



MINUTES

222nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**2016
PART I
JOURNAL**

**Published by the Office of the General Assembly
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202-1396**

Copyright © 2016
Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Additional copies available from Presbyterian
Distribution Services (PDS), 100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202-1396, by calling 1-800-524-2612 (PDS)

Soft Cover (\$15) including CD version—Please specify PDS Order #OGA-16-012
CD, Folio Version of Minutes, Part I (\$10)—Please specify PDS Order #OGA 16-014
CD, PDF Version of Minutes, Part I (\$10)—OGA-16-015

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE

Proceedings of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Including Reports of Assembly Committees

Convening	1
01 Business Referrals	2
02 Bills and Overtures	7, 16, 25, 31, 36, 37, 47, 49, 70
03 General Assembly Procedures	11, 24, 27, 48, 71
10 Mission Coordination	11, 27, 41, 48, 72
14 Theological Issues and Institutions	14, 16
07 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	23
13 Board of Pensions, PILP, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Foundation	25
05 Mid Councils	32
04 The Way Forward	37
11 Social Justice Issues	46, 53
06 Church Polity and Ordered Ministries	48, 49
08 Middle East Issues	59, 60
09 Immigration and Environmental Issues	62
12 Peacemaking and International Issues	66
Adjournment	74

SECTION TWO

Assembly Committee Reports Containing All Reports, Referrals, and
Recommendations of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly,
the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent and Special Committees,
the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation,
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Overtures, and Commissioners' Resolutions

00 Plenary	77
01 Business Referrals	89
02 Bills and Overtures	155
03 General Assembly Procedures	159
04 The Way Forward	211
05 Mid Councils	279
06 Church Polity and Ordered Ministry	349
07 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	439
08 Middle East Issues	453
09 Immigration and Environmental Issues	511
10 Mission Coordination	567
11 Social Justice Issues	691
12 Peacemaking and International Issues	853
13 Board of Pensions, PILP, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Foundation	955
14 Theological Issues and Institutions	971
Moderator's Report	1055

SECTION THREE

Supplements

The Roll of the General Assembly	1061
Standing Rules.....	1077
Moderators and Clerks	1127
Members of Entities Elected by the General Assembly	1135
Index.....	1149

OFFICERS

Two Hundred and Twenty-second General Assembly (2016)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Co-Moderators

TEACHING ELDER DENISE ANDERSON
TEACHING ELDER JAN EDMISTON

Stated Clerk

TEACHING ELDER GRADYE PARSONS (2008–2016)
TEACHING ELDER DR. J. HERBERT NELSON, II (2016–)

Associate Stated Clerks

TEACHING ELDER TOM HAY
TEACHING ELDER BETH HESSEL
TEACHING ELDER SUE DAVIS KRUMMEL
TEACHING ELDER JOYCE LIEBERMAN
RULING ELDER KERRY RICE
TEACHING ELDER ROBINA WINBUSH

Assistant Stated Clerks

TEACHING ELDER SANDAWNA G. ASHLEY
TEACHING ELDER TIMOTHY CARGAL
TEACHING ELDER MOLLY CASTEEL
DEBORAH DAVIES
TEACHING ELDER MELISSA G. DAVIS
RULING ELDER C. LAURIE GRIFFITH
RULING ELDER MARTHA MILLER
KAY MOORE
LAURA POLK
THE REVEREND TOYA RICHARDS
RULING ELDER VALERIE KIRIISHI SMALL
NANCY TAYLOR
KRIS VALERIUS
TERESA WAGGENER

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Changes made by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, communications, recommendations, and resolutions of General Assembly entities appear as text enclosed in brackets. Bracketed text that is underlined was added by the assembly to the original text; bracketed text that is stricken was original text deleted by the assembly. Bracketed text with a gray screen background indicates changes made by plenary.

This format serves to ensure a complete historic record of the actions of the General Assembly by noting both the original recommendation sent to the assembly and the revised text approved by the assembly.

SECTION ONE

Proceedings of the
222nd General Assembly (2016)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Including
Reports of Assembly Committees

The World Wide Web

<http://www.pcusa.org/ga222>

<https://www.pc-biz.org/#/>

Many of the reports of the General Assembly and the minutes can be found on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Web site: <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/publications/>

**THE JOURNAL OF THE
222nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2016)**

Saturday, June 18, 2016, 2:00 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING I

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was convened by Heath Rada, Moderator, 221st General Assembly (2014), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. Preceding this first business meeting, the assembly convened in Halls CD at 11:00 a.m. with a service of opening worship. Heath Rada, Moderator, 221st General Assembly (2014), preached on the parable of the prodigal son. Opening worship included a service of Commissioning for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates, which included a commitment to faithful fulfillment of their service as commissioners and a charge to commissioners.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH GREETINGS

Moderator Rada recognized Mienda Uriarte, area coordinator for the Asia/Pacific Region, who introduced the Reverend Henry William Booth Sumakul, ecumenical representative from Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa, Tomohon, Indonesia; and Dr. Martin Hiram Chowdhury, ecumenical advisory delegate from the Church of Bangladesh, to bring greetings and open the assembly with prayer.

Moderator Rada announced that members of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations had prepared hand-knitted pocket prayer shawls to give to ecumenical and interfaith guests attending the assembly. On behalf of the committee and the commissioners and delegates of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Moderator Rada presented Rev. Booth and Dr. Chowdhury with pocket prayer shawls.

MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

Moderator Rada recognized the staff leadership of ecumenical and interfaith ministries, Robina Winbush, Laurie Anderson, Rick Ufford-Chase, and Laurie Kraus, and introduced the moment of remembrance, lament, and commitment on the one year anniversary of the Charleston Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church massacre and the one week anniversary of the Orlando Pulse Club massacre. Participants in the prayer service included Donnie Woods of the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic, Dan Williams of the Presbytery of Central Florida, the Reverend Terry McCrae Hill of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Portland, Wajdi Said of the Portland Muslim Community, and Eliana Maxim of the Presbytery of Seattle.

QUORUM AND ENROLLMENT

Moderator Rada recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, who advised the Moderator that Standing Rule D.2. permitted the roll to be established by registration. Stated Clerk Parsons recommended that the roll of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) be established by the list of those who had registered or would register. Based on preregistration with General Assembly Meeting Services, there would be present at this assembly:

- 594 commissioners from 171 presbyteries
- 141 young adult advisory delegates
- 20 theological student advisory delegates
- 8 missionary advisory delegates
- 14 ecumenical advisory delegates

The assembly approved that the roll of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) be established by the list of those who had registered or would register. The roll of the General Assembly can be found starting on p. 1061 of the electronic version.

SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Stated Clerk Parsons announced that, in accordance with Standing Rule B.3., corresponding members were designated and present at the General Assembly. The list of corresponding members can be found starting on p. 1071 of the electronic version.

Moderator Rada welcomed the corresponding members.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

The report of the Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) of the Presbytery of Cascades was presented by Co-Moderators Gregg and Beth Neel and Dave and Beverly Crow. The COLA showed a video on Portland, and people with

placards representing all of the churches in the presbytery paraded through the assembly hall to Scottish bagpipes and drums playing “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less.”

REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

Moderator Rada called upon Larissa Kwong Abazia, Vice-Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), to assume the chair.

Heath Rada, Moderator, 221st General Assembly (2014), reported on “A Conversation with the Denomination.” (See p. 1055).

COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia recognized Stated Clerk Parsons, who provided the commissioner orientation. As part of the orientation, Conrad Rocha, synod executive and stated clerk of the Synod of the Southwest and volunteer platform manager at the assembly, introduced the platform leadership, the floor parliamentarians, and how to be recognized to speak in plenary. Conrad Rocha and Jieun Kim Han, program assistant for General Assembly Meeting Services, explained interpretation services in English, Spanish, and Korean. Don Lincoln, lead pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and a volunteer assistant platform manager; Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay; and Tamara Williams, stated clerk and administrative coordinator of the Presbytery of Charlotte and volunteer assistant platform manager, explained how to use PC-Biz and electronic voting.

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia reminded the assembly of the high standards of conduct it is called to follow. Stated Clerk Parsons encouraged commissioners to refer to the program book found in registration packets for further information about the assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia recognized Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), who described the process by which the GANC places names in nomination and the procedure for making nominations from the floor.

REPORT ON BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia called upon Earline Williams, deputy executive director of shared services and chief financial officer of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), who described the process to be used in identifying items with budget implications and how that process can inform decisions made during the assembly.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR THE ASSEMBLY

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia called on Stated Clerk Parsons to recommend a committee structure for the assembly.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) voted to approve Item 00-01. [See p. 77.].

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRAL

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia recognized George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, for a report from the committee, assisted by Cheni Khonje, vice-moderator of the committee. The assembly approved Item 01-01, the proposed docket. The assembly approved Item 01-02. The assembly approved Item 01-05. The assembly approved Item 01-06, which recommends suspending Standing Rule A.2.a. in order to receive late business from entities of the General Assembly. This action required a 2/3 majority of the assembly. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral reported that it had approved Item 01-03, Referral of Business to Assembly Committees. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral also reported that it voted not to refer Item 01-04, On Amending Articles of Agreement, Section 8.2, to Include “Pacific Islander,” because the Articles of Agreement is a historical document and cannot be amended.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Business Referral

Report One

Item 01-01. Proposed Docket of the General Assembly

Approved. [See p. 89.]

Item 01-02. Referrals in Progress and Final Responses to Referrals

Approved. [See p. 91.]

Item 01-03. Referral of Business to Assembly Committees

Approved by the Assembly Committee on Business Referrals. [See p. 131.]

Item 01-04. On Amending Articles of Agreement, Section 8.2, to Include “Pacific Islander.”

The Assembly Committee on Business Referral voted not to refer Item 01-04 because the Articles of Agreement is a historical document and cannot be amended. [See p. 141.]

Item 01-05. 2016 Final Business List

Approved. [See p. 141.]

Item 01-06. Suspend Standing Rule A.2.a.

Approved. [See p. 153.]

SPIRIT OF GA VIDEOS

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia announced that the General Assembly Communications Center would be presenting one video per day during the assembly, and she introduced the first video.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Parsons made several announcements, including a reminder that the deadline for business to be submitted to the assembly was Sunday, June 19, at 1:30 p.m.

SIX AGENCIES VIDEO PRESENTATION

Stated Clerk Parsons introduced a video presentation about the work of the six agencies.

CLOSING PRAYER

Vice-Moderator Kwong Abazia recognized Katherine Orth, theological student advisory delegate from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 4:46 p.m.

Saturday, June 18, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING II

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Heath Rada, Moderator, 221st General Assembly (2014), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Don Shaw and Linda Jackson-Shaw, Presbyterian leaders from the Portland area, shared their story and led the assembly in the convening prayer.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH GREETINGS

Moderator Rada recognized Valdir Franca, Presbyterian Mission Agency, area coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, who introduced ecumenical guests from Latin America and the Caribbean. The Reverend Christopher Williams, ecumenical advisory delegate, Guyana Presbyterian Church, brought greetings to the assembly, and the Reverend Miguel Cancu, ecumenical representative, Dominican Evangelical Church, led the assembly in prayer.

Moderator Rada presented all of the ecumenical representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean with pocket prayer shawls on behalf of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, and the commissioners and delegates of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

THE ROLE OF BELHAR AND THE *BOOK OF CONFESSIONS* IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Moderator Rada recognized Beth Shalom Hessel, executive director of the Presbyterian Historical Society, for a presentation on the role of the Confession of Belhar and the *Book of Confessions* in the life of the church.

ELECTION OF THE CO-MODERATORS

Moderator Rada called for the election of the Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as required by *Book of Order*, G-3.0501, and Standing Rule H.1.

Moderator Rada recognized Margaret Elliott, moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, who reported on Co-Moderator candidate expenses.

Moderator Rada recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons who described the procedure for electing the Moderator or Co-Moderators.

Moderator Rada asked all nominees to come to the area at the back of the platform and meet with Assembly Assistant Conrad Rocha and Neil Presa, Moderator of the 220th General Assembly (2012). Moderator Rada announced that two teams of candidates had declared their intention to stand for election as Co-Moderators.

Two teams of candidates were placed in nomination. Adan Mairena (Presbytery of Philadelphia) and David Parker (Presbytery of Salem) were nominated by Julia Hill (Presbytery of Philadelphia). Denise Anderson (Presbytery of National Capital) and Jan Edmiston (Presbytery of Chicago) were nominated by Karen Sapio (Presbytery of San Gabriel). There were no nominations from the floor.

Each pair of Co-Moderator candidates addressed the General Assembly for five minutes, expressing the concerns each feels to be most important for the church in this assembly and in the two years to follow.

Moderator Rada called on Stated Clerk Parsons to explain the use of the speaker-recognition system, and the candidates responded to questions from the floor for thirty minutes. At the expiration of the time allotted for this process, the candidates met former Moderator Presa backstage at the docket coordinator’s desk.

Moderator Rada called on Stated Clerk Parsons to explain the voting procedure.

Moderator Rada polled advisory delegates and then asked commissioners to vote.

Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston were elected Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on the first ballot, receiving a total of 432 votes. Of the total votes cast, Adan Mairena and David Parker received 136.

Moderator Rada declared that Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston were duly elected to the office of Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

RECOGNITION OF FORMER MODERATORS

Moderator Rada welcomed the following former Moderators to the platform:

Name	Year	G.A.	Church
Herbert D. Valentine	1991	203rd	PC(USA)
John M. Fife	1992	204th	PC(USA)
John M. Buchanan	1996	208th	PC(USA)
Fahed Abu-Akel	2002	214th	PC(USA)
Susan R. Andrews	2003	215th	PC(USA)
Rick Ufford-Chase	2004	216th	PC(USA)
Bruce Reyes Chow	2008	218th	PC(USA)

After being escorted back into the hall by former Moderator Presa, Co-Moderators-elect Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston were accompanied to the platform by family members and friends.

INSTALLATION OF NEWLY ELECTED CO-MODERATORS

Stated Clerk Parsons, Retiring Moderator Rada, and Retiring Vice-Moderator Larissa Kwong Abazia installed Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston to the office of Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Fred Lyon of Flossmoor Community Church in Illinois led the assembly in prayer for the Co-Moderators. Retiring Moderator Rada presented Co-Moderator Anderson and Co-Moderator Edmiston with the Celtic crosses that have been worn by all Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.) Moderators since 1983. Stated Clerk Parsons presented Co-Moderator Anderson and Co-Moderator Edmiston with moderatorial stoles.

Co-Moderators Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston addressed the assembly briefly.

PRESENTATION TO RETIRING MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR

Stated Clerk Parsons presented retiring Moderator Rada with a replica of the Celtic crosses that have been worn by all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Moderators since 1983, and he presented gifts to Retiring Moderator Rada and Retiring Vice-Moderator Larissa Kwong Abazia on behalf of a grateful church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons for several announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Anderson offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 9:03 p.m.

Sunday Morning, June 19, 2016

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants worshipped in local churches throughout the Presbytery of Cascades.

Sunday, June 19, 2016, 2:46 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING III

BIBLE STUDY PRESENTATION

Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons recognized Sung Hee Chang and Richard Boyce, who shared information about the Bible study during General Assembly.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Co-Moderator Denise Anderson and Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston at 2:57 p.m. in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

INTERFAITH DELEGATE GREETINGS AND OPENING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Laurie Anderson, interfaith relations associate for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who introduced interfaith guests.

Elder Richard K. Hansen, Presidency of the Seventy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Portland, Oregon, Temple; Rabbi Joshua Rose, Congregation of Shaarie Torah, Portland, Oregon; and Wajidi Said, president and co-founder of the Muslim Educational Trust, Portland, Oregon, brought greetings.

Co-Moderator Edmiston presented all of the interfaith representatives with pocket prayer shawls on behalf of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, and the commissioners and delegates of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Co-Moderator Edmiston opened the assembly with prayer.

YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEER PRESENTATION

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who introduced a presentation on young adult volunteers with Richard Williams, coordinator for young adult and national volunteers, and Lydia Kim, associate for young adult volunteer administration.

Co-Moderator Denise Anderson assumed the chair.

STATED CLERK NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Carol McDonald, chairperson of the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee, who introduced the members of the committee, reported on the work of the committee, and presented as its nominee, J. Herbert Nelson.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Dan Johnson from the Presbytery of Tampa Bay who nominated David Baker for Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, who stated that the assembly would elect the Stated Clerk according to Standing Rule H.2. The election took place Friday morning, June 24, 2016, as the first order of business.

Co-Moderator Anderson thanked the two candidates for their willingness to engage in this continuing discernment process. Co-Moderator Anderson dismissed the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee with thanks and appreciation for faithful service.

TASK FORCE ON KOREAN-SPEAKING CONGREGATIONS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Luke Choi of the Task Force on Korean-Speaking Congregations, who introduced a video that highlighted Korean ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and reported on the work of the task force.

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY WORK PLAN

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who spoke about the Presbyterian Mission Agency's work plan.

Co-Moderator Edmiston assumed the chair.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) BOARD OF PENSIONS 300TH ANNIVERSARY

Co-Moderator Edmiston introduced a video presentation celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Board of Pensions. Frank Spencer, president of the Board of Pensions, spoke at the conclusion of the video.

SPIRIT OF GA VIDEO

Co-Moderator Edmiston introduced the Spirit of GA Video on Eco-Justice.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Parsons made several announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Theo Leavell, young adult advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Milwaukee, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 4:54 p.m.

Sunday, June 19, 2016, 7:30 P.M.

The assembly met in assigned committees from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Monday, June 20, 2016, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered in assembly committees or in the Oregon Convention Center Ballroom for Bible study.

The assembly met in assigned committees from 9:30 a.m. until noon; from 1:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.; and from 7:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 21, 2016, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered in assembly committees or in the Oregon Convention Center Ballroom for Bible study.

The assembly met in assigned committees from 9:30 a.m. until noon; from 1:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m.; and from 7:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 22, 2016, 8:30 A.M.

Commissioners, advisory delegates, and other participants gathered for the Ecumenical Service of Worship. Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Prelate of the Twentieth District and ecumenical officer of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, preached the sermon titled, "Crisis of Conflicting Voices."

Wednesday, June 22, 2016, 2:03 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING IV

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Hall CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Victor Aloyo, director of Multicultural Relations at Princeton Theological Seminary, shared his story and led the assembly in the convening prayer.

Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston gave a special remembrance of Kelly S. Allen, pastor at University Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, Texas, and also a candidate for Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), who died on June 5, 2016, of a hemorrhagic stroke. The assembly watched a video about Kelly Allen.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Beverly Crow, co-moderator of the Committee on Local Arrangements, for a special presentation of gifts for the Co-Moderators.

SPEAK-OUT

Co-Moderator Anderson explained that for the past ten months the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly had invited the church to engage in conversations about the nature and future of the church. Commissioners had already seen the COGA report, "When We Gather at the Table" and had the opportunity to go deeper into the questions it raised.

Co-Moderator Anderson invited commissioners and advisory delegates to form small groups, which would spend fifteen minutes discussing the following two questions:

"In what ways have your views of the report's findings and insights changed during your time at the assembly?" "In what ways will your views of the report's findings and insights affect your consideration of the business before the assembly?"

Following conversation, Co-Moderator Anderson said that the assembly would have one more opportunity for conversation on Thursday, June 23, 2016.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report of the committee. Moderator George Anderson brought one item for action and two for information. The assembly approved Item 02-03, which indicated the order in which committee reports would be heard. Moderator George Anderson introduced Item 02-01, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Report 1, which contained the actions of the committee related to the referral of commissioners' resolutions and the referral of Item 11-A.

Co-Moderator Anderson asked the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to comment on its action related to CR-012. Moderator George Anderson stated that the committee declined to refer Item CR-012 for two reasons so compelling that the vote of the committee was 32 to 0.

Moderator Anderson reported that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures examined the minutes of the General Assembly from the time of its convening on Saturday afternoon, June 18, through the end of Business Meeting III on Sunday, June 19, and found them in order (Item 02-02). Additional minutes will be added through the week and posted under Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).

Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures

Report One

I. For Plenary Action

Item 02-03. Proposed Docket.

Approved. [See p. 156.]

Wednesday, June 22:

8:30 a.m.

- Ecumenical Worship Service
- Report Reading Time: Pay particular attention to Item WCA
- Lunch Break

2:00 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation by Committee on Local Arrangements
- Business Meeting 4
 - Speak-out
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Stated Clerk's Orientation II
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Report of General Assembly Nominating Committee
 - Consent agenda, Item WCA: Items receiving a super majority vote in assembly committee meetings
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency: Educate A Child Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions (14)
- Announcements

5:30 p.m.

- Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Dinner

7:00 p.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Prayer
- Business Meeting 5
 - Speak-out
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee Reports
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Issues (07)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03)
- Announcements
- Closing Prayer
- Recess

Thursday, June 19:

8:30 a.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 6
 - Committee on the Office of the General Assembly: When We Gather At The Table
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency: Refugee Ministry Response Update
 - Assembly Committee Reports
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC and Foundation (13)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils (05)

11:15 a.m.

- Worship
- Recess
Lunch Break

1:30 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 7
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency – Mission Personnel Commissioning
 - Syngman Rhee Memorial Minute
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency – Intercultural Ministries Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on “The Way Forward” (04)
 - Big Tent 2017 Announcement
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (10)
 - Spirit of GA Video Presentation
 - Announcements

5:30 p.m.

- Closing Prayer

Recess

Dinner Break

7:30 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 8
 - Speak-out
 - Committee on the Office of the General Assembly - Presentation to the Stated Clerk
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11)
 - Announcements
 - Closing Prayer

Recess

Friday, June 20:

8:30 a.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 9
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Stated Clerk Election and Installation
 - Report of General Assembly Committee on Nominations
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06)

11:15 a.m.

- Worship

Recess

Group Lunch

1:30 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 10
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency – Grace and Gratitude Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Reports
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (08)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues (09)
 - Spirit of GA Video
 - Announcements

5:30 p.m.

- Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Dinner

7:30 p.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Opening Prayer
 - Business Meeting 11
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency—1001 Video Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues (12)
 - Announcements
 - Closing Prayer
- Recess

Saturday, June 21:

9:00 a.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 12
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Office of the General Assembly – Thanks to Committee on Local Arrangements
 - Presentation of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Committee on Local Arrangements
 - Announcements
- Closing Worship

12:00 Noon

- Adjourn

II. For Information

Item 02-01. [See p. 155.]

A. For Information—Referral of Commissioners' Resolutions:

1. CR-001 (now Item 10-16)—*Commissioners' Resolution. To Withdraw the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).* Referred to Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (10).

2. CR-002 (now Item 14-15)—*Commissioners' Resolution. The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.* Referred to the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions. Referred to Assembly Committee on Theological Issues & Institutions (14).

3. CR-003 (now Item 07-04)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Prayer for the Persecuted Church.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. Referred to Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations (07).

4. CR-004 (now Item 06-17)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding Church Property.* Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 referred to Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06); and that Recommendation 3 be declined based upon the following rationale: Recommendation 3. implies an authoritative interpretation, which, under Standing Rule A.6.e., is not allowed in commissioners' resolutions.

5. CR-005—*Commissioners' Resolution. Regarding the Use of Two States for Two Peoples.* Declined.

6. CR-006 (now Item 08-08)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (08).

7. CR-007 (now Item 12-12)—*Commissioners' Resolution. On Affirming Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation in the Number of Displaced Person/Refugees.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking & International Issues (12).

8. CR-008 (now Item 12-11)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Reaffirming the Ministry of Sanctuary by Congregations.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues. Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking & International Issues (12).

9. CR-009 (now Item 13-08)—*Commissioners' Resolution. On Creating a Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and General Assembly Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Service.* Referred to Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation (13).

10. CR-010 (now Item 12-13)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking & International Issues (12).

11. CR-011 (now Item 07-05)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations (07).

12. CR-012—*Commissioners' Resolution. On Directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) to Release for Public View the Final Report of the Independent Investigation into the Incorporation and Funding of a California 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation.* Declined based upon following rationale: (1) civil proceedings have commenced in the matters referred to, and the church suspends its judicial process until civil proceedings have been resolved; (2) the UPCUSA, a predecessor denomination, voted that the General Assembly would not be an ecclesial court. Up to that time the General Assembly had to approve the decisions of the GAPJC before it was made final. That change has been the practice of the reunited church. Accepting this commissioners' resolution requires the General Assembly to serve as an ecclesial court of the church.

B. For Information—Final Referral

Item 11-A. Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Referred to Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11).

Item 02-02. [See p. 155.]

In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for Saturday afternoon, June 18, 2016, through the end of Business Meeting III on Sunday, June 19, 2016, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Assembly Committee 02 (Bills and Overtures).

COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION II

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons for an update on how commissioners could complete an electronic version of the motion form on PC-Biz and reminded the assembly about internet connectivity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE: REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Mary Lou Cox, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report on financial implications on the per capita budget of actions taken at this assembly. Moderator Cox presented a per capita apportionment of \$7.33 for 2017 and \$7.55 for 2018 and announced that the total financial implications of actions recommended by assembly committees amounts to: \$13,120 for 2016; \$263,203 for 2017; and \$270,583 for 2018. On Saturday morning, the committee will present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the per capita budget for 2017 and 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE: REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Eileen Best, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly. Moderator Best reported the total financial implications of actions under consideration by the assembly for the mission budgets were: \$303,144 for 2017, and \$251,642 for 2018.

NOMINATIONS INFORMATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons who reported that there have been no challenges to the nominees of the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) found in Item 00-03 and the Moderator's Nominations to the GANC found in Item 00-04; therefore, per the Standing Rules, these unchallenged nominations in Item 00-03 and Item 00-04 are now included in the Wednesday Consent Agenda. Additional nominations have been made and are listed in the GANC report, Item 00-05. Floor nominations for these positions are due Thursday, June 23, 2016, by 2:00 P.M.

CONSENT AGENDA, THE WEDNESDAY CONSENT AGENDA

Co-Moderator Anderson introduced the Wednesday Consent Agenda, Item 02-WCA, and stated that it could be found in PC-Biz as the Wednesday Consent Agenda. The Wednesday Consent Agenda includes recommendations from committees

that have been approved by 75 percent or more of the committee members. Items that were approved by less than 75 percent will be voted on individually in plenary. In addition, items that do not have constitutional implications or, in the judgment of the committee leaders, do not represent business requiring discussion by the full assembly, are included in the consent agenda. When the consent agenda is presented to the body for a vote, commissioners will be voting for all the items included, without any alterations, in a single vote.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who led the assembly through the consent agenda process. Moderator George Anderson moved the agenda. Co-Moderator Anderson announced that if a commissioner wished to have an item removed from the consent agenda, they would go to microphones 2 and 7 to be recognized.

Items removed from Wednesday Consent Agenda:

- 03-09: Site Selection for the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. Approved. (See p. 169.)
- 05-12: Request for Constitutional Interpretation of Resolving Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Synod of the Northeast. Approved with Comment. (See p. 298.)
- 09-08: On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources—From the Presbytery of Seattle. Approved as Amended. (See p. 541.)
- 11-08: On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—From the Presbytery of Baltimore. Approved as Amended. (See p. 711.)
- 11-20: Recommendations Regarding “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision”—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approved. (See p. 738.)
- 11-21: Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approved. (See p. 742.)
- 13-08: Commissioners’ Resolution. On Creating a Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and General Assembly Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Service. Disapproved with Comment. (See p. 957.)
- 14-02: Regarding Endorsing the Clergy Letter Project—From the Presbytery of the Cascades. Approved. (See p. 974.)

Having removed items as requested from the Wednesday Consent Agenda, the assembly voted on all of the remaining items. The Wednesday Consent Agenda, as amended above, was approved.

Wednesday Consent Agenda

- 00-03: *General Assembly Nominating Committee 2016 Nominations.* Approved. (See p. 78.)**
- 00-04: Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) Nominations to GANC.** Approved. (See p. 87.)
- 03-01: On Amending Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) Concerning Resources and E.2.f.(3) Concerning Oral Presentation to Assembly Committees—From the Presbytery of Central Florida. [Recommendation 1] Approved as Amended.** (See p. 159.)
- 03-01: On Amending Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) Concerning Resources and E.2.f.(3) Concerning Oral Presentation to Assembly Committees—From the Presbytery of Central Florida. [Recommendation 2] Referred with Comment.** (See p. 159.)
- 03-05: On Amending the Annual Statistical Report to Include a New Category “Partners in Ministry”—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.** Disapproved. (See p. 166.)
- 03-06: On Adding New Standing Rule B.5.b., Assembly Committee Moderators—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.** Approved. (See p. 167.)
- 03-07: Amendment to Standing Rule B.3.a., Presbyterian Women—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.** Approved. (See p. 167.)
- 03-11: On Amending Standing Rules B.4. and F.5.d. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.** Disapproved. (See p. 174.)
- 03-12: Approve “A Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity.”** Approved. (See p. 175.)
- 04-12: Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly. [Recommendation 1] Approved.** (See p. 249.)

- 04-12: Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly. [Recommendation 2] Approved. (See p. 249.)
- 04-12: Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly. [Recommendation 3] Approved. (See p. 249.)
- 04-12: Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly. [Recommendation 4] Approved. (See p. 250.)
- 05-02: On Restoring the Boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific to Its Status Prior to the 2012 Revisions—from the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii. Approved as Amended. (See p. 281.)
- 05-13: Synod Report Regarding Synod Boundaries. Answered with Action on another Resolution. (See p. 300.)
- 05-14: On Merging the Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest. Approved. (See p. 304.)
- 06-17: Commissioners' Resolution. Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding Church Property. Approved as Amended. (See p. 379.)
- 07-01: Delegation to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Approved. (See p. 439.)
- 07-02: Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Approved. (See p. 439.)
- 07-05: Commissioners' Resolution. Recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Approved. (See p. 441.)
- 08-03: On Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the United States—From the Presbytery of New York City. Approved. (See p. 463.)
- 08-04: On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements—From the Presbytery of the Redwoods. Approved as Amended. (See p. 465.)
- 09-05: On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si”—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe. Approved as Amended. (See p. 535.)
- 10-01: On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery from the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business—From the Presbytery of Newark. Approved as Amended. (See p. 567.)
- 10-04: Approve the Revised Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations. Approved. (See p. 575.)
- 10-05: Rescind the 1990 “General Assembly Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures.” Approved. (See p. 578.)
- 10-06: Amendments to the Organization for Mission. Approved. (See p. 589.)
- 10-07: Proposed Changes and Updates to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Approved. (See p. 591.)
- 10-09: “Empowered & Hopeful”—Women of Color Consultation Report. Approved. (See p. 611.)
- 10-12: A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed via Third Party Contractors—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. Approved. (See p. 615.)
- 10-14: 2017–2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Work Plan. Approved. (See p. 621.)
- 10-15: Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation A.1.] Approved. (See p. 623.)
- 10-15: Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation A.2.] Approved. (See p. 624.)
- 10-15: Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation B.] Approved. (See p. 625.)
- 10-15: Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation C.1.] Approved. (See p. 625.)
- 10-15: Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation C.2.] Approved. (See p. 626.)
- 10-NB: Reviewing the Guidelines for Reviewing Minutes. Approved. (See p. 629.)

- 11-09: On Celebrating a Significant Social Witness Anniversary—From the Presbytery of Chicago. Approved. (See p. 715.)**
- 11-10: On Reconciliation and Engagement in a New Civil Rights Movement—From the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. Approved as Amended with Comment. (See p.717 .)**
- 11-13: Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approved. (See p. 722.)**
- 11-19: ACREC Recommendations to the General Assembly [Recommendation 1] Approved. (See p. 737.)**
- 11-19: ACREC Recommendations to the General Assembly [Recommendation 2–4] Approved. (See pp. 737–38.)**
- 11-26: On the Economic Crisis in Puerto Rico—From the Presbiterio Del Noroeste. Approved as Amended. (See p. 833.)**
- 12-04: Overture Pertaining to the Congo—From the Presbytery of Chicago. Approved. (See p. 858.)**
- 12-07: New Hopes and Realities in Cuban–American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento”—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approved. (See p. 905.)**
- 12-09: On Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination—From the Synod of the Covenant. Approved as Amended. (See p. 938.)**
- 12-10: On Committing to Play an Active Part in the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic—From the Presbytery of Southern New England. Approved as Amended. (See p. 941.)**
- 12-11: Commissioner’s Resolution. Reaffirming the Ministry of Sanctuary by Congregations. Approved. (See p. 944.)**
- 12-12: Commissioners Resolution. On Affirming Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation in the Number of Displaced Person/Refugees. Approved as Amended. (See p. 946.)**
- 12-13: Commissioners’ Resolution. Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula. Approved as Amended. (See p. 951.)**
- 13-03: Recommendation to Confirm Election of Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. Approved. (See p. 955.)**
- 13-04: Churchwide Gifts Program. Approved. (See p. 956.)**
- 13-05: Confirm Individuals to PILP Board of Directors. Approved. (See p. 956.)**
- 14-05: Mountain Retreat Association Board of Directors. Approved. (See p. 1004.)**
- 14-06: Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education. Approved. (See p. 1004.)**
- 14-08: Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper--From the Committee on Theological Education. Approved. (See p. 1007.)**
- 14-14: Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Approved as Amended. (See p. 1018.)**
- 14-15: Commissioners’ Resolution: “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity. Approved as Amended. (See p. 1047.)**

EDUCATE A CHILD PRESENTATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, for a presentation on the Educate a Child mission. Tony De La Rosa introduced Frank Dimmock, Global Alleviation Catalyst in World Mission, Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and Alonzo Johnson, Compassion, Peace and Justice, PMA.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Jennifer Burns Lewis, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions, for the committee report.

Moderator Lewis presented Item 14-12, which was approved. Moderator Lewis presented Item 14-07. It was approved and Moderator Lewis introduced both the Reverend Dr. Leanne Van Dyk, president and professor of theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, and the Reverend Dr. David Esterline, president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, to speak.

Moderator Lewis presented Item 14-09. Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Dr. Doris Garcia-Rivera, president of El Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico, to explain the covenant relationship between the seminary and the PC(USA). Item 14-09 was approved with amendment.

Moderator Lewis presented Item 14-10. It was approved. Dr. Craig Barnes, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, offered a memorial minute for the late Dr. Steven Hayner, president emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary.

Moderator Lewis presented Item 14-04. It was approved with two amendments from the floor as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets, with a gray highlight (denotes plenary action), and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets, with a gray highlight (denotes plenary action), and with an underline.]

“5. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0402, paragraph 3 as follows:

“Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God’s redeeming grace offered to all people. ~~[Baptism is God’s gift of grace and also God’s call to respond to that grace.]~~ [Baptism is at once God’s gift of grace, God’s means of grace, and God’s call to respond to that grace.] Through Baptism, Jesus Christ calls us to repentance, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit gives the Church its identity and commissions the Church for service in the world.”

....

“9. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0409, paragraph 3 as follows:

“The Lord’s Supper enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God’s sustaining grace offered to all people. ~~[The Lord’s Supper is God’s gift and also God’s call to respond to that grace.]~~ [The Lord’s Supper is at once God’s gift of grace, God’s means of grace, and God’s call to respond to that grace.] Through the Lord’s Supper, Jesus Christ nourishes us in righteousness, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit renews the Church in its identity and sends the Church to mission in the world.”

Moderator Lewis then presented Item 14-01. It was disapproved.

Moderator Lewis presented Item 14-03. In response to Item 14-03, an alternate resolution that approves substitute wording drawn from the revised Directory for Worship was approved. Item 14-11 was approved and the awards were presented. See below in Announcements.

The committee report was arrested at this time to be resumed at the reconvening of the assembly at 7 p.m. [For the remainder of the report, see p. 16.]

SPIRIT OF GA VIDEO

Co-Moderator Edmiston introduced the Spirit of GA video on Discernment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized the Reverend Mindy Douglas, vice-moderator of the Committee on Theological Education, who presented awards for excellence in theological education to Dr. Kathanne Sakenfeld, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the Reverend Dr. Craig Dykstra, of Duke Divinity School.

Stated Clerk Parsons reported announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Stephanie Quintana-Martinez, theological advisory delegate from McCormick Theological Seminary, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 4:40 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING V

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Robina Winbush, Associate Stated Clerk in the Office of the General Assembly, who introduced the Reverend Dr. Yvette Noble Bloomfield, vice-president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, who offered prayer and brought greetings.

Co-Moderator Anderson presented Rev. Bloomfield with a pocket prayer shawl on behalf of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations and the commissioners and delegates of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

James Winkler, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and Jimmie R. Hawkins and Ann Walle of Church World Service, brought greetings, and they also received pocket prayer shawls.

SPEAK-OUT

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons who described the format for the “Speak-out” session. For fifteen minutes, commissioners, advisory delegates, and corresponding members are given the opportunity to speak for one minute each from microphones two and three. Speakers may not make motions during this time.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Cheni Khonje, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

Vice-Moderator Khonje presented Item 02-03, a revised docket scheduling the continuation of the report of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions before the other two committee reports scheduled for this plenary. It was approved. (See p. 156.)

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INSTITUTIONS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Jennifer Burns Lewis, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions, for the continuation of the committee report. [See pp. 14–15 for the first part of the report.] Sue Rutford, vicemoderator of the committee, was recognized to present the report.

Vice-Moderator Rutford presented Item 14-13. Because of some voting malfunctions, a total of four votes were held, two when the item was first presented and two after the approval of Item 14-02. Item 14-13 was approved as amended.

Vice-Moderator Rutford presented Item 14-A for information. Vice-Moderator Rutford called on Moderator Lewis to present Item 14-02. It was approved.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Recommendations with financial implications indicated with a “\$” sign.

I. Plenary Action

Item 14-01. *On Amending W-4.9000 by Replacing with New Text—From the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas.*

Disapproved. [See p. 971.]

Item 14-02. *Regarding Endorsing the Clergy Letter Project—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.*

Approved. [See p. 974.]

Item 14-03. *On Amending W-2.4011 by Adding Language Regarding Who Can Access the Lord's Supper—From the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.*

In response to Item 14-03, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the following alternate resolution: [See p. 976.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall W-2.4011 be amended by striking the current text and inserting new text to read as follows:

“Theology of the Lord's Supper

“a. The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.

“Worshippers prepare themselves to celebrate the Lord's Supper by putting their trust in Christ, confessing their sin, and seeking reconciliation with God and one another. Even those who doubt may come to the table in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

“Welcoming to the Table

“b. In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord's Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, the session should provide an occasion to welcome them to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord's Supper should include ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.”

Item 14-04. *Revised Directory for Worship—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved as amended: [See p. 978.]

Amend “Directory for Worship, Draft of Proposed Revision: November 2015” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets, with a gray highlight (denotes plenary action), and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets, with a gray highlight (denotes plenary action), and with an underline.]

1. Amend Chapter One, W-1.0202, paragraph 2 as follows:

“The first Christians began to celebrate Jesus' resurrection every Lord's Day, gathering to proclaim the Word and celebrate the Sacraments. The Church continues to gather, ~~especially~~ traditionally on the first day of the week, to hear the gospel and break bread in Jesus' name, with the confidence that the risen Lord is with us.”

2. Amend Chapter Two, W-2.0303, paragraph 2 as follows:

“In a particular congregation, ruling elders shall provide for the church's worship and encourage the people's participation. Specifically, when serving together on the session, ruling elders and ~~pastors~~ teaching elders†: make provision for the regular preaching of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments, corporate prayer, and the offering of praise to God in song; oversee and approve all public worship in the congregation, with the exception of responsibilities reserved for the teaching elder†; determine occasions, days, times, and places for worship; and have responsibility for the arrangement of worship space, the use of special appointments (flowers, candles, banners, paraments, and other objects), and the ministries of music, drama, dance, and visual arts.”

3. Amend Chapter Two, W-2.0304 as follows:

“Teaching elders† (also called ministers of Word and Sacrament) are called to proclaim the Word, preside at the Sacraments, and equip the people for ministry in Jesus' name. Specifically, teaching elders† are responsible for: the selection of Scriptures to be read, the preparation of the sermon, the prayers to be offered, the selection of music to be sung, printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service, and the use of drama, dance, and other art forms in a particular service of worship.”

4. Amend Chapter Two, W-2.0305 as follows:

~~“In a particular congregation, the order of worship [including printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service], is the responsibility of the teaching elder† with the concurrence of the session. The selection of hymnals, service books, Bibles, and other more permanent worship resources is the responsibility of the session with the concurrence of the teaching elder†, and in consultation with church musicians and educators.~~

“[Paragraph 2 remains unchanged.]

“The session is responsible for educating the congregation about the church’s worship, in order to facilitate their full and active participation. ~~[The]~~ [It is appropriate that the] session ~~[should]~~ provide for the regular study of this Directory for Worship, particularly in the training of ruling elders and deacons.

“In fulfilling their responsibilities for worship, sessions are accountable to presbytery. ~~[Presbyteries]~~ [It is appropriate that the presbyteries] ~~[should]~~ discuss with sessions the character of their congregation’s worship, the standards governing it, and the fruit that it bears in the mission and ministry of the church. ~~[Presbyteries]~~ [It is appropriate that the presbyteries] ~~[should]~~ provide instruction in worship, making use of this Directory for Worship in the preparation of candidates for ordination, and in the ongoing nurture of teaching elders†.”

5. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0402, paragraph 3 as follows:

~~“Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God’s redeeming grace offered to all people. [Baptism is God’s gift of grace and also God’s call to respond to that grace.] [Baptism is at once God’s gift of grace, God’s means of grace, and God’s call to respond to that grace.]~~ Through Baptism, Jesus Christ calls us to repentance, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit gives the Church its identity and commissions the Church for service in the world.”

6. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0402, paragraph 5 as follows:

“Both believers and their children are included in God’s covenant love. The baptism of believers witnesses to the truth that God’s gift of grace calls for our grateful response. The baptism of our [young] children witnesses to the truth that God claims people in love even before they are able to respond in faith. These two forms of witness are one and the same Sacrament.”

7. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0403 as follows:

“[Paragraph 1 remains unchanged]

“When a [young] child is presented for Baptism at least one parent (or person exercising parental responsibility) ~~[will]~~ [should] be an active member of a Christian church, normally the congregation in which the baptism takes place. The session may consider a request to baptize a child whose parent is an active member of another church. If the session approves such a request, it ~~[must]~~ [should] communicate with the council of the other congregation and notify them when the Sacrament has been administered. Those presenting children for Baptism will promise to nurture and guide them until they are ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership.

“A council may authorize a Baptism, to be administered by a teaching elder†, in certain situations beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other ministry settings. In these cases, the teaching elder† is responsible for ensuring that the name of the newly baptized person is placed on the appropriate roll of a ~~[congregation]~~ [council] (G-3.02, G-3.03).”

8. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0405 as follows:

“Candidates for Baptism or their parents shall renounce evil and profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who are being baptized upon profession of faith declare their intent to participate actively and responsibly in the church’s worship and mission. ~~[They join]~~ [Together with] the congregation [they profess] ~~[in professing]~~ their faith, using the Apostles’ Creed, the baptismal affirmation of the early Church.”

9. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0409, paragraph 3 as follows:

~~“The Lord’s Supper enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God’s sustaining grace offered to all people. [The Lord’s Supper is God’s gift and also God’s call to respond to that grace.] [The Lord’s Supper is at once God’s gift of grace, God’s means of grace, and God’s call to respond to that grace.]~~ Through the

Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ nourishes us in righteousness, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit renews the Church in its identity and sends the Church to mission in the world."

10. Amend Chapter Three, W-3.0413 as follows:

"At the table, in full view of the people, the teaching elder† breaks the bread and pours the cup, or lifts a cup that has already been filled. These actions may be accompanied by sentences of Scripture or performed in silence. The use of one loaf and one cup expresses the unity of the body of Christ and the communal nature of the Sacrament. The bread used for the Lord's Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation; those who prepare the bread shall make provision for ~~[persons with food allergies]~~ [the full participation of the congregation]. The session will determine whether wine is used; a non-alcoholic option shall be provided and clearly identified."

11. Amend Chapter Four, W-4.0202 as follows:

"In cases where baptized children ~~[have]~~ who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord's Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, the session should provide an occasion to welcome them to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord's Supper should include ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments."

12. Amend Chapter Four, W-4.0401 as follows:

"In Baptism each Christian is called to ministry in Christ's name. God calls some persons from the midst of congregations to fulfill particular functions, so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. In ordination the church sets apart with prayer and the laying on of hands those who have been called by God through the voice of the church to serve as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders†. In installation the church sets in place with prayer those who have been (previously) ordained as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders†, and are now called anew to service in that ministry. In commissioning the church recognizes other forms of ministry in the church: ruling elders ~~[called to pastoral service]~~ [commissioned to limited pastoral service], certified Christian educators, and persons certified to other forms of service."

13. Amend Chapter Four, W-4.0403 as follows:

"A service of ordination, installation, or commissioning focuses on Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church. Following the sermon, the moderator (or designee) of the appropriate council briefly states the nature of the ministry to which persons are being ordained, installed, or commissioned. Those who are being ordained, installed, or commissioned gather at the baptismal font. The moderator (or designee) asks them the constitutional questions (see W-4.0404). A ruling elder asks the corresponding questions of the congregation. When all questions have been answered in the affirmative, those to be ordained will kneel, if able, for the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination. (The presbytery commission lays on hands at the ordination of teaching elders†; its moderator may invite other teaching elders† and ruling elders to participate. Members of the session lay on hands at the ordination of ruling elders and deacons; the session may invite other ruling elders and teaching elders† to participate. Because ordination only takes place once for each office, the laying on of hands is not repeated.) Those previously ordained will stand, if able, along with the congregation, for the prayer of installation. After this, the moderator makes the declaration of ordination, installation, or commissioning. Members of the session or presbytery welcome the newly ordained, installed, or commissioned person(s). In the case of the installation of a teaching elder†, persons may be invited to charge the teaching elder† and congregation to faithfulness in ministry and mutuality in relationship. When a teaching elder† is ordained or installed, it is appropriate for that person to preside at the Lord's Supper in the same service; she or he may also give the blessing at the conclusion of the service. When ruling elders or deacons are ordained or installed, it is appropriate for one or more of them to give the charge [to the congregation at the conclusion of the service]."

14. Chapter Five, W-5.0302, paragraph 2 as follows:

"~~[The]~~ [In the] Service for the Lord's Day² ~~[is the primary context in which]~~ we ~~[regularly]~~ hear the proclamation of the gospel and have the opportunity to respond in faith, committing and recommitting our lives to Jesus Christ. Accordingly, an invitation to prepare for Baptism and live out baptismal discipleship is to be a regular part of Sunday worship. Christian worship also prepares believers to go forth, in the power of the Spirit, to share with others the good news they have received, inviting them to join in following Christ's way."

Item 14-05. *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Recommendation to Approve Nominee for the Mountain Retreat Association, Inc.’s Board of Directors.

Approved. [See p. 1004.]

Item 14-06. *Committee on Theological Education Recommendation to Approve the New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions in 2014–2016.

Approved. [See p. 1004.]

Item 14-07. *Committee on Theological Education Recommendation to Approve President, Columbia Theological Seminary, and President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; Docket Time for Brief Remarks.*

Approved. [See p. 1005.]

Item 14-08. *Committee on Theological Education Recommendation to Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in 2016–2017.

Approved. [See p. 1007.]

Item 14-09. *Committee on Theological Education Recommends to Approve the Revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 1007.]

1. Amend Section VII as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“VII. Term

“The term of this covenant shall commence when formally approved and signed by the designated parties and shall expire in June/July ~~[2016 (222nd General Assembly [2016])]~~ [2026 (227th General Assembly [2026]).]”

2. Amend Section VIII as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, acting by and through the signatories below, do so covenant and agree:

“REPRESENTING EL SEMINARIO EVANGÉLICO DE PUERTO RICO	“REPRESENTING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
“Doris Garcia-Rivera, “President 2016	“ <u>[Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston]</u> “ <u>[Co-]Moderator[s]</u> June 2016
“Carlos Gomez-Menendez “Chair, Board of Directors 2016	“ [Gradye Parsons] <u>[The Reverend J. Herbert Nelson II]</u> Stated Clerk June 2016”

Item 14-10. *Committee on Theological Education Recommendation for Docket Time of Up to Four Minutes, Adjacent to the Awards for Excellence in Theological Education, for a Brief Meditation in Memory of Steven Hayner, Late President of Columbia Theological Seminary.*

Approved. [See p. 1012.]

Item 14-11. *Committee on Theological Education Recommends for Award for Excellence in Theological Education.*

Approved. [See p. 1013.]

\$Item 14-12. *Recommendation to Create a Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved with comment. [See p. 1014.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the special committee be in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Department of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism, and its covenant partners.

[Per Capita: \$10,234 (2017); \$10,234 (2018)]

Item 14-13. *On Approving an “Affirmation of Creation—From the Presbytery of Boston.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 1015.]

1. Amend Recommendation 2., Bullet 5 of “Affirmation of Creation” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“• That God has connected all life on Earth in a network of kinship by virtue of [~~deseent with modification~~] [biological evolution] from common ancestors;”

2. Amend Recommendation 2., Bullet 6 of “Affirmation of Creation” as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“• That, in response to God’s call, we Homo sapiens [~~(modern humans)~~] emerged[, in our wide diversity and different cultures,] as a species over more than 6 million years of hominin development;”

Item 14-14. *Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Approved as amended. [See p. 1018.]

1. Amend Recommendation 3, “Affirmation: Faithful Living at the End-of-Life” as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Encourage Presbyterian medical personnel, caregivers, pastors, deacons, and other providers of end-of-life treatment, care, and support to lead studies and discussions of these resources on a regular basis within their congregations and communities to strengthen the understanding and use of advance directives.

“Affirmation: Faithful Living at the End-of-Life

“God’s good gift of life does not come without God’s guidance, guidance carried in the Scriptures of Old and New Testaments and interpreted in our confessions of faith. [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]

“The Reformed tradition as we understand it sees death as part of a purposeful journey that is undertaken by each of us in community, such that our baptisms are recalled and completed at our deaths, whether they be sudden and untimely, prolonged and painful, or long-expected and peaceful. [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]

“This theological/spiritual/ethical context must be considered in advance care planning. All of the stakeholders in end-of-life planning and care bring their spiritual and moral convictions to the challenges explored in *Abiding Presence*. [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]

“[It is important to note the progression of care as illness progresses. Critical care (full life-saving care toward health restoration), may then include palliative care (a multidisciplinary approach to supporting the personhood of the patient) that can co-exist with critical care, and continue if the decision to discontinue critical care is made. Finally, hospice care discontinues dimensions of critical care, while enhancing care of mind, body, and soul, through the end-of-life journey.]

“Decisions to hasten death may be understandable as a last resort when all connection to one’s community has been or will be lost and medical pain management is no longer effective. Both medically and spiritually, it is always crucial that the Church and individual Christians address the reasons why people choose to end their lives, listening and drawing on God’s love as best we can, and avoiding condemnation. While sharing in the historic Christian opposition to suicide, we do not find it condemned in Scripture nor see ourselves called to judge others, particularly those facing irreversible deterioration of awareness and bodily function. A separate issue is the use of deep sedation at the end of a person’s life to control severe pain. [~~Palliative (or terminal)~~] [Such] sedation [invokes a law of double effect: pain control may increasingly suppress bodily function. The ethical concern here is the intent of the medication, either to assist with pain control, or to hasten death. Pain management] may

in some cases be chosen prayerfully and within one's fully informed circle of care, knowing that death is typically a byproduct at some point.

“Death for us is not simply an individual event in a natural process, but a communal leave-taking still connected to God that involves our family, friends, and congregation. [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]

“The church has provided resources on medical efforts to manage the uncertainty and pain of death since 1974, addressing first the “artificial prolongation” of human life, and then addressing efforts at shortening or ending lives seen to have grown unbearable or unresponsive. [Rest of paragraph remains unchanged.]”

2. Amend recommendation 4.a. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“a. Encourages all members and friends active in the denomination to develop their own end-of-life directives, surrogate decision-makers, ‘living wills,’ durable powers of attorney for health care, Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLSTs), or other vehicles recognized by their states, to guide their treatment in the case of incapacity and/or irreversible medical decline. Copies of these documents should be shared with both primary and secondary (fallback) persons selected to carry the power of making health-care decisions when one is unable to do so oneself. Furthermore, it is very illuminating to discuss one's end of life values and preferences with the range of family members, physicians, nurses, and congregational care providers.”

*Item 14-15. *Commissioners' Resolution: “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.”*

Approved as amended. [See p. 1047.]

Amend the first paragraph of the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency[, in coordination with the Office of the General Assembly,] to help the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make use of ‘The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity’ by:”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Plenary

Item 14-A. Minutes, Committee on Theological Education

Approved with comment. [See p. 1049.]

Comment: The subcommittee for COTE minutes approval moves to recommend approval of the Committee on Theological Education minutes from February 25–26, 2014, through September 22, 2015, with the following comments:

- A. The committee would prefer to have the original bound minutes in hand.
- B. A notice of approval of the previous year minutes should be included.
- C. Although it may be necessary to involve different clerks, care and consistency is needed in presentation of the minutes:
 1. All meetings (both committee and subcommittees) to be opened and closed with prayer.
 2. Persons attending should be referenced by their full name or with title.
 3. If margin headings are used, consistency throughout the year is required.
 4. Care in using standard abbreviations is needed.
 5. Actions as motions should be emphasized and discussion more concise when presented.

A copy of the “Guideline for Preparation on Minutes of Agencies” should be made available to the acting clerks of the meeting.

Matt Miles, Committee on Theological Education (COTE) member, abstained

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 14-01 from the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions: Sandy Gandolfi, Presbytery of Kiskiminetas; Jarrett Johnson, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Justin L. Marple, Presbytery of Western New York.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Young Ghil Lee, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. Moderator Lee referred to Item 07-01 and Item 07-02, which the assembly approved as part of the Wednesday Consent Agenda. Moderator Lee then presented pocket prayer shawls to Co-Moderator Anderson and Co-Moderator Edmiston.

Moderator Lee recognized Lisa Eye, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. Vice-Moderator Eye introduced a video recognizing the service of Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, Ecumenical Officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Vice-Moderator Eye presented Item 07-04. It was approved as amended.

Vice-Moderator Eye recognized Juan Sarmiento, Evangelism Catalyst for Presbyterian World Missions, to offer a prayer.

Vice-Moderator Eye presented Item 07-06. It was approved with comment.

Vice-Moderator Eye recognized Moderator Lee, who presented Item 07-03. Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons who explained the procedure for amending the *Book of Confessions*. Moderator Lee introduced a video on the Confession of Belhar. Co-Moderator Edmiston called for the vote of the advisory delegates. Co-Moderator Anderson called for the vote of the commissioners. Item 07-03 was approved, and the assembly joined in singing “Freedom Is Coming.” The Confession of Belhar is now part of the *Book of Confessions*.

Moderator Lee recognized the Reverend Motlalentwa Godfrey Betha and the Reverend Dr. Allan Boesak of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, who addressed the assembly. The assembly joined in singing “We Shall Overcome.”

Moderator Lee thanked Matilde Moros and Clifton Kirkpatrick, chairs of the Special Committee on the Belhar Confession. Item 07-A was received as approved with comment by the assembly committee.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 07-01. *Delegation to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

Approved. [See p. 439.]

Item 07-02. *Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

Approved. [See p. 439.]

Item 07-03. *Recommendation to Approve the Confession of Belhar.*

Approved. [See p. 439.]

Item 07-04. *Commissioners’ Resolution: “Prayer for the Persecuted Church.”*

Approved as amended: [See p. 440.]

Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Engaging in a time of corporate prayer for the persecuted church around the world during its plenary meeting[s], ~~[lasting no less than five minutes,]~~ during the report of the committee that considers this resolution, to ~~[be led by]~~ [include] ecumenical advisory delegates, missionary advisory delegates, mission co-workers, and ecumenical guests who are participants in this General Assembly.”

***Item 07-05. Commissioners' Resolution. Recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.**

Approved. [See p. 441.]

Item 07-06. The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations 2016 Self-Study

Approved with comment. [See p. 442.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms and celebrates the work of the GACEIR and encourages their continued gracious hospitality, faithful imagination, and patient perseverance, as they reach out to welcome, to listen to and learn from, and to partner with the world's ecumenical, interfaith and emerging partners.

This commitment is particularly important and timely in a world fraught with ignorance and fear, discrimination and violence; and is to be supported, strengthened, and cherished.

As the committee moves forward, we would like to see them emphasize the following Moving Forward items (in the GACEIR self-study report):

- #5, collaborating ecumenically and interreligiously in addressing the crucial issues listed in the item, adding a commitment to standing in solidarity with individuals and groups targeted by a context of xenophobia that fosters disrespect and foments violence;
- #10, including the development of educational tools and materials that will assist members of our congregations to formulate faithful Christian responses to people of other faiths that reflect both integrity and respect. We request that the Confession of Belhar be considered for use in these materials.

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 07-A. Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

Approved with comment. [See p. 449.]

Comment: Minutes Review for the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) 2014–2015

Exceptions:

Jan 9, 2014: None.

Jan 22–24: Only 8 of 18 members present (quorum?); marginal headings suggested, no start time (Jan 22).

Feb 3: None.

Feb 14: No closing prayer.

June 5: None.

September 24–26: No opening prayer; no start time.

Jan 23, 2015: None.

June 10–12: No opening prayer for executive meeting; no closing prayer for regular meeting.

Aug 26: None.

Sept 30–Oct 2: No opening prayer; “The following attendees were present for all or portions of the meeting” (Quorum present at beginning, but was quorum present for all votes?)

Respectfully Submitted, Steven M. Marsh, Timothy P. Pollock

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 07-03 from the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations: Justin L. Marple, Presbytery of Western New York; Augustine Wright III, Presbytery of Stockton.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Mary Lou Cox, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

Moderator Cox presented Item 03-14, which was approved with comment.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons who offered an apology to the Reverend Kris Schondelmeyer.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Young Adult Advisory Delegate Olivia Campbell from the Presbytery of Donegal, who offered a prayer.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who moved to arrest the report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. The motion was approved. [For the remainder of the report, see p. 27.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Parsons reminded everyone that Thursday was Mission T-Shirt day at General Assembly.

CLOSING PRAYER

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Youth Advisory Delegates Nader Makar Armanious from the Presbytery of San Gabriel and Joanna Wilson from the Presbytery of North Central Iowa who offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 9:20 p.m.

Thursday, June 23, 2016, 8:30 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING VI

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Hall CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston alerted commissioners to a sheet at their tables that she invited them to fill out to share with the Co-Moderators stories of people who have given them hope. Co-Moderator Edmiston read a notice from Linda Culbertson, general presbyter of the Presbytery of The Pacific about Commissioner Karen Mizrahi, who fell and was hospitalized with injuries and would require surgery. Co-Moderator Edmiston led the assembly in prayer for Karen.

Denise Anderson, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), shared a video from the Presbytery of National Capital about racial justice and racial mindfulness.

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Melissa Davis, manager for ecumenical networking and resourcing in the Office of the General Assembly, who introduced the ecumenical guests: The Reverend Stephen H. Bils, American Baptist Churches U.S.A.; the Reverend David Guthrie, Moravian Church in America, Southern Province; the Reverend Herman Harmelink, International Council of Community Churches; the Reverend Stephen Kendall, Presbyterian Church in Canada; the Reverend Colleen Michael, Church of the Brethren; the Reverend Mark Pettis, United Church of Christ; Father Bishoy Ray, Coptic Orthodox Church in North America; the Reverend Dr. Halvard B. Thomesen, Seventh-Day Adventist Church; Chancellor Mary Jo Tully, United States and Canadian Churches Conference of Catholic Bishops; and Father Steven Voytovich, Orthodox Church in America.

Chancellor Mary Jo Tully brought greetings, and Father Steven A. Voytovich led the assembly in the convening prayer.

On behalf of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, and the commissioners and delegates of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Co-Moderator Edmiston presented the ecumenical guests with pocket prayer shawls.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Moderator George Anderson of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. Moderator Anderson presented Item 02-03, which included the amended morning docket, for approval. It was approved. (See p. 156.)

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BOP, PILP, PPC AND FOUNDATION

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Linda Lee, moderator of the Assembly Committee on the Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Corporation, Presbyterian Publishing Company, and the Presbyterian (U.S.A.) Foundation, and

Todd Wright, Vice-Moderator of the Assembly Committee on the Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Corporation, Presbyterian Publishing Company and the Presbyterian (U.S.A.) Foundation, for the committee report.

Moderator Lee and Vice-Moderator Wright reported on the work of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Moderator Lee presented Item 13-02 to confirm the reelection of Marc Lewis as president of PPC. The motion was approved. Moderator Lewis invited Marc Lewis to address the assembly.

Moderator Lee and Vice-Moderator Wright reported on the work of the Board of Pensions.

Moderator Lee and Vice-Moderator Wright reported on the work of Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Moderator Lee presented Item 13-07, to confirm the election of Jim Rissler as the president of PILP, Inc. Item 13-07 was approved. Jim Rissler addressed the assembly.

Moderator Lee and Vice-Moderator Wright reported on the work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. Moderator Lee presented Item 13-08, which was pulled off the consent agenda. The committee recommended disapproving with comment. Moderator Lee invited Greg Rousos, executive vice-president and chief operating officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to speak to the issue. Following debate, the assembly voted on the motion. Item 13-08 was disapproved with comment. [Note: Item 13-06 was removed and placed in the GANC slate.]

Moderator Lee and Vice-Moderator Wright reported on the committee's final action agenda, which included approval of Items 13-A, 13-B, 13-C, and 13-D.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC and Foundation. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, FOUNDATION

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 13-01. Not assigned.

Item 13-02. *Recommendation from the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.*

Approved. [See p. 955.]

Item 13-03. *Recommendation to Confirm Election of Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

Approved. [See p. 955.]

Item 13-04. *Churchwide Gifts Program—From the Presbyterian Church Foundation.

Approved. [See p. 956.]

Item 13-05. *Confirm the Following Named Individuals to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Directors—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Approved. [See p. 956.]

Item 13-06. *Elect Board Member for Board of Pensions—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

[Note: Item 13-06 was removed and placed in the GANC slate.]

Item 13-07. *Confirm Election of President of PILP, Inc.—From the Board of Directors, PILP.*

Approved. [See p. 957.]

Item 13-08. *Commissioners' Resolution. On Creating a Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and General Assembly Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Service.*

Disapproved with comment. [See p. 957.]

Comment: In the interest of Christ's reconciliation and the hope for closure, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) would strongly recommend that both parties (commissioners and Foundation) avail themselves of the Foundation's offer to mediate all issues in this resolution.

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 13-A. Minutes, Board of Pensions

Approved. [See p. 959.]

Item 13-B. Minutes, Foundation

Approved. [See p. 960.]

Item 13-C. Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Approved. [See p. 960.]

Item 13-D. Minutes, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

Approved. [See p. 960.]

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE: REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Mary Lou Cox, moderator, Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report on financial implications on the per capita budget of actions taken at this assembly.

Moderator Cox reported a correction for the total amount reported on Wednesday for 2018. Instead of \$262,203 the figure should be \$270,583. The total financial implications of actions approved by the assembly amount to: \$8,120 for 2016; \$251,969 for 2017, and \$260,349 for 2018, representing an increase in per capita of \$0.17 for 2017 and \$0.18 for 2018. Per capita implications of pending actions recommended by assembly committees amount to: \$0.16 for 2017 and \$0.17 for 2018. On Saturday morning, the committee is scheduled to present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the per capita budget for 2017 and 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE: REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Luis Ocasio-Torres, Vice-Moderator, Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly. Vice-Moderator Ocasio-Torres reported the total financial implications of actions taken so far by the assembly amount to \$18,074 for 2017 and \$0 for 2018. Items still under consideration by the assembly for the mission budget totaled \$285,070 for 2017; and \$251,642 for 2018.

REFUGEE MINISTRY RESPONSE UPDATE

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who introduced the speakers. Laurie Kraus, associate mission director in the Compassion, Peace and Justice Department of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; and Teresa Waggener, Assistant Stated Clerk and manager of immigration issues in the Office of the General Assembly reported.

ASSEMBLY PHOTO

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Michael Whitman, General Assembly photographer, to take a photograph of the assembled commissioners and delegates.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Moderator Mary Lou Cox and Jihyun Oh, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, to resume the arrested committee report. [For the first part of the report, see pp. 24–25.]

On behalf of the committee, Vice-Moderator Oh commended the assembly for actions taken through its concurrence with the committee recommendations in the Wednesday Consent Agenda regarding changes to the Standing Rules of the

General Assembly with Item 03-01, Item 03-06, Item 03-07, and Item 03-11; membership status in our statistics with Item 03-05; and the “standard definition of supplier diversity” for General Assembly agencies with Item 03-12.

Moderator Cox presented Item 03-09 for approval. It was approved. Moderator Cox presented Item 03-03, Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2. Item 03-03, Recommendation 1, was disapproved; Item 03-03, Recommendation 2. was disapproved with comment. Moderator Cox presented Item 03-10, Recommendations 1 and 2. Recommendation 1 was approved; Recommendation 2 was approved with comment.

Vice-Moderator Oh presented Item 03-02 with the recommendation for referral with comment. The recommendation was approved. Item 03-04 was answered by the action take on Item 03-02. Vice-Moderator Oh then presented Item 03-NB, which was approved. Vice-Moderator Oh presented Item 03-08 for approval. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Oh reported on the items on which the committee took final action (Items 03-A, 03-B, and 03-C). This concluded Report One of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures

Report One

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 03-01, Recommendation 1. *On Amending Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) Concerning Resources—From the Presbytery of Central Florida.

***Recommendation 1: Approved as amended. [See p. 159.]**

Amend the second paragraph of Recommendation 1. to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“(2) Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners’ resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred [~~and shall be as succinct as possible~~]. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures [with a commitment to equitable presentation of different perspectives.] shall consider any request that is made to distribute this resource material to the full assembly.”

***Recommendation 2: Referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly with comment. [See p. 159.]**

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acknowledges and affirms the intent of fairness behind this overture and would like to refer it for further discussion to be sure implementation ensures multiple perspectives are shared in deliberations while still retaining the discernment process of commissioners.

Item 03-02. *On Revising the Racial Ethnic Composition Component of the Session Annual Report of Church Statistics—From the Presbytery of Elizabeth.*

Referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly with comment. [See p. 161.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) supports the intended outcome of this item and refers Item 03-02 to the Committee of the Office of the General Assembly to work with the General Assembly Committee on Representation to determine the most effective and efficient way to achieve this outcome by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Item 03-03. *On Directing COGA to Bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Proposals Regarding Changes in the Moderator’s Election and Assembly Committee Meetings Process—From the Presbytery of St. Andrew.*

Recommendation 1: Disapproved. [See p. 163.]

Recommendation 2: Disapproved with comment. [See pp. 163–64.]

Comment: We recommend that COGA continue to identify, investigate, and implement strategies and processes to empower all commissioners to have maximum opportunities to prepare for committee work prior to the start of the General Assembly for which they are elected as commissioners.

Item 03-04. *On Adding the Category “Multiracial” to the Listing of Racial Classifications in the Annual Report from Congregations—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 03-02. [See p. 165.]

Item 03-05. *On Amending the Annual Statistical Report to Include a New Category “Partners in Ministry”—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Disapproved. [See p. 166.]

Item 03-06. *On Adding New Standing Rule B.5.b., Assembly Committee Moderators—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. [See p. 167.]

Item 03-07. *Amendment to Standing Rule B.3.a., Presbyterian Women—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved. [See p. 167.]

Item 03-08. *Election of Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved. [See p. 169.]

Item 03-09. *Site Selection for the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved. [See p. 169.]

Item 03-10. *Recommended Benchmarks for OGA and PMA—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation.*

Recommendation 1: Approved. [See p. 170.]

Recommendation 2: Approved with comment. [See p. 171.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) encourages the General Assembly Committee on Representation to continue to work closely with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to meet the benchmarks as stated throughout the six-year review period.

Item 03-11. *On Amending Standing Rules B.4. and F.5.d. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

Disapproved. [See p. 174.]

Item 03-12. *Approve A Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity.

Approved. [See p. 175.]

Item 03-13. *Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for General Assembly Per Capita Budgets 2016–2018*

[Note: To be voted on Saturday.] [See p. 179.]

Item 03-14. *Approve PC(USA) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Approved with comment. [See p. 181.]

Comment: We must be accountable as the body of Christ, for that which is done in our name. The creation and maintenance of a safe, supportive, non-abusive environment for all of our participants in all that we do must be and will be priority for all Presbyterians as we work to be God’s people and do God’s work. We do this out of compassion for Kris Schondelmeyer and all other victims who have suffered abuse in the Presbyterian church. We further applaud Kris and his family for their courage, which has moved us to address this imperative subject.

Item 03-NB Approved. [See p. 188.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Office of the General Assembly to form a task force made up of representatives from mid councils and local governing bodies to work with congregations on implementing child/youth/vulnerable adults protection policies and appropriate responses.

[Financial Implication: Per Capita—\$9,234 (2017); \$9,234 (2018)]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 03-A. Minutes, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Approved with comment. [See p. 188.]

Comment: Exceptions: 2015 minutes out of numerical order and unsigned.

Item 03-B. Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society.

Approved with comment. [See p. 189.]

Comment: No exceptions.

Item 03-C. Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Approved with comment. [See p. 189.]

Comment: With exceptions.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MID COUNCILS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Todd Freeman, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils. Moderator Freeman presented Item 05-05 with a motion to approve the committee's alternate resolution. Co-Moderator Anderson arrested the report for the Order of the Day: Worship. For the remainder of the report, see p. 32.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Associate Stated Clerk Joyce Lieberman reminded the assembly that daily *General Assembly News* was available at www.pcusa.org.

SERVICE OF DAILY WORSHIP

The Reverend Dr. Alice Ridgill, pastor, New Faith Presbyterian Church, West Greenwood, South Carolina, preached on the topic, "Difference Makers."

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 10:59 a.m.

Thursday, June 23, 2016, 1:37 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING VII

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Adan Mariena of the Presbytery of Philadelphia who offered prayers for gun violence victims in his community.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Elona Street-Stewart, executive of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, who recognized local tribes and groups of native people, spoke on the relevancy of the Confession of Belhar and acts of reconciliation for Native Americans, and led the assembly in prayer.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized General Assembly Trackers Jim Collie, Kathy Lueckert, and Kerry Clements who presented a Tracker shirt to Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons. Collie invited the assembly backstage staff to join them onstage, and he introduced Volunteer Platform Manager Conrad Rocha who presented Stated Clerk Parsons with a Gradye Parsons bobblehead on behalf of the assembly backstage volunteers.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Cheni Khonje, Vice-Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who moved Item 02-03, the docket as amended, allowing the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils to continue its report before the assembly takes up the committee reports previously scheduled during this session. Item 02-03 was approved as amended. (See p. 156.)

COMMISSIONING OF NEW MISSIONARIES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized PMA Interim Executive Director Tony De La Rosa for the commissioning of new missionaries. Presbyterian World Mission staff—Hunter Farrell, director of World Mission; Lydia Kim, young adult volunteer program associate for administration; Rachel Yates, associate director of program; Debra Braaksma, Africa area coordinator; and Amgad Beblawi, Middle East and Europe area coordinator—provided context for the commissioning and introduced a short video. The Reverend Dr. Kamal Youssef Yacoub, from the Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile, and the Reverend Douglas Chipofya, from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian/Livingstonia Synod, assisted with the commissioning of the new missionaries.

MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR SYNGMAN RHEE
MODERATOR OF THE 212TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Dean Thompson, president emeritus of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, who presented the memorial moment to celebrate the life of Syngman Rhee, Moderator of the 212th General Assembly (2000).

In 1948, when Syngman Rhee was kicked out of high school in the capital city of Pyongyang, North Korea, for his membership in a Christian minister's family, he was mercifully taken into the Sung Wha Methodist Seminary. At the seminary, he and 200 other outcasts were trained at a college level until late 1950. There, his major professor was a saint named Tae Sun Park.

In September 1950, Syngman's parish minister father, the Reverend Tae Suck Rhee, age 49, was martyred, while a prisoner, by the North Korean Communist regime. Before the United Nations troops came northward, Syngman's father and several other church leaders were shot and then buried in a common grave dug into an athletic field. One prisoner, who had miraculously survived those executions, led Syngman and his brother and their mother to the mass grave, where they retrieved Rev. Rhee's body, then arranged for a Christian funeral and burial. When the Chinese troops joined the war and arrived in early December 1950, Syngman's fearful mother, Song Hee Kim, a teacher in a Christian mission school, made the critical and agonizing decision to send her two sons on a life-saving trek southward toward Seoul with hundreds of other desperate refugees, many of whom died on the one-month walk in freezing weather to the tip of South Korea. Song Hee's last words to her sons foretold the unspeakable losses yet to come, for they would never see their mother again. "Remember to pray to God wherever you go, and we will see each other in our prayers," she promised them.

In January 1951, Syngman, age 19, and his brother, Syng Kyu Rhee, age 17, joined the South Korean Marines with whom they served as mortal combatants on the front lines of the Korean War. It was the only means of survival available to them. Because the two were from one family, Syngman was able to secure a discharge for his younger brother in 1953. While Syngman sent Syng Kyu to college, he remained with the South Korean Marines until he was discharged in 1955. Syng Kyu later became a prominent South Korean business leader and a generous supporter of orphanages.

Tae Sun Park, Syngman Rhee's revered professor at the Sung Wha Methodist Seminary, had also fled for his life from North Korea to South Korea. Thereafter, he made his way to the Boston University School of Theology where he earned his doctorate. During his graduate studies, Park was asked to speak at a church camp in the Boston area. Park used his speech to implore someone, anyone in the audience, to help him find a scholarship for one of his former students in North Korea, Syngman Rhee, then a refugee in South Korea. Miraculously, a person in that audience stepped forward: Dr. Charles Culpepper, a Methodist pastor from Elkins, West Virginia. Culpepper promised, then and there, that he personally could and would direct Park to a scholarship at Davis and Elkins College. That scholarship would be awarded if Syngman could name a U.S. citizen sponsor. Lieutenant Gunner Hansen, a Christian Marine officer in Quantico, Virginia, signed on as Syngman's sponsor; for in 1953–1954, Hansen and Rhee had become deeply respectful colleagues as they were trained together at the Quantico Marine Corps Base.

Surviving the bloody Korean War, Syngman journeyed from Seoul to Seattle, Washington; then from Seattle to Elkins for ten days on a Greyhound bus. After speaking at a Wednesday evening service at a Presbyterian church in Seattle, Syngman was provided his bus fare and arranged lodging with caring families along the way.

In January 1956, with a tuition scholarship in hand, but otherwise without sufficient financial resources, Syngman dedicated himself to his studies with intense determination at Davis and Elkins, a Presbyterian college nestled in the mountains of Appalachia. There, he felt called to follow in his courageous father's footsteps by studying for the gospel ministry. Through the advocacy and financial support of George H. Vick and Agnes Preston of First Presbyterian Church,

Charleston, West Virginia, Syngman was enabled to complete his coming years at Davis and Elkins, and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

The rest is history. Syngman graduated with honors from Louisville Seminary in 1960, and was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. He was married to Haesun Lee, a medical doctor and beloved friend from Korea, whose father, Chang Chun Lee, and mother, Changil Kim, had been educated together with Syngman's father at Union Christian College, Pyongyang, and had remained close friends across the years. (Chang Chun Lee was a Presbyterian elder, a supporter of Christian missionaries, and an owner of lumber and canning factories.) For many years, Agnes Preston served as a mother figure for Syngman and Haesun, and a grandmother figure for their children, Anna, Peter, and Mina. Syngman had pastorates in two American Presbyterian congregations in Kentucky. He was a campus minister at the University of Louisville, where he served as the first faculty advisor for the Black Student Union, was a brave participant in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, and marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He earned a master's degree from Yale University Divinity School, and a doctorate in Sociology of Religion from Chicago Theological Seminary. Syngman served the Presbyterian General Assembly staff for World Mission for twenty-five years (1973–1998). He was president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (1992–1993); Moderator of the 212th General Assembly (2000) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2000–2001); and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Evangelism and Mission, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, Virginia (1998–2008). Haesun Rhee also served at Union Seminary as director of the Carl G. Howie Center for Science, Art, and Theology (1998–2007). Then, for another decade, Syngman was the director of Union's Asian American Ministry and Mission Center. He also dedicated his saintly life to the rebuilding of churches in North Korea, and the dream of reconciliation between North and South Korea, still painfully disunited and torn by hostility, suspicion, and conflict.

From his endangered teenage years in Korea, to the occasion of his new life in the great company of heaven, made possible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Syngman's own remarkable life work has blessed our human race as a wonderful parable of the Spirit's leading, comforting, energizing, uniting, and prophetic power in our midst. He literally poured himself out across this small spaceship earth as an exemplary and trustworthy "servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1–2). Infused with inspiring mystical sensitivity, Syngman's style of leadership was a marvelous blending of competence, confidence, and humility. Indeed, he carried his deserved laurels as self-effacingly as any outstanding leader I have ever known. As a revered pastor, chaplain, teacher, preacher, administrator, and international church leader, Dr. Rhee has glorified God and served church, world, and neighbor as a preeminent role model of Christian statesmanship.

Today, by the grace of God, we stand on Syngman's shoulders. We, all of us, are his debtors.

INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES PRESENTATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Tony De La Rosa, who spoke about intercultural ministries, and recognized Rhshell Hunter, director of racial ethnic/women's ministries, for a short video presentation.

MOTION TO LIMIT DEBATE

Commissioners approved a motion to limit comments and debate to one minute (60 seconds).

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MID COUNCILS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Moderator Todd Freeman and Vice-Moderator Karen Sapio of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils to continue the committee's report. (For the first part of the report, see p. 30.)

Moderator Freeman presented Item 05-05, which was approved with an alternate resolution.

Vice-Moderator Sapio presented Item 05-06, which was disapproved.

Vice-Moderator Sapio presented Item 05-10 as amended with comment. Commissioners approved an amendment to the item as presented by the committee. Commissioners also passed a motion restoring voting time to twenty seconds with electronic devices with a recount only if the vote is within twenty votes. After additional discussion from the floor, commissioners voted to disapprove Item 05-10 as amended in plenary. After some debate, the assembly reconsidered Item 05-10 as presented by the committee, and it was approved with amendment and with comment.

Vice-Moderator Sapio presented Item 05-09 as amended with comment. She made an immediate motion to amend the item to reinsert [sexual misconduct policy and a] in the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106. The motion was approved. Item 05-09 was then approved as amended.

Moderator Freeman presented Item 05-11, which was approved as amended with comment.

Vice-Moderator Sapio presented Item 05-08 as amended with comment, which was approved. Vice-Moderator Sapio then presented Item 05-07, to be answered with the action taken on Item 05-08. It was approved.

Moderator Freeman presented Item 05-01. A minority report was moved. The main motion was perfected. The substitute motion (minority report) was amended and perfected. Commissioners voted against making the substitute motion the main motion. The main motion, to approve Item 05-01 with comment, was approved.

Moderator Freeman presented Item 05-15, to be answered with the action on Item 05-01. It was approved. Moderator Freeman then presented Item 05-12 for approval with comment, which was approved.

Vice-Moderator Sapio referred to Item 05-14, which was approved as part of the Wednesday Consent Agenda. She offered prayers to celebrate the ministry of the now dissolved Presbytery of Central Washington.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Mid Councils

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 05-01. On Rescinding the Actions of the 221st General Assembly (2014) That Directed the Establishment of a New Configuration of Synod Boundaries (Item 05-04)—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

Approved with comment. [See p. 279.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) would like to recommend to synods that they continue conversation and collaboration of ministry and mission between and among synods. This includes encouraging synods to offer assistance to struggling synods, including the possibility of changing boundaries to increase the vitality and viability of synods. Further, the assembly urges synods to undertake an intentional system of review and self-study and to report to General Assembly on a biannual basis.

***Item 05-02. On Restoring the Boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific to Its Status Prior to the 2012 Revisions— from the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii.**

Approve as amended. [See p. 281.]

Amend the third paragraph as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of the Pacific is the corporate expression of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consisting of all the churches and ~~[ministers of the Word and Sacrament]~~ [teaching elders] within the County of Los Angeles in the State of California lying southerly and westerly of the following described line: commencing at the intersection of the Pacific Ocean and Mulholland Highway; thence northerly and easterly along Mulholland Highway to its intersection with Mulholland Drive; thence easterly along Mulholland Drive (including the Bel Air Presbyterian Church) to the Hollywood Freeway; thence southeasterly along the Hollywood Freeway to Franklin Avenue; thence easterly along Franklin Avenue to Western Avenue; thence southerly along Western Avenue to Sunset Boulevard; thence easterly along Sunset Boulevard to Fountain Avenue; thence easterly along Fountain Avenue to Hyperion Avenue; thence northerly along Hyperion Avenue to Rowena Avenue; thence southeasterly along Rowena Avenue to Fletcher Drive; thence northeasterly along Fletcher Drive to the Southern Pacific Railroad; thence southerly along the Southern Pacific Railroad to its intersection with Alhambra Avenue; thence easterly along Alhambra Avenue to the Los Angeles River; thence southerly along the Los Angeles River to the city limits of Vernon; thence along the westerly city limits of Vernon, Huntington Park, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, and Long Beach to the Pacific Ocean; also all the churches and ~~[ministers of the Word and Sacrament]~~ [teaching elders] within the State of Hawaii and the Midway Island Group. Churches and ~~[ministers of the Word and Sacrament]~~ [teaching elders] who are members of the Hanmi Presbytery are excepted.”¹”

Item 05-03. Item 05-03 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 05-04. Item 05-04 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 05-05. On Amending G-3.0106 Requiring All Councils to Adopt a Dependent Care Policy—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

Approved an alternate resolution. [See p. 282.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop resources for councils of all levels to provide for dependent-care policies.

Item 05-06. On Developing a National Child Protection Policy Model—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

Disapproved. [See p. 285.]

Item 05-07. On Amending the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c Concerning Nongeographic Presbyteries—From the Eastern Korean Presbytery.

Answered by the action taken on Item 05-08. [See p. 286.]

Item 05-08. On Replacing the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c with New Text—From the Eastern Korean Presbytery.

Approved as amended with comment. [See p. 288.]

Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Authoritative interpretation of G-3.0301:

“~~“ [Presbyteries, including nongeographic presbyteries,]~~ [No presbytery] shall ~~[not]~~ start ministries within the geographic bounds of other presbyteries and synods without the approval of those councils.”

Comment: The General Assembly invites and encourages all Korean-speaking congregations located in the six western synods (Alaska-Northwest, the Pacific, Southern California and Hawaii, the Southwest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sun) to remain in contact with the synod in which they are physically located in order to have voice in the intentional consideration of a Korean-language presbytery in the western United States called for in Item 05-11, Recommendation 3.

Item 05-09. A Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Approve as amended with comment. [See p. 290.]

Amend the third paragraph as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy. ~~[In addition, all councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy. These two policies shall be two different policies with differentiated intents. The child and youth protection policy is directed specifically for working with and interactions involving children and youth within the church or in church-sponsored activities, while the sexual misconduct policy is directed toward proactively preventing and responding to sexual misconduct involving all people of all ages within the church and in church-sponsored activities.]”~~

Comment: The General Assembly notes that two separate policies are intended by this sentence, with different intents. The child and youth protection policy is intended to address interactions involving children and youth within the church or in church-sponsored activities. The sexual misconduct policy is directed toward proactively preventing and responding to sexual misconduct involving all people of all ages within the church and in church-sponsored activities.

Item 05-10. A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Approved as amended with comment. [See p. 292.]

Amend Recommendations 1. and 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~[1. Urge all presbyteries and congregations to create a family leave policy that each member congregation can adopt, which includes at a minimum six weeks paid leave and an additional six weeks unpaid leave during a twelve-month period for new mothers and fathers for the birth or adoption of or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.]~~

“~~[2. Direct the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian~~

~~Publishing Corporation) to improve their family leave policies by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to include at a minimum six weeks paid leave and an additional six weeks unpaid leave during a twelve-month period for eligible (individuals employed full-time for twelve months before taking the leave) new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.]~~

“[Urge all presbyteries, synods, and sessions to evaluate their leave policies for new mothers and fathers for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.]”

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) urges the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.

Item 05-11. The Task Force for Korean-Speaking Congregations.

Approved as amended with comment. [See p. 294.]

Amend Recommendations 1. and 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“1. Direct the [Presbyterian Mission Agency or the] Office of the General Assembly to create a [permanent] staff position, working in coordination with the Office of Mid Council Ministries [and the Presbyterian Mission Agency], for the purposes of supporting and nurturing healthy, connectional Korean-language congregations and presbyteries and second-generation Korean congregations, and request that any committee or task force created by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to study the structure of the General Assembly agencies consider continuing such a position in any recommendations it makes.”~~

~~“3. [Direct any administrative commission, committee, or task force created by the 222nd General Assembly (2016)] to consider reorganization of synod boundaries to include in its work consideration of whether a nongeographic, Korean-language presbytery can be created in the western United States,] [Ask synods of the west (Alaska-Northwest, the Pacific, Southern California and Hawaii, the Southwest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sun) to intentionally consider the viability of creating a new Korean, nongeographic presbytery in the western United States,] consistent with the concerns addressed in this report regarding healthy relationships between Korean-language and geographic presbyteries and the constitutional protection of full representation of men and women in the leadership of such a presbytery and the congregations therein.”~~

Comment (Comment to Overture): The 216th General Assembly (2016) strongly advises that the western synods consider forming a nongeographic Korean presbytery.

Comment on Rationale to Overture: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000089> The rationale that accompanies this report implies that the only issues for ministry to LGBTQ persons in Korean-speaking congregations are related to ordination and marriage. This implication is incorrect. The General Assembly reminds all Presbyterians and congregations of the long-standing advocacy of the PC(USA) for the civil rights and personal safety of LGBTQ persons.

Item 05-12. Request for Constitutional Interpretation of Resolving Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Approved with comment. [See p. 298.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recognizes the value of making room for all people at the table of decision-making in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We urge councils, at all levels, to actively consider ways to involve, in the whole life of the church, those previously left out from the table. This includes, but is not limited to, young adults and those involved in new worshiping communities. We further recommend to the Synod of the Northeast to continue their productive conversations regarding this issue and bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a tangible recommendation.

*Item 05-13. Synod Report Regarding Synod Boundaries.

Answered by the action taken on Item 05-01. [See p. 300.]

*Item 05-14. On Merging the Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

Approved. [See p. 304.]

Item 05-15. On Requesting Exemption on Any Action the Assembly Might Take to Reduce the Number of Synods—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

Answered by the action taken on Item 05-01. [See p. 305.]

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 05-A. Review of Synod Minutes.

Approved by the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils with comment and with exception. [See p. 306.]

Comment and Exception:

Lakes and Prairies—Comment. 2015 Auditor report does not have auditor’s signature.

Mid America—Comment. 2014, no report of the previous review of minutes.

Sun—Comment. 2014, no report of the previous review of minutes.

Trinity—Exceptions, no sexual misconduct policy. No insurance policies.

Lincoln Trails—Comment. It is hard to tell what the crossed out pages mean.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, presented a motion to hear two short presentations and then reconvene at 7 p.m.

BIG TENT 2017

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons and Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who announced that the fifth Big Tent gathering will be held on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, July 6–8, 2017.

SPIRIT OF GA VIDEO

Co-Moderator Anderson introduced the Spirit of GA video on the Confession of 1967 and the Confession of Belhar.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Parsons for several announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Don Choi, missionary advisory delegate serving at Duta Wacana Christian University in Indonesia, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 5:17 p.m.

Thursday, June 23, 2016, 7:03 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING VIII

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Samson Tso from the Presbytery of New York City who shared his story and opened the assembly with prayer.

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized five advisory delegates and commissioners who had inspired stories of hope.

COGA PRESENTATION TO THE STATED CLERK

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo and other members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly for a special presentation honoring Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons and his family. Garcia-Arroyo introduced Moderator Margaret Elliott and Vice-Moderator Jim Wilson, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, who presented Stated Clerk Parsons a Gradye Parsons Word Cloud. Stated Clerk Parsons addressed the assembly. Eileen Lindner, member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, reported that the committee has worked with the Presbyterian Historical Society to develop a Stated Clerk Square at the Presbyterian Historical Society to commemorate our Stated Clerks. Barbara Gaddis, incoming moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, led the assembly in prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Moderator George Anderson of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. Moderator Anderson presented the docket as amended, Item 02-03. Tonight, the Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, and the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues will report. The assembly will recess no later than 11:30 p.m. Tomorrow morning, after the Stated Clerk election and installation, the assembly will hear from the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry.

Item 02-03 as amended was approved. (See p. 156.)

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Steve Aeschbacher, moderator of the Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, and Cynthia Jarvis, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on the Way Forward to make their committee's report.

Moderator Aeschbacher presented Item 04-NB. Item 04-NB was approved. He then presented Item 04-07, which was approved with an alternate resolution. Moderator Aeschbacher presented Items 04-08 and 04-11 to be answered with the action of Item 04-07. Items 04-08 and 04-11 were approved to answer both with the action taken on Item 04-07.

Moderator Aeschbacher presented Items 04-01, 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-09, 04-10, and 04-13 as a block action with the committee recommendation to disapprove Item 04-01 with comment and to answer Items 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-09, 04-10, and 04-13 with the action taken on Item 04-01. The assembly disapproved Item 04-01 with comment and approved answering Items 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-09, 04-10, and 04-13 with the action taken on Item 04-01.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on the Way Forward. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on "The Way Forward"

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 04-01. *On Amending G-3.0503 and G-6.04 Regarding Meetings of the General Assembly and Amending the Constitution—From the Presbytery of Foothills.*

Disapproved with comment. [See p. 211.]

[Comment: We recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) disapprove Items 04-01, 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-09, 04-10, and 04-13 with comment:]

1. The committee thanks the presbyteries who submitted and concurred with these overtures for opening the conversation and calls on future General Assemblies to continue to explore ways of better engaging the whole church in important decisions.

2. The General Assembly calls upon the whole church to do the following:

a. Recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to advocate with all of our voice for, in the words of Moderator Edmiston to the Assembly Committee on the

Way Forward, “that which breaks God’s heart in our neighborhoods” and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor, the marginalized, and the excluded in our communities.

b. Call on our congregations to recommit to a biblical witness focused on values upon which the Presbytery of Foothills based their series of overtures of unity, community, diversity, and transformation, and reaffirm our foundational commitment to social justice from the historical documents of the church, including the *Book of Confessions* and existing social witness policy.

c. Call on our presbyteries and synods to place these values at the center of their concerns and work together within their unique ministry contexts.

d. Ask the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to consider focusing time during future General Assemblies for creating opportunities for dreaming an ongoing way forward and to work in consultation with the committees on local arrangements to engage all of the commissioners, delegates, and observers in acts of service to and with communities at risk.

e. Commend the OGA for its commitment to ensure that the voices of peoples long silenced, from within our church and outside of it (including interfaith voices), are invited to share with and challenge it and encourages congregations, mid councils, and future assemblies to do the same.

By disapproving these overtures with comment we can help move toward a more faithful, more just, and more hopeful vision of who we are as Christ’s church. We have an opportunity to bring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) into these important conversations through invitations, through education, through prayerful consideration, and not through constitutional changes.

Item 04-02. *On Amending Standing Rule B.2.b.to Add the Category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates”—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 216.]

Item 04-03. *On Amending G-6.04e.to Require a Two-Thirds Majority Vote to Amend the Constitution—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 217.]

Item 04-04. *On Adding G-3.0105c. to Permit a Presbytery to Abstain on Constitutional Changes—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 220.]

Item 04-05. *On Adding a New Standing Rule L.2. Identifying the Right of Presbyteries and Synods to Submit Overtures Changing the Standing Rules—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 221.]

Item 04-06. *On Amending G-3.05 On the Review of the Manual of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 223.]

Item 04-07. *On Merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a Single Entity—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.*

In response to Item 04-07, the assembly approved the following resolution: [See p. 224.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), together with the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), name a Way Forward Commission to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA). That vision shall take into account the ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), but shall not be bound by the current configuration of those ministries, except where mandated by the church’s Constitution. The mandate of the commission is to en-

gage/contract a qualified, examination team that may include some or all of the All Agency Review team, with the requisite skills and abilities to assess institutional performance, both internally among the agencies and externally as they interface with the congregations. This examination team is charged with conducting a comprehensive, detailed analysis that will provide clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements to the commission for implementation by the agencies. The commission shall further describe and implement a General-Assembly level staffing pattern that will accomplish its vision. The commission shall be guided in its development and articulation of this vision and structure by Reformed ecclesiology as expressed in our Constitution.

In the discharge of its responsibilities, the commission shall:

1. Integrate the recommendations provided by the All Agency Review Committee, the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.

a. All recommendations should be reviewed by the commission to determine which should be implemented by the appropriate agencies.

b. The commission will monitor implementation across the agencies

2. Visit with and explore

a. the best practices of other national church bodies,

b. the best practices of corporations and nonprofits, as deemed helpful.

3. Consult with

a. seminary faculty and presidents,

b. presbytery and synod leaders.

4. Explore other resources they deem helpful and prudent

And shall be empowered to

1. take such administrative actions in both OGA and PMA as may move the General Assembly staff in the direction of its vision;

2. recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) such changes in Standing Rules as may move the church in the direction of its vision;

3. recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) any amendments to the *Book of Order* as may move the church in the direction of its vision.

4. explore the best way for Shared Services to serve these agencies.

The commission shall be comprised of no more than twelve voting members (with a quorum to be a simple majority of seven) at least two of whom should be members of the 2016 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, with every effort made to include an advisory delegate from that committee. The commission membership will include a representative from both the PMA Review Committee and the OGA Review Committee, a representative from both the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and at least one mid council staff person.

We agree with the PMA Review Committee that the commission consist of the following:

1. The commission shall be made up of ruling and teaching elders with broad geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, a total of at most twelve commissioners.

2. The PMA and OGA will each appoint a staff person to serve as staff support for the commission.

3. The commission's work will be informed by other churchwide conversations on the future of the church and its structure.

4. The assembly will allocate sufficient resources so that this commission can meet regularly and consult with other PC(USA) constituents, as well as others who could provide insight into the process. There should be at least two face-to-face meetings in one year and with as many electronic meetings as deemed necessary.

5. Recommendations for any missional and structural changes will be brought to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in compliance with all Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

Rationale

The business before this committee consistently called for study of our current structure, expressed concern for the culture and administration of the PMA and OGA bodies, and posited a hope for change that will make us a more efficient, inclusive, culturally sensitive, and visionary denomination.

We appreciate the substantial work of the PMA and OGA review committees and those who developed and concurred with the amendments that have been brought to our committee. As we pursued responses to what was proposed, we recognized that it would be better to first identify the purposes and immediate foci that will govern our next steps and then address issues of structure and staffing.

We have limited the size of the commission in response to studies, and in consideration of our own process, which indicate that the decision-making abilities of committees is diminished as size increases. The inclusion of a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is a direct response to the insightful, articulate input our committee has received from its YAAD participants. We believe their involvement is an important component in achieving greater inclusivity and broadened perspective as we make our way forward.

Item 04-08. *On Authorizing the Hiring of a Consultant to Assess the Relationship of OGA and PMA and the Need for Their Continued Existence as Two Separate Entities—From the Presbytery of St. Andrew.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-07. [See p. 232.]

Item 04-09. *On Creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew the Practice of Our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century—From the Presbytery of Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 235.]

Item 04-10. *On Amending Book of Order G-6.04e and Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) to Require Two-Thirds Vote on Constitutional Changes—From the Presbytery de Cristo.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 236.]

Item 04-11. *Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-07. [See p. 237.]

Item 04-12. *Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.

*Recommendation 1. Approved. [See p. 249.]

*Recommendation 2. Approved. [See p. 249.]

*Recommendation 3. Approved. [See p. 249.]

*Recommendation 4. Approved. [See p. 250.]

Item 04-13. *On Amending Book of Order, G-6.04e, Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 04-01. [See p. 256.]

Item 04-New Business. *2020 Vision Team.*

Approved. [See p. 257.]

The Assembly Committee on the Way Forward recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Co-Moderators, in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), to name a “2020 Vision Team” of fifteen people to develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed. The process of developing such a guiding statement will help us to name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future.

1. The committee shall be made up of the following:

- a. **At least six teaching elders and at least six ruling elders.**
 - b. **The following demographic traits should be considered when naming members of the committee: gender identity; geographic location; inclusion of people under the age of forty (with special attention paid to young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) serving on the Assembly Committee on “The Way Forward” of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)); racial ethnic minorities; those engaged in both parish and validated ministries; theological diversity (people representative of all the “clusters” identified in “When We Gather at the Table”).**
 - c. **The following skill sets should be considered when naming members of the committee: strategic planning, visioning, experience on administrative commissions.**
 - d. **The Co-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall serve as additional, ex officio, members of this committee.**
2. **The committee shall build upon the work begun in “When We Gather at the Table” as well as Moderator Heath Rada’s report made to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).**
 3. **The committee should conduct targeted listening exercises with various constituencies throughout the PC(USA) in an effort to discern where the Spirit is leading the church in the future. These may include, but are not limited to, congregations, presbyteries, synods, and seminaries. Such conversations should center on the calling of the church (*Book of Order*, F-1.03) as well as the vision these constituencies have of how God is calling them to respond to “what breaks God’s heart” in their communities.**
 4. **The committee should also look outside the walls of the church to seek best practices and resources for being relevant to the changing landscapes of local, national, and international communities.**
 5. **The committee will develop recommendations that shall be the only business for the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward to review at the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The only exception would be overtures that respond directly to any reports from the 2020 Vision Team. The intention is that there will be a new vision for the denomination by the 224th General Assembly (2020).**
 6. **The assembly shall allocate sufficient resources for this committee to effectively accomplish its work.**

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Eileen Best, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, and Luis Ocasio-Torres, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination.

Moderator Best presented Item 10-11, which was approved. Moderator Best noted that the financial implications of Item 10-11 will add \$52,000 to the 2017 Mission Budget and \$52,000 to the 2018 Mission Budget.

Moderator Best presented Item 10-10, Recommendation 1, which was approved. He then presented Item 10-10, Recommendation 2, which was approved with amendment.

Moderator Best yielded the microphone to Vice-Moderator Luis Ocasio-Torres of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination. Vice-Moderator Luis Ocasio-Torres presented Item 10-08, which was approved. He then presented Item 10-16, which was disapproved. Vice-Moderator Ocasio-Torres yielded the microphone back to Moderator Best.

Moderator Best presented Item 10-13. Item 10-13 was approved with amendment. Moderator Best then presented Item 10-03. Item 10-03 was approved with amendment and with comment. Moderator Best then reported on the committee final actions (Item 10A through Item 10D).

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination

Report One

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign, \$.

I. Plenary Action

**Item 10-01. On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery from the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business—From the Presbytery of Newark.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 567.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Newark respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

“1. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be aware of the presence of slavery [and forced labor] in international chains of commerce.

“2. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to inquire of each vendor with which they do business (a) that the vendor [ascertain and/or] disclose the nature and extent of slavery [and forced labor] in its supply chains, (b) that the vendor disclose the programs and strategies that it has adopted to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from its supply chains, and (c) that the vendor provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the vendor’s representations.

“3. Encourage the ministries and agencies that invest in companies to inquire of each company in which they make an investment (a) that the company [ascertain and/or] disclose the nature and extent of slavery [and forced labor] in its supply chains, (b) that the company disclose the programs and strategies that it has adopted to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from its supply chains, and (c) that the company provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the company’s representations.

“4. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do business with and make investments in those companies that (a) have a rigorous program intended to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from their supply chains and (b) disclose those reports and other information that enable the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and such other persons as may be interested, to understand and evaluate the program that is intended to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from the company’s supply chains.”

Item 10-02. Item 10-02 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 10-03. On Taking Specific Action to Address the Worsening Plight of the African American Male—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh.

Approved as amended with comment. [See p. 570.]

1. Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Take specific action, not just in word, but also in deed, to address and improve the worsening plight of the African American male in [any of the] five specified cities as a pilot initiative pointing toward future and further nationwide intervention. Micah 6:8, with its powerful words to ‘Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly [with your God],’ calls us to action and not only proclamation. The following are the five cities where the plight of the African American male is especially egregious, including one where a future General Assembly will be held, and are the ones designated for specific action:

- “• Baltimore, Maryland [site of the 224th General Assembly (2020)]
- “• Charlotte, North Carolina
- “• Cleveland, Ohio
- “• New York, New York
- “• Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

“Specific actions to be taken include:

“~~[f.] [a.]~~ Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to advocate for policies at the local and state levels that will change the structures that contribute to the demise of the black male;

“~~[a.] [b.]~~ [Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), mid councils, and congregations to develop] [P][p]rograms that address recidivism

“~~[b.] [c.]~~[Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to develop] [P][p]rograms that address and engage local congregational and community members that speak the language of and to African American males aged 6–25 years;

“~~[e.] [d.]~~[Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to develop] [P][p]rograms that empower African American males to develop hireable skills so that all of the beloved community benefits;

“~~[d.] [c.]~~[Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to collaborate with] [Programs of partnership between the congregations, presbyteries, and synods of the] PC(USA) [with] established agencies/groups such as [National Black Presbyterian Caucus,] My Brother’s Keeper, 100 Black Men of America, Amachi, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Boy Scouts of America: Scoutreach (an urban emphasis program), and the Open Table;

“~~[e.] [f.]~~ Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to provide resources for the establishment and support of programs ~~[within their bounds]~~ that provide for prevention and rehabilitation in the areas of substance abuse and job placement and security;

“g. Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to celebrate particular black males who are role models and members of extended families for the contributions to the whole society.”

2. Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. ~~[Access the Hawkins Buchanan Fund for Racial Justice for a portion, if not all, of the five million dollars anticipated to be necessary to support this overture.] [Request that congregations and mid councils join in this ministry by offering the funding received by the congregations in the Peace & Global Witness offering to fund this initiative.~~

“[3. Encourage presbyteries to partner with concurring presbyteries by participating in a one-time special offering challenging each presbytery to raise at least \$30,000 to address the worsening plight of the African American male.

“[4. Establish a ministry partnership fund with the Presbyterian Foundation to be administered by the five pilot presbyteries.

“[5. Partner with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) in its public violence disaster responses when those community events are rooted in the plight of African American males.]”

Comment: This concern prevails in the U.S.A. beyond the African American communities and applies to Hispanic, Native American, and all poor communities.

*Item 10-04. *Manual of Operations Changes—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Approved. [See p. 575.]

*Item 10-05. *Rescind 1990 “General Assembly Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures” and Replace with “Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy.”*

Approved. [See p. 578.]

*Item 10-06. *Organization for Mission Amendments.*

Approved. [See p. 589.]

*Item 10-07. *Proposed Changes and Updates to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.*

Approved. [See p. 591.]

Item 10-08. *Report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force.*

Recommendations 1–4, Approved. [See p. 603.]

Item 10-09. *“Empowered & Hopeful”—Women of Color Consultation Report.

Approved. [See p. 611.]

Item 10-10. *Living Missionally Recommendation—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*

Recommendation 1. Approved. [See p. 613.]

Recommendation 2. Approved as amended. [See p. 613.]

Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“[2. Release the Presbyterian Mission Agency from the directives ‘to develop tangible metrics to determine success and impact,’ and ‘identify strategies for deeper engagement.’] [Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to define ‘missional,’ educate the church, identify strategies for deeper engagement, and develop tangible metrics to determine success and impact of living missionally within the context of the goals of the new Mission Work Plan.]”~~

Item 10-11. *A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

Approved. [See p. 614.]

[Financial Implication: Presbyterian Mission Agency—\$52,000 (2017), \$52,000 (2018)]

Item 10-12. *A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed via Third Party Contractors—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

Approved. [See p. 615.]

Item 10-13. *On Achieving a 5:1 Ratio Between the Highest-Paid and Lowest-Paid Employees of PMA—From the Presbytery of Newton.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 617.]

Amend the recommendation as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Newton overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to establish the goal of achieving, in a reasonable period of time, a 5:1 [salary] ratio between the highest-paid and lowest-paid employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), beginning with new PMA positions, understanding this to be a partial return to earlier policy and a practical embodiment of missional solidarity.”

Item 10-14. *2017–2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Work Plan.

Approved. [See p. 621.]

Item 10-15. *Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation A.1.]

Approved. [See p. 623.]

Item 10-15. *Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation A.2.]

Approved. [See p. 624.]

Item 10-15. *Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency. [Recommendation A.3.]

To be acted upon Saturday. [See p. 624.]

***Item 10-15. *Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.* [Recommendation B.]**

Approved. [See p. 625.]

***Item 10-15. *Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.* [Recommendation C.1.]**

Approved. [See p. 625.]

***Item 10-15. *Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.* [Recommendation C.2.]**

Approved. [See p. 626.]

Item 10-16. *Commissioners' Resolution. To Withdraw the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).*

Disapproved. [See p. 626.]

10-NB. *OGA to Review the Guidelines for Reviewing the Minutes.

Approved. [See p. 629.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the Office of the General Assembly review the guidelines for reviewing the minutes, as they had not been updated since the 1990s. The guidelines should reflect the computerized nature of the minutes being reviewed.

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

[The items listed below were acted upon and approved by the assembly committee. No further action is needed and is here for information only.]

Item 10-A. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Women of Faith Awards.*

Approved. [See p. 629.]

Item 10-B. Minutes, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation

Approved with comment. [See p. 631.]

Comment: From the electronic versions, it was not possible to determine whether three conditions were met: (1) was there a calendar year submission, (2) were they submitted to General Assembly on the first day, and (3) were the minutes deposited with the Department of History? Perhaps the minutes protocol should additionally include a certification block that verifies these three conditions were met.

Additionally, Subcommittee member, Kenneth Whitehurst, requested his comments from his review of the Minutes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board's Executive Committee be added to these considerations:

1. Called Meeting Full Record June 4, 2015—10:00 a.m. EDT—Teleconference: No differentiation among who are members, who is staff, who is visitor. An attorney was present but not classified. Page numbering required by General Guideline 10 was not present. Marginal topic headings (Style Guideline #3) indicating “Public Session” or “Closed Session” might be helpful.

2. Called Meeting Full Record July 14, 2015—6:00 p.m. EDT—Teleconference: These minutes do not indicate an appointment of a clerk pro tem, nor who called the roll; minutes are unsigned by anyone. Page numbering is missing, and depending on the eventual placement of signatures on page 2, a slash may be required per General Guideline 11.

The Subcommittee on Minutes would also like to recognize each reviewer's efforts in contributing to a total of fifty-one reviews of minutes:

Johnson, Tonya: 2014-06 PC(USA) Corp Exec Minutes; 2014-11 PC(USA) Corp Exec Minutes; 2015-06 PC(USA) Corp Exec Minutes; 2015-07-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-08-28 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-09-09 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-09-14 PMAB Exec Minutes.

Schaeffer, R. Jill: 2014-09-29 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-11-10 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-11-20 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-12-11 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-01-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-02-20 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-03-04 PMAB Exec Minutes.

Leavell, Theodore: 2014-02 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2014-04 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2014-09 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-04 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-06 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-09 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-09-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-11-19 PMAB Exec Minutes.

Segers, Grace: 2015-03-25 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-04-08 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-04-10 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-04-15 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-05-06 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-05-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-05-31 PMAB Exec Minutes.

Lee, Richard: 2014-02 PMAB Minutes; 2014-04 PMAB Minutes; 2014-09 PMAB Minutes; 2014-10 PMAB Minutes; 2015-04 PMAB Minutes; 2015-09 PMAB Minutes; 2015-11 PMAB Minutes; 2015-12 PMAB Minutes.

Whitehurst, Kenneth: 2015-06-04 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-12 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-16 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-18 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-25 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-07-08 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-07-14 PMAB Exec Minutes.

Pospichal, Amy: 2014-01-16 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-02-05 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-04-02 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-04-23 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-06-13 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-08-28 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-09-16 PMAB Exec Minutes.

Item 10-C. Audit.

Approved. [See pp. 632, 658.]

Item 10-D. Sam and Helen Walton Awards for 2015.

Approved as amended. [See p. 632.]

Amend the recommendation as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reports the recipients of the Sam and Helen R. Walton Awards for 2015 and [2016 and] recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) recognize the recipients as outstanding new church developments:

“[2015]

- “1. Camino de Vida, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Synod of the Southwest, Presbytery of Santa Fe
- “2. The Fellowship Place, Charlotte, North Carolina, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Presbytery of Charlotte
- “3. Northland Village Church, Los Angeles, California, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Presbytery of San Fernando

“[2016]

“[4. First Thai-Laotian Presbyterian Church, Synod of the Pacific, Presbytery of Nevada]”

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 10-16 of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination: Mary Kay Glunt, Presbytery of John Calvin; Jarrett Johnson, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Justin L. Marple, Presbytery of Western New York; Taeler Morgan, Presbytery of Olympia; Mickey Stueck, Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Gale Watkins, Presbytery of Grand Canyon; Augustine Wright III, Presbytery of Stockton.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Patricia Tull, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues, and Bobby Musengwa, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues.

Moderator Tull presented Item 11-22, which was approved as amended. He then presented Item 11-06, which was answered with the action taken on Item 11-22. Moderator Tull presented Item 11-12. Item 11-12 was approved as amended.

Moderator Tull presented Item 11-24. Item 11-24, Recommendations 1.a.–e., 2, 3, 5, and 6 were approved. Item 11-24, Recommendation 1.f. was referred to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with comment. Item 11-24, Recommendations 4 and 7 were approved as amended. He then presented Item 11-17, which was answered by the action on Item 11-24. Moderator Tull yielded the microphone to Vice-Moderator Musengwa.

Vice-Moderator Musengwa presented Item 11-08, which was approved as amended. Musengwa then presented Item 11-20, which was approved.

The assembly approved a motion to consider Items 11-18, 11-03, 11-21, and 11-25 in a block vote. Vice-Moderator Musengwa presented Items 11-18, 11-03, 11-21, and 11-25 for a block vote. Items 11-18 (approve), 11-03 (approve as amended and with comment), 11-21 (approve) and 11-25 (approve with comment) were approved in one block vote.

Vice-Moderator Musengwa presented Items 11-01 and 11-02, which were answered by the action taken on Item 11-03. Musengwa yielded the microphone to Moderator Tull.

Tull presented Item 11-05, which was answered by an alternate resolution.

Cheni Khonje, Vice-Moderator of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, moved to arrest the report and continue at the scheduled time together. The motion was approved. [For the remainder of the report, see p. 53.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons made the evening's announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Theological Student Advisory Delegate Ricky "Lee" Sartain, from Union Theological Seminary (New York), offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 11:22 p.m.

Friday, June 24, 2016, 8:30 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING IX

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon. Co-Moderator Anderson led the assembly in prayer for the people affected by the Greenbrier River flooding in West Virginia.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Amgad Beblawi, Presbyterian Mission Agency area coordinator for the Middle East, Central Asia, and Europe, who introduced the ecumenical guests bringing greetings and prayer.

The Reverend Dr. Kamal Youssef Yacoub, ecumenical advisory delegate from the Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile, brought greetings. The Reverend Dr. Derek Browning, ecumenical representative from the Church of Scotland, led the assembly in prayer.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, who explained that many individuals on the platform were wearing bow ties to honor Bill Forbes, who for nearly thirty-five years served as platform manager for every meeting of the General Assembly. Bill was never seen on the platform without his signature bow tie, and to honor him and all the volunteers who give of their time to make the assembly work, it was announced that today was Bow Tie Friday at the assembly.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Cheni Khonje, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

Vice-Moderator Khonje presented the amended docket, Item 02-03. The revision scheduled the arrested report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues for the afternoon plenary today before the other two committee reports already scheduled for the afternoon. The amended docket, Item 02-03, was approved. [See p. 156.]

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE:
REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Mary Lou Cox, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report on financial implications on the per capita budget of actions taken at this assembly thus far. Moderator Cox announced that the total financial implications of actions approved by the assembly amount to: \$5,000 for 2016; \$254,083 for 2017, representing an increase of \$0.16 to per capita; and \$270,583 for 2018, representing an \$0.18 increase to per capita. Implications of pending actions recommended by assembly committees amount to: \$8,120 for 2016 and \$8,120 for 2017. This would represent an additional increase in the General Assembly per capita apportionment of approximately \$0.01 per member for 2017 and would total an increase in per capita of \$0.17 for 2017. On Saturday morning, the committee is scheduled to present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the per capita budget for 2017 and 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE:
REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Eileen Best, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for a report on financial implications to the mission budget of actions taken at this assembly thus far. Moderator Best reported the total financial implications of actions taken so far by the assembly amount to \$187,212 for 2017; and \$59,476 for 2018. Items still under consideration by the assembly for the mission budget total \$146,932 for 2017; and \$192,166 for 2018. On Saturday morning, the committee is scheduled to present to the assembly its final recommendation for balancing the mission budget for 2017 and 2018.

ELECTION OF THE STATED CLERK

Co-Moderator Anderson called for the election of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, as required by Standing Rule H.2.b. Stated Clerk Parsons described the procedure for the election.

Having been nominated during the second plenary of the assembly (Item 00-02, p. 78), the nominee of the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee, J. Herbert Nelson, and the other candidate for Stated Clerk, David M. Baker, were afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for five minutes each. The candidates then responded to questions from the floor for a period of thirty minutes. The candidates were then escorted from the hall by Platform Manager Conrad Rocha. Stated Clerk Parsons explained the electronic voting procedures.

J. Herbert Nelson was elected Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on the first ballot, receiving a total of 447 votes. Of the total votes cast, David M. Baker received 112 votes. Co-Moderator Anderson declared that J. Herbert Nelson was duly elected to the office of Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

J. Herbert Nelson was accompanied to the platform by family members and friends. Margaret Elliot, moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; Jim Wilson, vice-moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; Stated Clerk Parsons; Co-Moderator Anderson; and Co-Moderator Edmiston participated in the service of installation for Stated Clerk-elect, J. Herbert Nelson. The Reverend Jerrod Lowry led the assembly in prayer.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO THE NEWLY ELECTED STATED CLERK

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Young Ghil Lee, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations, who presented a hand-knitted prayer stole to Stated Clerk-elect Nelson.

Stated Clerk-elect J. Herbert Nelson addressed the assembly.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks, moderator of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, who reported that on Wednesday the assembly was informed of additional nominations from the General Assembly Nominating Committee in Item 00-05 and was instructed how to submit nominations from the floor. Moderator Kyremes-Parks reported that there were no challenging floor nominations.

Moderator Kyremes-Parks presented the slate as listed in Item 00-05 for the assembly's approval. The slate, Item 00-05, was approved. [See p. 87.]

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Yzette Swavy-Lipton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry, and Joy Myers, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry, to present the report.

Moderator Swavy-Lipton presented Item 06-CA, the consent agenda from the committee. Item 06-02 and Item 06-09 were removed from the consent agenda. Commissioners then approved the remaining items on the consent agenda: Item 06-04 (disapprove with comment); Item 06-05 (approve with amendment); Item 06-06 (disapprove); Item 06-11 (disapprove); Item 06-12 (disapprove); Item 06-13 (disapprove); Item 06-15, Recommendations 1 and 2 (approve); and Item 06-16 (refer to the Office of the General Assembly with comment).

Moderator Swavy-Lipton stated that the committee reviewed and approved the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates self-study (Item 06-Self-Study).

Moderator Swavy-Lipton presented Item 06-14, which was approved. Swavy-Lipton then presented Item 06-08, which was approved as amended. Swavy-Lipton then yielded the floor to Vice-Moderator Myers.

Vice-Moderator Myers presented Item 06-07, which was disapproved. It was then moved and seconded to answer Item 06-07 with Item 06-10. The assembly then approved the motion to answer Item 06-07 by the action taken on Item 06-10. An amendment to Item 06-10 was moved and seconded.

George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, moved to arrest the report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry. It was approved. [For the remainder of the report, see below.]

SERVICE OF DAILY WORSHIP

The Reverend Dr. Jerry Andrews, senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church, San Diego, California, preached a sermon titled, "The Vertical: Be Reconciled to God."

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 12:15 p.m.

Friday, June 24, 2016, 1:30 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING X

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Therese Taylor-Stinson, moderator of the Presbytery of National Capital, who shared her story and led the assembly in the convening prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures. Moderator Anderson presented the docket as amended, Item 02-03. The revision included the following: during this afternoon's plenary, the arrested reports of both the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry and the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues will be continued. Then the assembly will begin the reports from the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues and the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues. In addition, it was recommended that the assembly return from the dinner recess this evening at 7:00 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m. Item 02-03 was approved as amended. [See p. 156.]

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY—*GRACE AND GRATITUDE* PRESENTATION

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who introduced Emily Stecher, director of Christian Education, First Presbyterian Church, Portland. Stecher shared her congregation's experience using the *Growing in Grace and Gratitude* curriculum with their third to fifth grade Sunday school class.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Yzette Swavy-Lipton, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry, and Joy Myers, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry, to continue the report. [For the first part of the report, see p. 48.]

Before the committee resumed the report, Co-Moderator Anderson asked Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay to remind the assembly where they were in the report. Associate Stated Clerk Hay suggested it would be appropriate for the assembly to

resume debate on the amendment to Item 06-10 and to invite Laurie Griffith, Assistant Stated Clerk of the Office of the General Assembly, to the podium to answer questions as needed on the motion.

Debate resumed on Item 06-10 and the amendment was approved. Moderator Swavy-Lipton presented Item 06-01, which was answered by the action taken on Item 06-10. In response to a concern from the floor that the assembly, although deciding to answer Item 06-07 with Item 06-10, did not take action on Item 06-10, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons responded that in his assessment, the assembly approved Item 06-10 by choosing to answer Item 06-07 with Item 06-10.

Moderator Swavy-Lipton presented Item 06-02, which was disapproved. Moderator Swavy-Lipton then presented Item 06-09 with the recommendation that the assembly disapprove with comment. The assembly did not approve the committee's recommendation. A motion was made from the floor to approve Item 06-09. The assembly disapproved the motion to approve Item 06-09. A motion was made that Item 06-09 be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), which was approved.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Committee Consent Agenda items indicated by a ♦.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 06-01. *On Amending G-2.0509 by Deleting Recently Added Language Dealing with Renunciation of Jurisdiction—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.*

The recommendation was answered by the action taken on Item 06-10. [See p. 349.]

Item 06-02. *On Amending G-2.0607c. to Add Training in Evangelism—From the Presbytery of Tampa Bay.*

Disapproved. [See p. 351.]

Item 06-03.

Item 06-03 was moved to 09 Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues and was reassigned the following item number: Item 09-11. (See p. 556 of the electronic copy.)

♦Item 06-04. *On Amending G-3.0203 to Allow for Virtual Attendance in Session Meetings When Appropriate Technology Is Available—From the Presbytery of Lake Erie.*

Disapproved with comment. [See p. 353.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapproved this item as *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th edition*, does not impair a council's capacity to authorize remote meetings.

♦Item 06-05. *On Amending the Second Paragraph of G-3.0109 Regarding Parity in Committees of Councils Above the Session—From the Presbytery of St. Andrew.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 354.]

Amend the third paragraph as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with and underline.]

“A committee shall study and recommend action or carry out decisions already made by a council. It shall make a full report to the council that created it, and its recommendations shall require action by that body. Committees of councils higher than the session shall consist of both teaching elders and members of congregations, [~~with at least one-half being members of congregations~~] [in numbers as nearly equal as possible].”

♦Item 06-06. *On Adding Section G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA)—From the Presbytery of Central Nebraska.*

Disapproved. [See p. 355.]

Item 06-07. *On Amending G-2.0509 to Clarify the Relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of a Person Who Has Renounced the Jurisdiction of the Church—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.*

Answered by the action take on Item 06-10. [See p. 358.]

Item 06-08. *On Amending the Book of Order to Clarify Titles to Ordered Ministry—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 359.]

1. Amend the third paragraph of Recommendation 6. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with and underline.]

“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to ~~teaching elders~~ *its pastors, both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ruling elders* commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned ~~lay~~ *pastors [also known as commissioned ruling elders]*), as well as the ~~and~~ certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ~~teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service,~~ *pastors* and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.” [The last two paragraphs of the section remain unchanged.]”

2. Amend Recommendation 7. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with and underline.]

“7. That within the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline, the terms “ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service” or “ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service” and “teaching elder” shall be replaced with its former terms, ‘*commissioned [lay] pastor [also known as commissioned ruling elder]*’ or ‘*minister*’ or ‘*minister of Word and Sacrament*’, respectively.”

Item 06-09. *On Amending G-2.0301, “Ruling Elder Defined,” to Allow for Individually Commissioned Ruling Elders—From the Synod of the Northeast.*

Referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. [See p. 363.]

Item 06-10. *On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to Clarify the Relationship to the PC(USA) of a Person Who Has Renounced Jurisdiction of the Church—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 365.]

Amend Recommendation 1.a. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets, with a strike-through, and with gray shading; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets, with an underline, and with gray shading.]

“1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

“a. Shall the fourth paragraph of G-2.0509 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“‘Whenever a former teaching elder has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former teaching elder shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *unless and until the person rejoins the church, comes forward [in self-accusation either directly or by reference to the stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member, pleads guilty to all charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former teaching elder had renounced jurisdiction, has censure imposed without trial and with no participation from victims required, and completes appropriate rehabilitation] [and resubmits to the disciplinary process].*’”

♦Item 06-11. *On Amending G-3.0104 to Clarify the Role of Ecclesiastical Officers—From the Presbytery Of Detroit.*

Disapproved. [See p. 369.]

♦Item 06-12. *On Amending Book of Order, G-6.02, Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.*

Disapproved. [See p. 371.]

♦Item 06-13. *On Amending Section G-2.1001 to Clarify the Discretion Given Presbyteries to Utilize Commissioned Ruling Elders—From the Presbytery de Cristo.*

Disapproved. [See p. 373.]

Item 06-14. *On Creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force Charged with Revising the Rules of Discipline—From the Presbytery of Chicago.*

Approved. [See p. 374.]

♦Item 06-15. *Recommendation to Amend G-2.1101, Forms of Certified Church Service, in the Book of Order and also Approve National Certifying Bodies—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.*

Recommendation 1. Approved. [See pp. 375–76.]

Recommendation 2. Approved. [See p. 376.]

♦Item 06-16. *A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.*

Referred to the Office of the General Assembly with comment. [See p. 378.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) refers Item 06-16 to the Office of the General Assembly to develop and recommend language that addresses the problems raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) and report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

*Item 06-17. *Commissioners’ Resolution. Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding Church Property.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 379.]

Amend the recommendation as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016)

“1. takes notice that this conflict (settlement of disputes regarding church property) exists and acknowledges that presbyteries are working to adapt to a difficult and changing legal landscape;

“2. prays for our presbyteries and our congregations as they face legal challenges;

“~~3. [Recommendation 3. was declined because it implied constitutional interpretation.]~~

“~~4. invites this General Assembly to encourage conversation about the long-term implications of court rulings that property is a legal issue and not an ecclesiastical issue.]~~”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

Item 06-Self-Study

Report of the Self-Study Committee of the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Approved. [See p. 382.]

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 06-02 from the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry: Christopher Carlson, Presbytery of Peace River; Christopher Davis, Presbytery of Northern Kansas; Justin L. Marple, Presbytery of Western New York; Geoffrey G. Rach, Presbytery of Washington; Gale Watkins, Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Co-Moderator Jan Edmiston recognized Patricia Tull, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues, and Bobby Musengwa, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues, to continue their report. [For the first part of the report, see p. 46.]

Moderator Tull presented Item 11-23, which was approved. Moderator Tull then presented Item 11-16. This recommendation came to the committee with financial implications, but the amendments made by the committee removed these, so there was no cost associated with this item. Item 11-16 was approved as amended.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign, \$.

I. Plenary Action

Item 11-01. *On Adding a New Standing Rule F.5.c. Regarding Social Witness Policy Statements or Resolutions at the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 11-03. [See p. 691.]

Item 11-02. *On Setting Aside “Forming Social Policy” at the Next Three General Assemblies—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 11-03. [See p. 695.]

Item 11-03. *On Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.*

Approved as amended and with comment. [See p. 700.]

Amendment:

1. Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Call on our churches to commit to a year of Bible study focused on issues of social justice[, with particular attention to the matters of race proposed in Item 11-08 and the application of the Confession of Belhar to these concerns.]”

2. Amend Recommendation 7. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“7. [~~Create a~~] [Recommend that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries area, implement a coordinated strategy or] ‘cycle of social engagement’ that will assure that concerns around confronting racism, environmental concerns, standing against violence and militarism, and advocating for the dispossessed come before the assembly on a regular and consistent basis, [~~soliciting overtures from~~] [consulting on mission strategies and overtures with affected and engaged] presbyteries before each General Assembly on topics of the most immediate concern.”

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) notes the advice of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) of keeping together Jesus and justice “in the face of the rise of the ‘nones’ who ignore or write off the church.” Therefore, the assembly wants to urge that alternative sources of funding be sought so that the online voice and presence of www.justiceunbound.org not be lost.

Item 11-04

Item 11-04 has been moved to 12 Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues and has been re-assigned the following item number: Item 12-09. (See p. 938 of the electronic copy.)

Item 11-05. *On the Admission of, and Apology for, Harms Done to the LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends—From the Presbytery of New York City.*

In response to Item 11-05, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the following resolution. [See p. 702.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) resolves to continue the journey as a denomination to become more open, understanding, and accepting of our LGBTQ/Q family and does the following:

1. Issues the following statement: “Followers of Jesus Christ know that no person can claim divine favor through personal merit, but only by the grace of God. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledges that actions we and our members have taken over the years have at times led God’s beloved children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning to feel that they stand outside the grace of God and are unwelcome in the PC(USA). We deeply regret that, due to human failings, any person might find cause to doubt being loved by God. We affirm the God-given dignity and worth of every human being, and renew our commitment to ‘welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed [us], for the glory of God’ [Rom. 15:7].”

2. Expresses the deep sorrow of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) about all individuals and congregations who have left our fellowship, affirms our commitment to continue to pray with them, and acknowledges our sincere appreciation for those who have maintained relationship despite profound disagreement.

3. Challenges all Presbyterians to reflect upon, and repent of, the ways we have mistreated one another, and to seek reconciliation.

4. Celebrates the diversity of those called by God into the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

5. Calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to deeper conversations about our differing understandings of what Scripture teaches about faithful living, recognizing that our relationships as God’s children are not ultimately dependent upon agreement.

6. Encourages congregations to reach out actively to those who have experienced marginalization due to decisions of the church, across the spectrum of theological understanding.

7. Encourages presbyteries, when assessing readiness for ordered ministry, to take into account the preparation of those whose ordination process was interrupted by policies that are no longer applicable (*Book of Order*, G-2.06).

8. Urges presbyteries and congregations to be in ministry respectfully, justly, and graciously together with those with whom they may disagree in regard to ordination and marriage policies and procedures.

9. Prays that all Presbyterians, empowered by God’s grace, work to cultivate a renewed spirit of partnership, to live as one community, moving forward in mission and ministry together in faith, hope, love, joy, and peace.

Item 11-06. *On Resources for Learning, Reflection, and Reconciliation—From the Presbytery of John Knox.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 11-22. [See p. 708.]

Item 11-07

Item 11-07 has been moved to 12 Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues and has been re-assigned the following item number: Item 12-10. (See p. 941 of the electronic copy.)

Item 11-08. *On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.

Approved as amended. [See p. 711.]

1. Strike the endnote in the first paragraph as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Baltimore overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to offer an apology to Native Americans, Alaska natives, and native Hawaiians^[†] and to do the following:”

~~“[1. In this statement the term ‘Native American’ respectfully refers to all three of the indigenous groups.]”~~

2. Amend the first paragraph of Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. That the PC(USA) and its members apologize to United States citizens of Native American ancestry, both those within and beyond our denomination. We offer this apology especially to those who were [and are] part of ‘stolen generations’ during the Indian-assimilation movement, namely former students of Indian boarding schools, their families, and their communities.² That the PC(USA) approve and issue the following words of apology:”

3. Amend the fifth and sixth paragraphs in Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“Our burdens include dishonoring the depths of the struggles of Native American people and the richness of your gifts. Therefore, we confess to you that when our Presbyterian ancestors journeyed to this land within the last few centuries, ~~{you shared your Sacred Vision with us, to our Presbyterian ancestors, and to our country’s leaders; essentially none of us heard you.}~~ [we did not respect your own indigenous knowledges and epistemologies as valid.]

“In our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ, our hearts and minds were closed to the value of your ~~{spirituality}~~ [own epistemologies and lifeways]. We did not understand the full extent of the Gospel of Christ! We should have affirmed the commonality between your spirituality and our understanding that God’s sovereignty extends with length from East to West, with breadth from North to South, with depth throughout the Earth, and with height throughout the Sky and Heavens.”

4. Amend the tenth paragraph in Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“We seek God’s forgiveness, healing grace, and guidance as we take steps toward building mutually respectful, compassionate, and loving relationships with ~~[Native American]~~ [indigenous] peoples.”

5. Amend Recommendation 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. That the Office of the General Assembly share this apology with ~~[Native American tribal authorities]~~ [the leadership of Native Nations] in the United States. The means of sharing this apology shall be coordinated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Native American Congregational Support Office and with the PC(USA)’s Native American Consulting Committee (NACC).”

*Item 11-09. *On Celebrating a Significant Social Witness Anniversary—From the Presbytery of Chicago.*

Approved. [See p. 715.]

*Item 11-10. *On Reconciliation and Engagement in a New Civil Rights Movement—From the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.*

Approved as amended and with comment. [See p. 717.]

Amendment:

Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. That local and state jurisdictions, [, in order to ensure that all citizens are treated with equal dignity and justice,]

“• [review and] revise, [, as needed,] use of force policies and training,

“• appoint special prosecutors in police use of force cases,

“• [review and] update, [, as needed,] use of force policies related to fleeing suspects,

“• improve police training to include social interaction, implicit bias, [de-escalating violence,] and cultural responsiveness,

“• create, develop, and strengthen meaningful civilian review of police departments.”

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms the lessons from Charleston and the role of the church in preventing violence.

Item 11-11

Item 11-11 has been moved to 09 Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues and has been reassigned the following item number: Item 09-12. (See p. 562 of the electronic copy.)

Item 11-12. *On the PC(USA) Continuing Its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 719.]

Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Executive Director, to present to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a detailed six-year plan containing explicit procedures for renewed implementation of every strategy detailed in the churchwide strategies (as listed under the ‘Points of Engagement’ and specifically directed towards the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, and congregations) in [~~‘Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community,’~~] [‘Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community (Item 11-22),’] which [~~was approved~~] [is up for approval] by the [~~211th~~] [222nd] General Assembly [~~(1999)~~] [(2016)].”

*Item 11-13. *Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved. [See p. 722.]

Item 11-14

Item 11-14 has been moved to 14 Theological Issues & Institutions and has been reassigned the following item number: Item 14-14. (See p. 1018 of the electronic copy.)

Item 11-15

Item 11-15 has been moved to 03 General Assembly Procedures and has been reassigned the following item number: Item 03-12. (See p. 175 of the electronic copy.)

Item 11-16. *On Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS—From the Presbytery of National Capital.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 729.]

Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Equip and mobilize its member congregations to better serve those living among us with HIV-AIDS by the development of the following initiatives:

“a. A mission-based program to create a certificate program in response to the action of the 219th General Assembly (2010), ‘Becoming an HIV, AIDS[~~, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C~~] Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action’ (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, pp. 72–73, 1370ff). This effort will support the church in its continued prophetic witness on issues of HIV and AIDS, to specifically expand the prophetic witness into practical application.

“b. [~~An annual HIV/AIDS conference that would be conducted in partnership with the ten seminaries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)~~] [Commission delegates of the denomination to attend an existing domestic or international HIV/AIDS conference.]”

“2. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) to coordinate a development strategy and activities to raise the following revenue to support these initiatives: \$150,000 over a three-year period to be utilized to operationalize [~~these two initiatives~~][this initiative.]”

Item 11-17. *On Reviewing the Doctrine of Discovery—From the Presbytery of National Capital.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 11-24. [See p. 732.]

Item 11-18. *A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).*

Approved. [See p. 735.]

***Item 11-19. ACREC Review Process, Recommendation 1.**

Approved. [See p. 737.]

***Item 11-19, ACREC Review Process, Recommendations 2.–4.**

Approved. [See p. 737–38.]

Item 11-20. *Recommendations Regarding “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision”—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved. [See p. 738.]

Item 11-21. *Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved. [See p. 742.]

Item 11-22. *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency*

Approved as amended. [See p. 770.]

1. Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Direct the Stated Clerk to challenge the church through a direct communication to do a personal self-examination of its [~~participation~~] [implicit bias] in structures that support and maintain racism regardless of the good intentions of individual Presbyterians.”

2. Amend Recommendation 3. as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Urge mid councils to provide an annual one-day event dedicated to [implicit bias and] antiracism, similar to sexual harassment, abuse prevention, and officer trainings.”

3. Amend Recommendation 6. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“6. Direct the national church agencies to jointly formulate a communications plan to share [implicit bias and] antiracism resources, and create an electronic campaign to send information on [implicit bias and] antiracism resources and trainings to mid councils, congregations, and Presbyterian-affiliated institutions.”

4. Amend Recommendations 10. and 11. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“10. Urge the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities to encourage its member institutions to provide regular [implicit bias and] antiracism trainings for students, faculty, and staff, to integrate racially and culturally diverse voices in the curriculum, and to revisit hiring policies to ensure the faculty and staff are racially diverse.

“11. Urge the Committee on Theological Education to encourage its affiliated seminaries to provide regular [implicit bias and] antiracism trainings for students, faculty, and staff, to integrate racially and culturally diverse voices in the curriculum, and to revisit hiring policies to ensure the faculty and staff are racially diverse.”

Item 11-23. *On Therapies Purporting to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity—From the Synod of the Covenant.*

Approved. [See p. 785.]

\$Item 11-24. *Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism¹ and Ethnocentricity Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.*

Recommendation 1.a.–e.

Approved. [See p. 787–88.]

Recommendation 1.f.

Referred to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with comment. [See p. 788.]

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) requests that the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board explore how translations can be produced utilizing volunteers from around the church.

Recommendation 2.

Approved. [See p. 789.]

Recommendation 3.

Approved. [See p. 789.]

Recommendation 4.

Approved as amended. [See p. 789–90.]

Amend the first paragraph of Recommendation 4. as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly[, in coordination with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries,] to work with committees on ministry and committees on the preparation for ministry or their equivalents so that those overseeing preparation for ministry, congregations, pastoral relationships, and approval of calls shall:”

Recommendation 5.

Approved. [See p. 790.]

Recommendation 6.

Approved. [See p. 791.]

Recommendation 7.

Approved as amended. [See p. 791.]

Amend Recommendation 7. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“7. Call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess its complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery[, and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with ACREC, to]

~~“a. [Direct the Office of the General Assembly, specifically empowering the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the Presbyterian Historical Society, to lead the church to study and to learn about the historic and current social, missional, and theological implications of the Doctrine of Discovery.] [Initiate a process of review of the Doctrine of Discovery that would commence at the end of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and that would~~

“[i. include a comprehensive review of the history of the Doctrine of Discovery;

“[ii. include a review of actions taken by other denominations and religious groups to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, including the explanatory and educational materials created and recommendations developed by these groups related to the Doctrine of Discovery;

“[iii. include contacting Native American tribes and individuals in order to understand how this doctrine impacts them.

“[b. Prepare a report that

“[i. describes the Doctrine of Discovery and explains its history;

“[ii. makes recommendations of how congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights;

“[iii. describes how relationships with specific Native American individuals and tribes can be developed;

“[iv. suggests specific ways in which congregations may recognize, support, and cooperate with Native American individuals, tribes, and nations who reside within their communities.]

“~~[b-]~~ [c]Engage in dialogue with ecumenical partners concerning the doctrine.”

[Financial Implication: Per Capita—\$47,541 (2017), \$47,541 (2018); Presbyterian Mission Agency—\$1,353,830 (2017), \$1,266, 280 (2018), Revised—\$91,138 (2017), \$7,476 (2018)]

Item 11-25. *Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved with comment. [See p. 801.]

Comment: In addition to the other government recommendations, the federal government should reclassify all forms of cannabis from schedule 1 to schedule 2 classification. As it is currently classified, research for medical applications is extremely restricted, which limits the opportunity for new treatments for many conditions, especially for degenerative neurological diseases. Reclassification would open up more possibilities.

Item 11-26. *On the Economic Crisis in Puerto Rico—From the Presbiterio Del Noroeste.

Approved as amended. [See p. 833.]

Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Instruct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to Congress requesting that Congress find a fair, ~~[just, and financially rightful treatment in relation to]~~ [long-term debt plan to address] the fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico, ~~[where all]~~ [in which the combination of] actions to be approved ~~[by the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments]~~ ~~[do]~~ [does] not result in greater austerity measures that impoverishes the most vulnerable classes; to include a plan for real economic development in Puerto Rico; and that every alternative include a majority of multisectoral participation of the people of Puerto Rico.”

II. Committee Final Action and Report to Assembly

11.A. *Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved. [See p. 836.]

Item 11-Self-Study

Self-Study Report of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Approved. [See p. 836.]

DISSENTS

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 11-05 from the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues: Geoffrey G. Rach, Presbytery of Washington.

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 11-23 from the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues: Christopher Davis, Presbytery of Northern Kansas; Justin Marple, Presbytery of Western New York; Geoffrey G. Rach, Presbytery of Washington; Gale Watkins, Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Amy Fowler, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues, and Frances Lin, vice-moderator, Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues, to present the committee report.

Moderator Fowler introduced Amgad Beblawi, area coordinator for Europe and the Middle East, Presbyterian Mission Agency, to speak for five minutes on the history of Presbyterian partnerships and engagement in the Middle East.

Moderator Fowler resumed the microphone and presented the first item of business, Item 08-02. Item 08-02 was approved as amended. Moderator Fowler then presented Item 08-01, which was disapproved.

Moderator Fowler presented Item 08-06, a report and recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy: “Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace.” Moderator Fowler stated that the committee moved approval of Item 08-06 with comment and noted that there was a minority report. Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons explained the minority report process. Moderator Fowler asked to invite Sam Jones and Doug Tilton, who were among the au-

FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2016

thors of the Israel-Palestine report, to speak for five minutes. Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Jones and Tilton. Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Commissioner Brian Paulson and Young Adult Advisory Delegate Nivin Lee, authors of the minority report, to speak for five minutes on their report.

Following a request to enlarge the text of amendments proposed from the floor on the plenary hall screens, Co-Moderator Edmiston halted debate to allow the information technology technicians backstage to do so. While the assembly waited, the assembly watched the Spirit of GA video on Identity.

Co-Moderator Edmiston resumed debate on Item 08-06, and amendments to the main motion were approved.

George Anderson, Moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, moved that the report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues be arrested. The motion was approved. [For the remainder of the report, see below.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stated Clerk Parsons announced that two Presbyterian Disaster Assistance teams were already on their way to West Virginia to provide assistance to flooding victims. He also made several procedural announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Young Adult Advisory Delegates Luck Rasoanilana from the Presbytery of Elizabeth and Rachel Wong from the Presbytery of San Francisco offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 5:24 p.m.

Friday, June 24, 2016, 7:05 P.M.

BUSINESS MEETING XI

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderator, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon. Annie Ntumba Tshiswaka, Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa, led the assembly in the convening prayer.

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Debbie Braaksma, Presbyterian Mission Agency area coordinator for Africa, who introduced various ecumenical representatives from Africa. Rt. Reverend Seth Senyo Agidi, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, brought greetings to the assembly.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Cheni Khonje, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, who introduced the docket as amended, Item 02-03. The revision included the following: during the evening's plenary, the assembly will hear the arrested report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues. Next up would be the report from the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues and then the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues. It was noted that trains would stop running around midnight. However, with limited time to do any additional business tomorrow morning, the assembly will likely stay this evening until all committee reports are completed. The docket as amended, Item 02-03, was approved. (See p. 156.)

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Moderator Amy Fowler of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues to resume the committee report. [For the first part of the report, see p. 59.]

The debate on Item 08-06 continued. The minority report was defeated. The comment on the main motion was amended. Item 08-06 was then approved with the amended comment.

Vice-Moderator Frances Lin of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues presented Item 08-07, which was approved as amended.

Moderator Fowler presented Item 08-08, to be answered with the action taken on Item 08-07, with comment. It was approved.

Moderator Fowler asked to invite the Reverend Dr. Tom Taylor, president and CEO of the Presbyterian Foundation, to speak about the ministry of positive investment in Palestine. Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Taylor.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 08-01. On Boycott of All HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Products—From the Synod of the Covenant.

Disapproved. (See p. 453.)

Item 08-02. On Advocating for the Safety and Well-being of Children of Palestine and Israel—From the Synod of the Covenant.

Approved as amended. (See p. 458.)

Add a new Recommendation 5. to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[5. Call on the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and the government of Israel to denounce and cease the incitement of violence against children or at the hands of children.]”

***Item 08-03. On Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the United States—From the Presbytery of New York City.**

Approved. (See p. 463.)

***Item 08-04. On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements—From the Presbytery of the Redwoods.**

Approve as amended. (See p. 465.)

Amend Recommendations 4., 5., and 6. to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]]

“4. Call for RE/MAX to [~~cut its ties with franchises involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank]~~ [do everything within its legal and moral power to stop facilitating the sale and rental of property in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank].”

“5. [~~Urge members of the RE/MAX network in the United States to not refer clients to agents and brokers who are involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.]~~ [Commend RE/MAX, LLC, for responding favorably to discussions of this matter with representatives of the PC(USA) and committing to take action to ensure that RE/MAX, LLC, will no longer receive any income from the sale of Jewish settlement properties in the West Bank.]”

“6. [~~Urge Presbyterians to take actions such as contacting local RE/MAX franchises or corporate headquarters or participating in petition campaigns to pressure RE/MAX to cut its ties with franchises involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.]~~ [Encourage Presbyterians to continue to be in dialogue with RE/MAX, LLC, to explore ways that it can stop facilitating the sale and rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.]”

Item 08-05. Item 08-05 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 08-06. Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Approved with comment. (See p. 469.)

Comment: As disciples of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, of the people of Abraham and the lineage of David, we stand with the people of Israel, affirming their right to exist as a sovereign nation, and we stand with the Palestini-

an people, affirming their right to exist as a sovereign nation. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms Footnote 8, which emphasizes a preference for a two-state solution. The assembly also affirms our desire to stay in conversation with our partners in Israel who work for peace. Finally, the assembly expresses its opposition to any efforts to deny or undermine the rights of the Palestinian people or the Jewish people to self-determination.

Item 08-07. *On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)*—*From the Presbytery of New Hope.*

Approved as amended. (See p. 504.)

Amend Recommendations 1. through 4. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Prayerfully study the call from Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel [as well as resources that oppose this BDS movement] (see “additional resources” after the Rationale section of this overture for full text of the call).

“2 Engage in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue with the authors and signatories of this document, including our historic church partners in Palestine [and our interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement], in order to better understand and interpret the call for BDS that was issued in 2005.

“3. [Remains unchanged.]

“4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to facilitate dialogue events regarding BDS, which would include the authors of the 2005 civil society call [and our interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement] and any interested Presbyterians.

“5. Direct the Stated Clerk to distribute, for prayerful study, the text of the Palestinian call [and documentation from interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement] to all PC(USA) congregations.”

Item 08-08. Commissioners’ Resolution. Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition.

Answered by the action taken on Item 08-07, with comment. [See p. 506.]

Comment: With the decision to prayerfully study the call from Palestinian Civil Society for boycott, divestment, and sanctions, the PC(USA) acknowledges that this may constitute a source of concern for our interfaith partners and supporters of Israel as a state. This choice for prayerful study is aimed to discern how we may be called to actively work for lasting justice and peace for people of Israel and Palestine. We seek ways to be faithful and effective by means that don’t perpetuate injustice or systematic violence.

DISSENTS

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 08-02 from the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues: Isaac Chung, Presbytery of Detroit.

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 08-06 from the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues: Isaac Chung, Presbytery of Detroit; Christopher Davis, Presbytery of Northern Kansas.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Peter Hulac, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues, to present the committee’s report.

Item 09-10 was approved. Item 09-11 was approved. Item 09-06 was approved as amended.

Mary Lynn Walters, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues, assumed the microphone. Item 09-12 was amended on the floor. Item 09-12 was approved as amended.

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Elizabeth (Terry) Dunning and Joseph Kinard from Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI) to speak about the report MRTI developed at the direction of the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Vice-Moderator Walters introduced Item 09-01. A minority report was introduced and perfected. The assembly voted to accept the minority report, as amended, as the main motion, and it was approved.

Co-Moderator Denise Anderson assumed the chair.

George Anderson, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, moved to limit debate to forty-five seconds per speaker. It was approved.

Vice-Moderator Walters moved that Item 09-09 be answered by the action taken on Item 09-01. It was approved. It was moved that Item 09-02, Item 09-03, and Item 09-04 be answered with the action taken on Item 09-01. It was approved.

Moderator Hulac introduced Item 09-08. It was approved as amended.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

There are no items with financial implications in this report.

I. Plenary Action

Item 09-01. *On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.*

In response to Item 09-01, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets, with a strike-through, and with shading; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets, with an underline, and with shading.] [See p. 511.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016)

1. Requests the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to consider an increasingly more diversified energy sector in their overall investment portfolios, which would increase exposure to potentially profitable alternative energy companies and/or companies with an active interest in changing the consumer market's energy demand (e.g. automobile companies producing alternatively powered vehicles).

2. ~~[Commits to remaining invested in current energy companies whose primary resource is fossil fuel for the purpose of MRTI's (Mission Responsibility Through Investment) stockholder engagement.] [Directs MRTI to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations, including possible selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.]~~

3. Directs the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

Item 09-02. *On an Alternative to Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.*

Answered with the action taken on Item 09-01. [See p. 521.]

Item 09-03. *On Faithful Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.*

Answered with the action taken on Item 09-01. [See p. 525.]

Item 09-04. *On Faithful Response to Climate Change—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.*

Answered with the action taken on Item 09-01. [See p. 530.]

Item 09-05. *On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical "Laudato Si"—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

Approved as amended. [See p. 535.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Santa Fe overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to [direct the Stated Clerk to] do the following:

~~“1. Communicate [gratitude] [appreciation] to Pope Francis I for his efforts in preparing and courageously circulating the encyclical, ‘Laudato Si,’ [~~and to encourage its study and use throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)~~] [~~and to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for their positive reception of the same~~] (<http://www.usccb.org/news/2015/15-094.cfm>).~~

~~“2. To encourage its study and use throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in dialogue with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) statements of environmental theology that have led us to create environmental justice ministries since the early 1970s;]~~

~~“[2-] [3.] Inform all churches within the PC(USA) where copies of the encyclical are available for free. (It is accessible on [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html]] [~~http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html~~] and in printed form from booksellers; another is available at <http://presbypeacefellowship.org/laudatosi>].~~

~~“[3-] [4.] [Ask synods, presbyteries, and congregations to] [~~E~~] [e]ncourage nonpartisan, ecumenical and inter-faith groups to carefully study and discuss the document through use of a study guide. ([~~H~~] [One] is accessible at no cost at [~~ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/readers-guide-laudato-si~~] [<http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/readers-guide-laudato-si>]; another is available at <http://presbypeacefellowship.org/laudatosi>]; and also in printed form at booksellers [~~and~~].]~~

~~“[4-] [5.] [Ask synods, presbyteries, and congregations to] [~~E~~] [e]ncourage nonpartisan, ecumenical and inter-faith groups to act to alleviate the crisis and suffering [caused by environmental damage and climate change].~~

~~“[6. The PC(USA) joins Pope Francis’ call for all Christians to support an ecumenical day of prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1 annually. This day was first proposed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation is to be included on PC(USA) Program Calendars and resources are to be made available online on the PC(USA) website.]”~~

Item 09-06. *On Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or Internally Displaced—From the Presbytery of New York City.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 538.]

1. Amend Recommendation 2.c. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“c. [~~Dramatically increased~~] [Increase] support by governments, religious entities, private organizations, and individuals for direct refugee services.”

2. Amend Recommendation 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Joining denominational entities and staff named above, PC(USA) presbyteries, sessions, and pastors should encourage congregations to host, co-sponsor, and/or support refugee families.

“a. Churches can provide basic support such as clothing, housing, furniture, [language teaching] and food.

“b. Churches can provide a social connection for refugees to assist their acclimation to the community—including a welcoming voice for Muslims [and persons of all other religious views].”

3. Add new Recommendations 5. and 6. to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[5. Direct PC(USA) entities, including the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to advocate for an end to and prevention of conflicts that cause people to be internally and externally displaced from their homes.

“[6. Reaffirm the actions taken on immigration by the 216th, 217th, and 220th General Assemblies (2004), (2006), and (2012).”

Item 09-07.

Item 09-07 has been moved to 14 Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions and has been re-signed the following item number: Item 14-13. [See p. 1015 of the electronic copy.]

Item 09-08. *On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources—From the Presbytery of Seattle.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 541.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Seattle overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to empower the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of Public Witness (OPW) in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry to the United Nations, to witness against environmental degradation and to affirm public policy that supports good stewardship of natural resources. With firm biblical foundation and the policies of twenty General Assemblies to build upon, they may give voice to threats to air and water quality; and to the well-being of humans and all God’s creation, including carefully documented threats from fracking; threats from ~~crude oil transport and storage and, indeed,~~ all modes of fossil fuel extraction; processing, transport, and storage; and threats from methane and other destabilizing and harmful byproducts that results from industrial processes. This empowers both ~~the~~ the offices to speak for the church to uphold the integrity of creation and speak against emerging or worsening environmental injustices.”

Item 09-09. *Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 09-01. [See p. 543.]

Item 09-10. *Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship—From the Board of Pensions, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.*

Approved. [See p. 550.]

Item 09-11. *On Amending G-1.0304, “The Ministry of Members,” by Adding “Caring for God’s Creation”—From the Presbytery of New Castle.*

Approved. [See p. 556.]

Item 09-12. *On Advocacy Against Factory Farming—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.*

Approved as amended. [See p. 562.]

Amend the recommendation section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

~~[1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate wherever possible in favor of alternatives to CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) or IFAP[S] (Industrial [Food] [Farm] Animal Production [Sites]), commonly known as] also known as CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) or factory [farms] [farming], and to advocate against measures that support industrialized animal farming, with specific attention to large scale vertical integration/coordination in the meat industry, recognizing that large scale farming is necessary for producing the large amount of food needed to sustain our growing population.]~~ [1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to responsibly advocate wherever possible in favor of humane treatment of animals on all size of farms. Furthermore, as an assembly of Christians, it is our duty to promote environmental stewardship and additional public regulations within reason, such as CAFO, which encourage minimizing the impact that modern production practices have on God’s beautiful earth: acknowledging that large scale farming is necessary to produce sufficient food to feed the world’s growing population.]

“2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate in support of farm and processing plant workers, ‘fence line’ communities surrounding ~~factory farms~~ IFAP sites, racial ethnic farmers, and family farmers and ranchers.

“3. ~~Remind the church of~~ Apply to industrialized animal farming insights from the 1990 ~~proclamation~~ report, ‘Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice,’ which asserts that humanity and nature are so inextricably bound that the suffering of one affects the other. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a history of affirming that protection of the environment is an essential part of the Christian faith.

“[4. Apply insights from the 2002 report, ‘We Are What We Eat,’ which was prepared by and with farmers, ranchers, and those involved in rural ministry, and which reminds us of our need to be aware of the impact of choices related to the food we produce, process, and consume. It calls us to put faith in action by praying, advocating, and acting for rural communities.]

“[4. Encourage all levels of the denomination (presbyteries, congregations, and individual members) to purchase only meat that carries the minimal certification of ‘Certified Humane Raised & Handled.’] [5. Recognize that damage is done to the Body of Christ when we vilify those who work in good faith in an industry that undergirds most of modern life; encourage collaboration with the many individuals in the food industry who seek to engage food production in positive and creative ways.]”

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Jochebed Jordan, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues, and Sarah Sanderson-Doughty, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues, to present the committee report.

Moderator Jordan invited Annie Ntumba Tshiswaka, Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa, Congo; Daniel Izquierdo, general secretary of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba; and Dr. Lee Hong Jung, general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, to address the assembly.

Moderator Jordan introduced Item 12-06. A motion from the floor to amend Item 12-06 was approved. Item 12-06 was approved as amended.

Moderator Jordan introduced Item 12-02, to be answered by the action taken on Item 12-06. It was approved.

Vice-Moderator Sanderson-Doughty introduced Item 12-01, an alternate resolution from the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues. It was approved. Vice-Moderator Sanderson-Doughty introduced Item 12-05. It was approved with comment.

Moderator Jordan assumed the microphone.

This concluded the report of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues

Wednesday Consent Agenda items indicated by an asterisk.

Items with financial implications are indicated by a dollar sign, \$, in this report.

I. Plenary Action

\$Item 12-01. *On Acknowledging and Reconciling for Killing Korean Civilians in July 1950—From the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse.*

Approved an alternate resolution. (See p. 853.)

In response to Item 12-01, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the following alternate resolution:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Acknowledges that during the Korean War, American troops knowingly killed at least 150 Korean civilians (and probably between 250 and 300, mostly women and children) on July 26–29, 1950, near the village of No Gun Ri.

2. Directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with the president of the United States and members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, to request an official statement to the Republic of Korea that would include:

a. an acknowledgement of the responsibility of the United States military for knowingly killing Korean civilians at No Gun Ri;

b. an apology and statement of regret for the actions of United States troops at No Gun Ri, with an indication of openness to consider appropriate compensation to the surviving victims and the families of those killed or wounded in that incident; and

c. a commitment to include information about the events at No Gun Ri in the training of United States military personnel to diminish the likelihood of such events happening in the future.

3. Directs staff persons from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consult electronically with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s mission partners in the Republic of Korea, including the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), in order to:

a. offer condolences to the approximately forty surviving victims of the events of No Gun Ri on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

b. create a bibliography of resources about the events at No Gun Ri;

c. create worship materials to remember the people impacted by the events at No Gun Ri;

d. share the bibliography and worship materials and this overture and rationale electronically with the congregations and presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK);

e. explore possibilities for joint prayer and witness regarding continuing tensions on the Korean peninsula, in the South China Sea, and other considerations for peace, world order, security, and meeting basic human needs that are currently before their congregations and members.

[Financial Implication: PMA—\$14,932 (2017), \$0 (2018)—Revised]

Item 12-02. *On Celebrating the Completion of the Six-Year Discernment on Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of Mission.*

Answered by the action taken on Item 12-06. (See p. 857.)

Item 12-03

Item 12-03 has not been assigned.

*Item 12-04. *Overture Pertaining to the Congo—From the Presbytery of Chicago.*

Approved. (See p. 858.)

Item 12-05. *On Affirming Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley.*

Approved with comment. (See p. 860.)

Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) does not include support for the concurrence material from Genessee Valley and San Francisco presbyteries, since the overture does not make reference to any specific conflict situations.

\$Item 12-06. *Risking Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved as amended. (See p. 867.)

Amend Recommendation 10. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“10. Approve the following affirmations to guide the peacemaking witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

“a. ~~[We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge evil and hatred, and who calls the church to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.]~~ [We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict evil and hatred, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence.]

~~“b. [We confess our complicity in the world’s violence and our failures to stand with those who suffer, even as we pray for the Spirit’s courage to unmask idolatries, speak truth about war and oppression, and respond with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.] [We confess that we have sinned by participating in acts of violence, both structural and physical, or by our failure to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.]~~

“c. We follow Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, and reclaim the power of nonviolent love evident in his life and teaching, his healings and reversals of evil, his cross and resurrection.

“d. Learning from nonviolent struggles and counting the costs of war, we draw upon the traditions of Just War, Christian pacifism, and Just Peacemaking to cultivate moral imagination and discern God’s redemptive work in history.

“[e. We commit ourselves to studying and practicing nonviolent means of conflict resolution, nonviolent methods for social change, and nonviolent opposition to war. Even as we actively engage in a peace discernment process, we commit ourselves to continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the United States military, veterans, and their families. We promise to support materially and socially veterans of war who suffer injury in body, mind, or spirit, even as we work toward the day when they will need to fight no more.]

~~“[e. We commit ourselves to practice the things that make for peace in our daily lives, families, and communities, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to take part in social movements for a domination-free order.] [f. We place our faith, hope, and trust in God alone. We renounce violence as a means to further selfish national interests, to procure wealth, or to dominate others. We will practice boldly the things that make for peace and look for the day when ‘they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.’]”~~

[Financial Implication: Presbyterian Mission Agency \$78,100 (2017); \$77,750 (2018)]

*Item 12-07. *New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento”—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.*

Approved. (See p. 905.)

Item 12-08

Item 12-08 not referred for lack of concurrence.

*Item 12-09. *On Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination—From the Synod of the Covenant.*

Approved as amended. (See p. 938.)

1. Amend Recommendations 2. and 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Commit the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to support the goals expressed in the report to

“a. protect individuals from violence;

“b. prevent torture and ill-treatment;

“c. decriminalize homosexuality and to repeal other laws used to punish individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity;

“d. protect individuals from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; ~~and~~

“e. protect rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and to take part in the conduct of public affairs[~~]~~]; and

“[f. protect access to travel and all public facilities.]

“3. ~~[Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to identify and encourage legislation to accomplish the above goals in the United States and U.S. territories, giving attention to the strategies enumerated in the report.] [Direct~~

the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, and the Office of the General Assembly to identify and oppose legislation that discriminates on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and to identify and encourage legislation to accomplish the above goals in the United States and U.S. territories, giving attention to the strategies enumerated in the report.]”

2. Amend Recommendation 8. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“8. Direct the [Office of the General Assembly to develop resources that are responsive]~~ [Presbyterian Mission Agency to give attention] to the particular needs of LGBT immigrants, and to provide support to congregations wishing to welcome LGBT persons seeking asylum.”

*Item 12-10. *On Committing to Play an Active Part in the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic—From the Presbytery of Southern New England.*

Approved as amended. (See p. 941.)

1. Amend Recommendation 4.b.(3) by striking the current text and inserting new text as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“(3) — mobilize financial resources to support education and stigma reduction initiatives, both domestically and in cooperation with global partners.]”~~

“(3) encourage congregations to use existing methods of fundraising, such as the portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering retained locally to be used toward this cause, either by encouraging the support of the Presbyterian AIDS Network, or another HIV/AIDS ministry with which the PC(USA) is in partnership. The Presbyterian Mission Agency is not asked to fund the goals of this overture.]”

2. Amend Recommendation 4. by adding a new Recommendation 4.d. to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[d. Direct the Stated Clerk to designate one Sunday a year, beginning with 2016 through 2020, as PC(USA) World AIDS Sunday for the purpose of raising awareness, lifting prayer, and promoting advocacy among PC(USA) members, and for the taking of a special collection to be used to support the prevention of HIV and AIDS both domestically and internationally.]”

*Item 12-11. *Commissioners’ Resolution. Reaffirming the Ministry of Sanctuary by Congregations.*

Approved. (See p. 944.)

*Item 12-12. *Commissioners’ Resolution. On Affirming Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation in the Number of Displaced Person/Refugees.*

Approved as amended. (See p. 946.)

Amend Recommendation 2. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

~~“2. [We direct the Stated Clerk to notify the President of the United States, the office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Homeland Security of our commitment to these fundamental principals and our commitment as a church to support efforts to welcome refugees, and of our particular concern for refugees from Syria and Central America at this moment in time.] [We direct the Stated Clerk to notify the President of the United States, the office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Homeland Security of our commitment to these fundamental principles and our commitment as a church to support efforts to welcome all refugees. At this moment in time, our particular concern is for refugees from Syria, Central America, and conflict zones in Africa.]”~~

*Item 12-13. *Commissioners’ Resolution. Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula.*

Approved as amended. (See p. 951.)

Amend Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. [~~Affirm~~] [Receive] the ‘Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula,’ adopted by the 10th assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) meeting in South Korea in November 2013[, and commend it for study and reflection].”

DISSENTS

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 12-01 from the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues: Terry Simpkins, Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.

The following commissioner filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 12-06 from the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues: Gale Watkins, Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay made several announcements.

CLOSING PRAYER

Theological Student Advisory Delegate Sally Herlong, from Union Presbyterian Seminary, offered the closing prayer for this session of the General Assembly.

RECESS

The assembly recessed at 10:57 p.m.

Saturday, June 25, 2016, 9:00 A.M.

BUSINESS MEETING XII

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened by Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators, 222nd General Assembly (2016), in Halls CD of the of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon.

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, who led the assembly in the convening prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Moderator George Anderson, and Vice-Moderator Cheni Khonje of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures for a report from the committee.

Co-Moderator Anderson congratulated the assembly for its diligence and good work the previous night completing the committee reports.

Vice-Moderator Khonje reported that the minutes of business meetings from Saturday, June 18, 2016, to Sunday afternoon, June 19, 2016, in Item 02-02, as well as the minutes for Sunday, June 19, 2016, through Friday, June 24, 2016 (except for Thursday evening), in Item 02-04, have been reviewed and found in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for Committee 2 (Bills and Overtures). Minutes of business meetings from Friday afternoon, Friday evening, and Saturday morning will be approved by a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures after adjournment and posted on PC-Biz.

Moderator Anderson and Vice-Moderator Khonje commended the work of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Protests found to be in decorous language are recorded in the *Minutes* as follows:

Protest on the process regarding Item 10-16—From Taeler Morgan, commissioner from the Presbytery of Olympia:

“This is in reference to the business of CR 10-16 on the Mission Coordination Committee.

“After being repeatedly rescheduled CR 10-16 was placed on our agenda for 4:15 pm. The moderator chose to take it up at 3:45 pm when the commissioner speaking to it was not present. I was the first person to the mic and asked if we ought not wait until the commissioner was present. The moderator replied noting he was not there and indicating we should move forward anyway. Immediately a motion was made to disapprove CR 10-16. Discussion ensued and finally the commissioner

arrived at which point he was allowed to present. I do not feel this was a fair process, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and putting the presenting commissioner at a disadvantage.”

Protest on motion made by vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues to answer Items 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 with the action taken on Items 09-01 and 09-09—From Kathleen Owens, commissioner from the Presbytery of John Knox:

“I protest the motion made by the Vice-Moderator of the Environment and Immigration Issues to answer 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 with the action on 09-01 and 09-09. This was not the committee’s action and therefore out of order. The committee voted to approve 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 as amended. This is what should have been moved by the Vice-Moderator. These three motions had several items included that had nothing to do with divestment, but instead spoke to our church’s witness to the care of creation through PILP loans, promotion of earth care congregations, and the advocacy work of our Office of Public Witness, and many other programs that are not answered within 09-01 and 09-09.”

Protest on staff offering opinions during debate regarding Item 14-04—From Augustine Wright III, commission from the Presbytery of Stockton; Justin L. Marple, commissioner from the Presbytery of Western New York; Jarrett Johnson, commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Mickey Stueck, commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Christopher Carlson, commissioner from the Presbytery of Peace River; Geoffrey G. Rach, commissioner from the Presbytery of Washington; Dana Wilmot, commissioner from the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas; Sandy Gandolfi, commissioner from the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas; Terry Simpkins, commissioner from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia; Isaac Chung, commissioner from the Presbytery of Detroit; Mary Kay Glunt, commissioner from the Presbytery of John Calvin:

“‘The notes of the true Kirk ... we believe, confess, and avow to be: first, the true preaching of the Word of God, in which God has revealed himself to us, as the writings of the prophets and apostles declare; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus, with which must be associated the Word and promise of God to seal and confirm them in our hearts; and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God’s Word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished’ (*Book of Confessions*, 3.18).

“The proposed new Directory for Worship (Item 14-04) introduces a radical departure from the historic and ecumenical Christian understanding of the right administration of the sacraments. Yet this change was downplayed in debate by an official from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) who offered an opinion speaking against the ‘Marple amendment,’ which would have brought back the phrase ‘the baptized faithful’ in reference to those who are offered the Lord’s Supper (W-3.0402).

“It is improper for PMA staff to offer opinions rather than just factual information while commissioners are engaged in debate. Therefore, we ask for an investigation into this matter and whatever action is necessary to prevent a repeat performance of this practice on any other matter of business before this and future General Assemblies.”

Protest regarding the display and celebration of the approval of Item 07-03 at the Wednesday evening plenary—From Justin L. Marple, commissioner from the Presbytery of Western New York; Jarrett Johnson, commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Mickey Stueck, commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Christopher Carlson, commissioner from the Presbytery of Peace River; Geoffrey G. Rach, commissioner from the Presbytery of Washington; Terry Simpkins, commissioner from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia; Sandy Gandolfi, commissioner from the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas; Mary Kay Glunt, commissioner from the Presbytery of John Calvin; Christopher Davis, commissioner from the Presbytery of Northern Kansas; Augustine Wright III, commissioner from the Presbytery of Stockton:

“There is a lot of discussion about reconciliation and acceptance. A total of 25 presbyteries voted against adoption of the Belhar Confession. Many conservative Presbyterians did not want this document added to our Book of Confessions. They lost that vote. They accept that it is now part of our constitution.

“The display and celebration at the Wednesday evening plenary was offensive to many of us. It is especially disappointing that this was led from the platform, with musicians ready to lead in song. We protest this unseemly display and demonstration as well as the fact that it was not stopped by anyone in the OGA, the Stated Clerk or the Co-Moderators. We ask that no further demonstrations be permitted which would unduly rub salt into the wounds of those who have lost a vote. We ask that those who planned this demonstration be investigated and, if appropriate, action taken against PCUSA employees.”

FINAL REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Moderator Mary Lou Cox of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures for the committee’s final report.

Moderator Cox reported that the General Assembly approved \$13,120 in financial implications for 2016; \$262,203 for 2017; and \$270,583 for 2018. The total approved additional financial implications for the 2017–2018 budget is \$545,906. The per capita impact is an additional increase of \$.17 in the rate for 2017 and \$.18 for 2018.

Moderator Cox introduced Item 03-13, which was approved with amendment. This concluded Report Two of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures

Report Two

I. Plenary Action

Item 03-13. Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for General Assembly Per Capita Budgets 2016–2018

[Approved as amended. See p. 179.]

Amend Recommendations 1.–4. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

1. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) incorporate into the *Minutes* the Comparative Balance Sheet for 2015 and 2014, along with the 2015 Actual Performance in the Per Capita Statement of Activities.

[See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment A—Comparative Balance Sheet and Attachment B—Per Capita Statement of Activities.]

2. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

a. Approve the Revised 2016 General Assembly Per Capita Expense Budget totaling [~~\$12,434,777~~] [\$12,430,897 including \$13,120 in new Financial Implications approved by this General Assembly];

b. Approve the total Expenditure Budget for 2017 totaling [~~\$12,747,185~~] [\$12,892,388, including \$262,203 in new financial implications], and for 2018 totaling [~~\$12,735,784~~] [\$12,992,367, including \$270,583 in new financial implications].

c. Approve a per capita apportionment rate of [~~\$7.33~~] [\$7.50] per active member for 2017 [including 17 cents for new financial implications], and a rate of [~~\$7.55~~] [\$7.73] to be effective for 2018 [including 18 cents for new financial implications].

3. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve that an amount of \$1,365,540 be designated from the 2017 per capita budget (about half the cost of the General Assembly meeting), and be reserved for use in the year of the General Assembly meeting (2018).

[See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment B—Per Capita Statement of Activities, Budget Proposals 2014–2015 and see also Attachment B1—Per Capita Statement of Cash Flow 2012–2016.]

4. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the attached allocation of designated funds for OGA, and PMA task forces, totaling \$1,830,588 for 2017[~~5~~] [and] \$2,071,838 for 2018.

[See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment C.]

DISSENT

The following commissioners filed a dissent from the action taken on Item 03-13 of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures: Justin L. Marple, Presbytery of Western New York, and Augustine Wright III, Presbytery of Stockton.

FINAL REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Co-Moderator Edmiston recognized Moderator Eileen Best, Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination, for the final report of the committee.

Moderator Best reported that the total financial implications to the mission budget of actions approved by the assembly were \$282,744 for 2017 and \$162,500 for 2018.

Moderator Best introduced Item 10-15, Recommendation A.3., the total mission budget: \$63,530,297 for 2017 and \$63,450,591 for 2018. Item 10-15, Recommendation A.3., was approved.

Moderator Best recognized Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, who addressed the assembly.

This concluded Report Two of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination. A summary of the report is as follows:

Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination

Report Two

I. Plenary Action

10-15, Recommendation A.3. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget 2017 and 2018.*

Approved. (See p. 624.)

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY 1001 WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES REPORT

Tony De La Rosa reported that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) currently supports 344 new worshipping communities. He shared other statistics about the 1001 Worshipping Communities project and introduced a video.

RECITATION OF PEACEMAKING AFFIRMATIONS

Co-Moderator Anderson led the assembly in reciting the new Peacemaking Affirmations as approved in Item 12-06 Friday evening.

YAAD PRESENTATION TO CO-MODERATORS AND OUTGOING STATED CLERK

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Young Adult Advisory Delegates Katherine Mullings and Robert Lyons, representing the YAAD Council, for a presentation of personalized gift books and memes to the Co-Moderators and the Stated Clerk.

EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Co-Moderator Anderson recognized Associate Stated Clerk Tom Hay and Assistant Stated Clerk Deborah Davies who thanked the Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA) from the Presbytery of Cascades and presented a plaque to the committee. Gregg Neel, co-moderator of COLA, thanked Deborah Davies and Tom Hay for their work and presented a Pendleton blanket to Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons. Dave Crow, co-moderator of COLA, presented Pendleton stoles to Co-Moderators Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Co-Moderator Edmiston introduced Carol DeVaughan of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy Committee on Local Arrangements (COLA), who introduced a video welcoming the church to St. Louis, Missouri, host city for the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

THANKS TO STAFF

Co-Moderator Anderson called upon Stated Clerk Parsons who expressed his appreciation to OGA staff, staff from the other agencies, volunteers, and others.

At this point, outgoing Stated Clerk Parsons welcomed newly elected Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson to the Stated Clerk's chair on the platform.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Co-Moderator Anderson called upon J. Herbert Nelson for announcements on various topics.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2016

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:12 a.m., Co-Moderators Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston declared the 222nd General Assembly (2016) adjourned following worship, to be dissolved upon the convening of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) on June 16, 2018, in St. Louis, Missouri.

During worship, Larissa Kwong Abazia, Vice-Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), preached on “Left Behind.”

SECTION TWO

Assembly Committee Reports Containing
All Reports, Referrals, and Recommendations of the
Committee on the Office of the General Assembly,
the Office of the General Assembly, Permanent and Special Committees,
the General Assembly Council, the Board of Pensions,
the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation,
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation,
Overtures, and Commissioners' Resolutions

Item 00-01

[The assembly approved Item 00-01. See p. 2.]

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the following assembly committee structure [a brief list of the business to be referred to that committee follows the committee title]:

02 Bills and Overtures

03 General Assembly Procedures

Consider matters related to: meetings of the assembly and standing rule amendments, except those items assigned to the Way Forward Committee; per capita budget; operation of the Office of the General Assembly; statistics; publishing of reports; General Assembly Nominating Committee process; special committees; commissioners and advisory delegates credentials/leaves of absence; GA child protection policy.

04 The Way Forward

Consider matters related to: Overtures referring to structure of the meetings of the General Assembly; COGA and other conversations on ecclesiology; business concerning the future of six agency structure; reports of the Agency Review Committees for the OGA and the PMA

05 Mid Councils

Consider matters related to: the ongoing strengthening and nurturing of the mid councils of the PC(USA); mid council boundaries including Synod boundaries; mid council-related referrals; the report of the Mid Council Commission

06 Church Polity and Ordered Ministry.

Consider matters related to: amendments to Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (chapters 1 and 3), Form of Government Chapters I–IV, VI with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; amendments to the Rules of Discipline with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; recruiting, enlistment of persons to service of church; Advisory Committee on Litigation; Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

07 Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Consider matters related to: Approval and enactment of the Belhar Confession; amendments to Chapter V of the Form of Government with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; requests for interpretation; matters dealing with relationships with, and attitudes toward, other religious movements or bodies; conversations with other Presbyterian denominations; nominations for ecumenical advisory delegates; nominations for delegations to corresponding churches; reports of corresponding bodies

08 Middle East Issues

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs and the arms race primarily involving the nations of the Middle East; Middle East monitoring committee; MRTI recommendations concerning Middle East nations.

09 Immigration and Environmental Issues

Consider matters related to: the church's response to US immigration policies and related issues; plight of refugees worldwide; matters related to carbon fuels and the environment.

10 Mission Coordination

Consider matters related to: Mission programs authorized by General Assembly; PC(USA) vision and mission goals; Organization for Mission and General Assembly Mission Council Manual of Operations; mission budget; audits; churchwide compensation; initiatives on church growth and the 1001 Worshiping Communities program.

11 Social Justice Issues

Consider matters related to: Concerns of church in national affairs; national military matters; matters relating to righteousness and justice of persons/organizations.

12 Peacemaking and International Issues

Consider matters related to: Peacemaking, international military affairs, and the arms race except matters touched upon by the Middle East Issues Committee; international matters; human rights; international economic justice; global evangelism and education.

13 BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation

Consider matters related to: Report of Board of Pensions; business related to the church's pension, annuity, and medical plans; other forms of such programs, including government or private retirement programs; business related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

14 Theological Issues and Institutions

Consider matters related to: Amendments to the Directory for Worship and Chapter II of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity with Advisory Committee on the Constitution advice; authority and interpretation of Scripture; Christian educators; theological institutions; celebration of Lord's Supper requests.

Item 00-02

[The assembly approved Item 00-02. See p. 48.]

Report of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

With enthusiasm and joy, the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee nominates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to serve a four-year term as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale

The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee was elected by the 221st General Assembly (2014) and charged to bring to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) a single nomination for the office of Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA). The committee began its work in early 2015. We met in five, face-to-face meetings and by multiple conference calls. We received thirteen completed applications; all thirteen were interviewed by telephone. Six persons were invited for face-to-face interviews in late February 2016; all six underwent a vocational assessment under the auspices of the North Central Ministry Development Center. Three persons were invited for final, face-to-face conversations in early April 2016; extensive reference and background checks were conducted on these individuals. A full report of the committee's process is available on [PC-Biz](#) in the "Resources" section, as [Stated Clerk Nomination Committee Process Report](#).

After the final interviews and prayerful discernment, the committee wholeheartedly and overwhelmingly selected J. Herbert Nelson as its nominee.

The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee will offer an oral report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on Sunday, June 19, and, at that time, will place in nomination the name of J. Herbert Nelson for the office of Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Item 00-03

[The assembly approved Item 00-03. See pp. 11, 12.]

General Assembly Nominating Committee 2016 Nominations

Commissioners to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) will vote to elect many people to positions on the various entities of the General Assembly. In accordance with the *Book of Order*, G-3.0111, and to ensure careful nominations of members to these entities, the General Assembly Nominating Committee proposes a slate of nominees for election. Positions to be filled are listed on the attached pages.

Biographical Information: A short descriptive paragraph for each nominee being presented by the General Assembly Nominating Committee can be found by June 17 on the GA Nominations website – www.pcusa.org/nominations.

Inclusive Representation: The nominations made by the General Assembly Nominating Committee are responsive to and reflective of the principles of participation and representation expressed in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. This report provides diversity information following the name of each nominee as well as a chart describing inclusiveness information for each committee to which the General Assembly is electing members.

Nominations Process: The process for nominations proposed to the General Assembly is a long and thorough one. As of June 12, 2016, the General Assembly Nominating Committee has on file approximately 260 Application for Nomination forms. The names of these persons were gathered through

- self-nomination;
- suggestions from sessions, presbyteries, and synods;
- and other Presbyterians who suggested the nominations of persons they knew or with whom they've worshipped and worked.

Application for Nomination forms are received by the General Assembly Nominations office and a copy of each form is shared with all members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee. In addition a copy of the application is sent to the committee or entity itself.

Each applicant is asked to solicit references from three persons of their choosing. In response to the action of the 208th General Assembly (1996), an appraisal is also solicited from the applicant's council of membership—presbytery for teaching elders and session for ruling elders and church members. The General Assembly Nominating Committee will not nominate a person unless it has received three appraisals, one of which must be an appraisal from the applicant's council of membership.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation has encouraged persons, particularly those in underrepresented categories, to consider serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on General Assembly entities and to submit an application for nomination form for the General Assembly Nominating Committee consideration. The General Assembly Committee on Representation has reviewed this report.

Although the majority of nominations are proposed for “at-large” positions, some people are nominated as representatives of specific presbyteries or synods to a particular entity. Entities that have such representational positions include the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. In these cases, the General Assembly Nominating Committee requests presbyteries and synods to send the names of no less than three persons for consideration. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may select only from the pool suggested by the synod or presbytery—through its regular nominating process—when filling a mid council representation slot in these instances.

This report lists the names of persons being proposed for nomination and distinguishes between those positions that are at-large (AL), those that are synod (S) or presbytery (P) representation slots, etc. and those that are filled by representatives from other General Assembly agencies or ecumenical bodies.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee also needs to take into account the inclusiveness requirements outlined in the *Book of Order* or mandated by the General Assembly: racial ethnic, geographic, physical, theological, and age diversity. The committee is also sensitive to the needs for expertise expressed by the entities themselves. It is a balancing act that the General Assembly Nominating Committee takes seriously and faithfully as it attempts to discern the call of Presbyterians to service on committees at the General Assembly level.

Persons who are elected to service on General Assembly committees and entities are, in most cases, eligible to be reelected to a second term. The 219th General Assembly (2010) urged “General Assembly entities to consider re-nominations as the exception, rather than the rule and applied only to those members whose continued service is clearly beneficial to on-going or projected work in order to assist the GANC in making its careful nominations.” However, many of the persons who are proposed in the report are re-nominations.

Descriptions for each committee have been developed by the entity and adapted from the Entity Lists and Descriptions page of the General Assembly nominations website—pcusa.org/nominations. Nomination information for the 2016–2018 cycle is available at the Office of the General Assembly exhibit area—Booth 423.

Procedure for Nominations from the Floor: The procedure for nominations from the floor is described in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, F. General Assembly Plenary Meeting 6.c. Nominating from the Floor:

When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee's nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

The name of the specific person being challenged must be stated on the “Nomination by Commissioner” form. Please return this form, completed in full on all sides, to the ASSEMBLY INFORMATION CENTER located in Pre-Function C no later than 1:30 p.m. on Monday, June 20, 2016, so that it may be verified for eligibility and the Stated Clerk may prepare for a ballot. Thank you.

This report containing the General Assembly Nominating Committee “Proposed Nominees” will be reported for action on Friday, June 24. Commissioners and advisory delegates will need the following pages for action at that time.

Key for the General Assembly Nominating Committee Report

Mariana Pardo (D) (YA)	HFR	26–35	Milwaukee	LAK	AL NEW
⑤	④	② ①	⑤	⑥	⑦
					⑧ ⑨

means

Mariana Pardo (person living with a disability) (Young Adult) Hispanic/Latina, Female, Ruling Elder, 26–35 years old, Milwaukee Presbytery, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, At-large position, New (first term) nomination.

Key:

① Gender and Ordination designation:

FT—Female Teaching, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
FR—Female Ruling Elder
FL—Female Church Member
FD—Female Deacon
FC—Female Minister (non-Presbyterian)
MT—Male Teaching Elder, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
MR—Male Ruling Elder
ML—Male Church Member
MD—Male Deacon
MC—Male Minister (non-Presbyterian)

② Racial/Ethnic designation:

A—Asian American
B—African American
H—Hispanic/Latina/Latino
M—Middle Eastern
N—Native American
O—Other
W—Caucasian

Combination of letter codes may be used when applicant indicates more than one racial/ethnic category (bi-racial or multi-racial) i.e. B/N = African American and Native American.

③ Person living with disability designation:

D—Disability (persons with self-identified disability)

④ Youth/Young Adult designation:

YA—Young Adult (35 years and younger when nominated)

⑤ Age Range:

25— (25 years old and younger); **26+** =26–35 years old; **36+** =36–45 years old; **46+** =46–55 years old; **56+** =56–65 years old; **66+** = 66–75 years old; and **75+** = over 75 years old

⑥ Presbytery

⑦ Synod:

ANW—Alaska Northwest; **BPR**—Borinquen en Puerto Rico | Puerto Rico; **COV**—Covenant; **LAK**—Lakes and Prairies; **LIN**—Lincoln Trails; **LW**—Living Waters; **MAM**—Mid-America; **MAT**—Mid-Atlantic; **NE**—Northeast; **PAC**—Pacific; **ROC**—Rocky Mountains; **SA**—South Atlantic; **SCH**—Southern California and Hawaii; **SUN**—Sun; **SW**—Southwest; **TRI**—Trinity

⑧ Membership:

AA =Asian American At-Large
AC =Asian American Caucus
ACE =Associate Pastor of Christian Education
AL =At-Large
BA =African American At-large
COGA =Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
COMM =Commissioner
DCE =Director of Christian Education
ELCA = Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
FND =Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation
HC =Hispanic/Latina/Latino Caucus
MC =Middle Eastern Caucus
NC =Native American Caucus
P =Presbytery
PMAB =Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
RE Comm =Ruling Elder Commissioner
S =Synod
TE Comm =Teaching Elder Commissioner
UCC =United Church of Christ
WCL =Woman Church Lay Employee

⑨ Nomination Category:

NEW =New Nomination
REN =Re-nominated
† =Appointed by General Assembly Moderator

Diversity Chart

FR	MR	FT	MT	FL	ML	FD	MD	FC	MC
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

FR	=Female Ruling Elder
MR	=Male Ruling Elder
FT	=Female Teaching Elder
MT	=Male Teaching Elder
FD	=Female Deacon
MD	=Male Deacon
FC	=Female Minister (non-Presbyterian)
MC	=Male Minister (non-Presbyterian)

A. Advisory Committee on the Constitution**Class of 2018**

1. Daniel Saperstein WMT 56-65 Lake Huron COV AL NEW+

Class of 2022

2. Forrest Claassen WMT 46-55 Los Ranchos SCH AL NEW
 3. Catherine Ulrich WFT 56-65 Denver ROC AL NEW
 4. Judy Woods WFR 56-65 Whitewater Valley LIN AL NEW

† Moderator appointment

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
2020	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2022	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Total	1	2	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0

B. Advisory Committee on Litigation**Class of 2022**

1. Michael E. Williams WMR 56-65 San Diego SCH AL NEW
 2. Pending

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
2020	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2022	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0

C. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**Class of 2017**

1. Mary Jorgenson WFR Heartland MAM PMAB NEW

Class of 2018

2. Jean Demmler WFR 56-65 Denver ROC PMAB NEW

Class of 2020

3. Beverly Brewster WFT 56-65 Redwoods PAC AL NEW
 4. Rachel Eggebeen (YA) WFL 26-35 deCristo SW AL REN
 5. Kevin Johnson BMT 56-65 Detroit COV AL REN
 6. Sylvia Thorson-Smith WFR 66-75 deCristo SW AL NEW
 7. Gloria Tuma MFR 66-75 Cascades PAC AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2017/18	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
2020	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	1
Total	7	1	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	10	0	0	1

D. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns**Class of 2018**

1. José Luis Casal HMT 66-75 Tres Rios SUN HC NEW+
 2. Buddy Monahan NMT 46-55 Tres Rios SUN NC NEW+

00 PLENARY

Class of 2020

3.	Mark S. Jones	BMR	56-65	Pacific	SCH	BC	REN
4.	Raafat Labib Zaki	MMT	46-55	Grace	SUN	MC	REN
5.	Victorius Adventius Hamel	AMT	National Capital	MAT	AC	NEW	
6.	Jessica Vazquez Torres	HFL	36-45	Greater Atlanta	SA	HA	NE-W
7.	Pending					NA	NEW
8.	Pending					AL	NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	0	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
2020	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	1	5	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	0

E. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns**Class of 2018**

1.	Jeanne Choy Tate	WFR	66-75	San Francisco	PAC	WCL	NEW
----	------------------	-----	-------	---------------	-----	-----	-----

Class of 2020

2.	Mary M. Fulkerson	WFT	56-65	New Hope	MAT	AL	REN
3.	Susan Wiggins	WFR	56-65	Arkansas	SUN	AL	REN
4.	Terry Alexander	WMT	66-75	Western North Carolina	MAT	AL	NEW
5.	Jon Forbes	WMR	25-	Northeast Georgia	SA	AL	NEW
6.	Destini Hodges	BFR	25-	Carlisle	TRI	AL	NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2017/18	3	0	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
2020	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2
Total	5	1	4	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	3

F. Audit Committee**Class of 2018**

1.	Steve Asher	WMR	66-75	Mackinac	COV	AL	NEW
2.	Ellen Pearre Cason	WFR	56-65	New York City	NE	AL	REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Total	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

G. Board of Pensions**Class of 2018**

1.	Mary C. (Molly) Baskin	WFL	56-65	Chicago	LIN	PMAB	NEW
----	------------------------	-----	-------	---------	-----	------	-----

Class of 2020

2.	Adam Ceteznik	WMR	36-45	Seattle	ANW	AL	NEW
3.	Harland Doak	WMR	46-55	Mission	SUN	AL	REN
4.	Fairfax Fair	WFT	46-55	Detroit	COV	AL	REN
5.	Amy Williams Fowler	WFT	56-65	Genesee Valley	NE	AL	REN
6.	Margaret Fox	WFL	26-35	Southern New England	NE	AL	NEW
7.	Arlene Gordon	BFT	66-75	Tropical Florida	SA	AL	REN
8.	Mark Lu	AML	36-45	Los Ranchos	SCH	AL	REN
9.	Katherine (Kathy) Lueckert	WFR (D)	56-65	Heartland	MAM	AL	NEW
10.	David McBride	WML	66-75	New Castle	MAT	AL	NEW
11.	Linda Patrick	WFL	56-65	Middle Tennessee	LW	AL	REN
12.	Floyd White	BMT	46-55	West Jersey	NE	AL	NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	3	11	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	2
2020	3	4	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	1
Total	6	15	4	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	23	0	1	3

H. Committee on the Office of the General Assembly**Class of 2020**

1.	Stephanie Anthony	WFT	36-45	Twin Cities Area	LAK	AL NEW
2.	Mark Boyd	WMT	36-45	Beaver-Butler	TRI	AL NEW
3.	Margaret Elliott	WFR	46-55	Salem	MAT	AL REN
4.	Barbara J. Gaddis	WFT	56-65	North Central Iowa	LAK	AL REN
5.	Lynn Hargrove	WFT	56-65	New Covenant	SUN	AL NEW
6.	Clayton (Andy) James	WMT	36-45	New York City	NE	AL NEW
7.	Eliana Maxim	HFT	46-55	Seattle	ANW	AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	1	3	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	1	0	1
2020	1	0	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
Total	2	1	7	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	10	1	0	1

I. Committee on Theological Education**Class of 2020**

1.	Garnett E. Foster	WFT	66-75	Chicago	LIN	AL REN
2.	Annie Vanessa Hawkins	BFT	46-55	San Francisco	PAC	AL NEW
3.	Katherine Smith	WFT	26-35	Middle Tennessee	LW	AL NEW
4.	Amaury Tañón-Santos	B/HMT	26-35	Elizabeth	NE	AL NEW
5.	Michael Williams	WMT	66-75	New Castle	MAT	AL NEW
6.	Pending (Ruling Elder)					AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2
2020	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1
Total	2	0	3	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	1	0	3

J. Educator Certification Committee**Class of 2020**

1.	Hugh Anderson	WMT	56-65	Cascades	PAC	MC REN
2.	Susan Sharp Campbell	WFT	46-55	West Virginia	TRI	AL REN
3.	Mary Marcotte	WFR	56-65	New Covenant	SUN	AL REN
4.	Gordon Mikoski	WMT	46-55	New Brunswick	NE	PTI NEW
5.	Lita Simpson	HFR	66-75	Mission	SUN	R/E NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3
2020	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Total	3	0	1	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	3

K. Finance Committee**Class of 2018**

1.	John Hinkle	WMR	75+	Western North Carolina	MAT	AL NEW
2.	Raul Felipe Santiago-Rivera	HMR	36-45	San Juan	BPR	AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

L. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations**Class of 2020**

1.	Anne Bond			WFR	56-65	Denver	ROC	AL NEW
2.	Laura Brekke			WFT	26-35	San Jose	PAC	AL NEW
3.	John E. (Jack) Felch Jr.	WMR	66-75	Lehigh			TRIAL	NEW
4.	Cynthia Holder Rich	WFT	56-65	Maumee Valley	COV	AL NEW		
5.	Stephen J. Pointon	WMR	26-35	Homestead	LAK	AL NEW		
6.	Y. Dianna Wright	BFR	46-55	Salem	MAT	AL REN		

00 PLENARY

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
2020	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
Total	3	3	4	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0

M. General Assembly Committee on Representation**Class of 2020**

- Edward (Byron) Elam BML 25– Mid-South LW AL NEW
- Aida Faris MFR 75+ Mission SUN AL NEW
- Treena Parvello NFL 36–45 deCristo SW AL NEW
- Evelyn Pugh A/WFL 25– San Francisco PAC AL NEW
- Rubén Ortiz-Rodríguez HMT 46–55 Suroeste BPR AL REN
- Paula Sanders WFT 56–65 Twin Cities Area LAK AL NEW
- Adan Mairena HMT 36–45 Philadelphia TRI AL NEW]

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	2	2	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	2
2020	3	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total	5	3	4	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	2	3

N. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission**Class of 2020**

- William (Bill) Myers WMT 46–55 Mackinac COV AL NEW

Class of 2022

- Susan McGhee WFT 56–65 Ohio Valley LIN AL NEW
- Craig Lindsey WMT 56–65 Cayuga-Syracuse NE AL NEW
- Paul Hooker WMT 56–65 New Covenant SUN AL NEW
- June Lorenzo NFR 46-55 Santa Fe SW AL NEW
- Pending (Ruling Elder) TRI AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
2020	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	1
2022	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Total	5	2	3	5	0	0	1	0	1	0	12	0	0	0

O. Mission Development Resources Committee**Class of 2018**

- David Zimmerman WMR 46–55 San Francisco PAC FDN NEW†

Class of 2020

- Arthur Canada BMT 66–75 Charlotte MAT AL NEW
- Martin W. Lifer III WMT 46–55 Charleston-Atlantic SA AL REN
- Frances Lin AFR 36–45 San Diego SCH AL REN
- Cecilia Moran HFR 66–75 Stockton PAC AL NEW
- Perzavia Praylow BFL 36–45 Trinity SA AL NEW
- Donald A. Wingate WMR 56–65 Central Florida SA AL REN
- † Moderator appointment

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	3	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	1	0
2020	3	1	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Total	4	4	1	4	1	2	2	0	0	0	8	0	0	0

P. Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee**Class of 2020**

- Sharon Davison BFR 56–65 New York City NE AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

00 PLENARY

2020	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Q. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation**Class of 2020**

1.	Wonjae Choi	AFT	36-45	Philadelphia	TRI	AL NEW
2.	Bridget-Anne Hampden	BFR	56-65	Charlotte	MAT	AL NEW
3.	Stephen Kelly	WMR	56-65	Transylvania	LW	AL REN
4.	Eustacia Marshall	BFT	26-35	Charlotte	MAT	AL REN
5.	Michelle Minter	BFR	46-55	New Brunswick	NE	AL REN
6.	Malcolm Nimick	WMR	46-55	Pittsburgh	TRI	AL NEW
7.	Jihyun Oh	AFT	36-45	Greater Atlanta	SA	AL NEW
8.	Eric Osborne	WML	26-35	Mid South	LW	AL NEW
9.	Neal Presa	AMT	36-45	San Diego	SCH	AL NEW
10.	Paul Roberts	BMT	46-55	Greater Atlanta	SA	AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	3	4	1	1			1				8			
2020	2	3	3	2	3	4					3			2
Total	5	7	4	3	3	4	1				11			2

R. Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People**Class of 2020**

1.	Karen Brown	BFT	46-55	Baltimore	MAT	AL NEW
2.	Susan Dobkins	WFO	46-55	Tacoma, Washington	NP	AL NEW
3.	Phyllis Edwards	BFL	56-65	Detroit, Michigan	NP	AL NEW
4.	Laura Krauss	WFT	46-55	Pacific	SCH	AL REN
5.	Lawrence Low	AMT	65+	Seattle	ANW	AL REN
6.	Rebecca Reyes	HFT	56-65	New Hope	MAT	AL REN
7.	James Steele	WMR	26-35	Central Florida	SA	AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	3	2	1	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1
2020	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1
Total	5	3	4	4	2	7	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	2

S. Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel**Class of 2018**

1.	Josephine Laury	BFR	66-75	Miami Valley	COV	AL NEW
----	-----------------	-----	-------	--------------	-----	--------

Class of 2020

2.	Michael (Mike) Gillespie	WMT	56-65	Cascades	PAC	AL NEW
3.	Sung-Joo Park	AMT	56-65	Twin Cities	LAK	AL REN
4.	Kelly Wadsworth	WFT	36-45	Seattle	ANW	AL NEW
5.	Don Yancey	WMT	56-65	St. Andrew	LW	AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
2020	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0

T. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee**Class of 2020**

1.	Stephanie Fritts	WFL	56-65	Olympia	ANW	AL REN
2.	Kathy Faye Lee	AFL	26-35	South Louisiana	SUN	AL REN
3.	Kenneth G. Page	WMT	46-55	Grand Canyon	SW	AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2020	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Total	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1

U. Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee**Class of 2020**

- Neddy Astudillo HFT 36-45 Milwaukee LAK AL NEW
- Sung Yeon Choi Morrow AFT 26-35 Chicago LIN AL REN
- Betty J. Griffin BFT 56-65 Hudson River NE AL REN

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	2
2020	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	3

V. Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**Class of 2018**

- Jason Chavez NMR 25- deCristo SW Young Adult NEW
- James E. Foucher Jr. BMC UCC Ecumenical Advisory REN
- Vicki Garber WFC 56-65 ELCA Ecumenical Advisory REN
- Wendy S. Tajima AFT 46-55 San Gabriel SCH Presbytery Staff REN

Class of 2020

- Shannan Vance-Ocampo WFT 36-45 Albany NE Presbytery Staff NEW†
- Pending Co-Moderator 222 GA NEW

Class of 2022

- Arndolfo (Bong) Bringas AMR 46-55 San Gabriel SCH Presbytery NEW
- Harold M. Delhagen WMT 56-65 Geneva NE Synod Staff REN
- Kenneth H. Godshall WMT 56-65 Western KY LW Presbytery REN
- Charles (Chip) Low WMT 36-45 Hudson River NE Presbytery NEW
- James Parks BMR 66-75 Baltimore MAT Presbytery NEW
- Conrad Rocha HMR 56-65 Santa Fe SW Presbytery NEW
- Patsy Smith BFR 56-65 Indian Nations SUN Presbytery AL REN
- Brenton Thompson WMT 26-35 Philadelphia TRI Young Adult NEW
- Tamara Williams BFR 56-65 Charlotte MAT Presbytery Staff NEW
- K. Nicholas Yoda AMT 36-45 Cincinnati COV Presbytery AL NEW
- Sinthia Hernandez Diaz HFR 36-45 Tropical Florida SA 222 GA Commissioner NEW
- Kathy Mauer WFR 46-55 Lake Huron COV 222 GA Commissioner NEW

† Moderator appointment

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	4	3	3	5	3	2	0	0	1	0	9	0	0	1
2020	3	2	5	4	1	2	1	0	1	0	9	0	1	3
2022	2	3	0	5	2	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	1
Total	9	8	8	14	6	7	2	0	2	0	22	0	1	5

W. Presbyterian Publishing Corporation**Class of 2020**

- Mary Gene Boteler WFT 46-55 Giddings-Lovejoy MAM AL REN
- Rebecca Davis WFR 36-45 National Capital MAT AL NEW
- Robert Holben WMR 56-65 Chicago LIN AL REN
- Sunghee (Joanna) Kim AFL 46-55 Grace SUN AL NEW
- Rubén Rosario Rodriguez HMT 36-45 Giddings-Lovejoy MAM AL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0
2020	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Total	3	3	4	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	6	1	1	0

X. Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Examinations

Class of 2018

1. Randon (Randy) Jackson WMT 56-65 Florida SA AL NEW

Class of 2020

2. Margaret Cowan WFR 56-65 East Tennessee LW AL REN
 3. James Davis WMT 36-45 Albany NE ACAD NEW
 4. Sylvia Karcher WFT 66-75 Riverside SCH AL REN
 5. Carmen M. Rosario HFT 66-75 New York City NE AL NEW
 6. Leeann Scarbrough WFT 56-65 Sheppards & Lapsley LW AL NEW
 7. Pending Academic NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	0	0	1	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
2020	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Total	1	0	4	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	7	0	0	0

Item 00-04

[The assembly approved Item 00-04. See pp. 11, 12]

Heath Rada, Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), places in nomination the following persons for election to the General Assembly Nominating Committee:

Nominee Diversity Age Synod of Residence

Class of 2018

1. Steve Aeschbacher WMR 46-55 Alaska-Northwest

Class of 2020

2. Marta T. Rodriguez-Fonseca HFR 56-65 Puerto Rico

Class of 2022

3. Gregory G. Bolt WMT 36-45 Lakes and Prairies
 4. Douglas Howard BMR 66-75 Northeast
 5. Pending Mid-America
 6. Mary Lynn Walters WFR 75+ Southwest
 7. Will Zandler WMD 25- Rocky Mountains

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	2	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
2020	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
2022	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1
Total	5	3	3	4	3	4	1	0	1	0	5	1	1	2

Item 00-05

[The assembly approved Item 00-05. See pp. 11, 48.]

Additional Nominations to the General Assembly Nominating Committee 2016 Nominations—From the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

M. General Assembly Committee on Representation

Class of 2020 (Continued)

7. Adan Mairena HMT 36-45=Philadelphia TRIAL NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	2	2	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	2
2020	3	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total	5	3	4	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	2	3

V. Presbyterian Mission Agency Board**Class of 2022 (Continued)**

17. Synthia Hernandez Diaz HFR 36-45 Tropical Florida SA 222 GA Commissioner NEW
 18. Kathy Mauer WFR 46-55 Lake Huron COV 222 GA Commissioner NEW

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	4	3	3	5	3	2	0	0	1	0	9	0	0	1
2020	3	2	5	4	1	2	1	0	1	0	9	0	1	3
2022	2	3	0	5	2	3	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	1
Total	9	8	8	14	6	7	2	0	2	0	22	0	1	5

Y. Review Committee on the Whole PC(USA) (All-Agency Review)**Class of 2018***Commissioners*

1. Debra Avery WFT 46-55 San Francisco PAC
 2. Eric Beene WMT 36-45 Savannah SA
 3. Claire Rhodes BFR 56-65 Arkansas SUN
 4. Pending Female Ruling Elder, Person of Color from 2010, 2012, 2014 GA

At-Large

5. Marco Grimaldo HMR 46-55 National Capital MAT
 6. Kelly Shriver WFT 26-35 Detroit COV
 7. James Tse AMR 46-55 New York City NE
 8. Madison VanVeelen HFT 26-35 Whitewater Valley LIN

Appointed by Agencies

9. Deborah A. Block, Moderator WFT 56-65 Milwaukee LAK
 10. David A. Davis WMT 56-65 New Brunswick NE
 11. Rachel Mihee Kim-Kort AFT 36-45 Whitewater Valley LIN
 12. Christopher Mason WMR 56-65 New York City NE
 13. James B. Rea Jr. OML 46-55 Pacific SCH
 14. James Wilson WMR 46-55 Scioto Valley COV

Class	FL/R	ML/R	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	O	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	1	5	5	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	7	0	0	1
Total	1	5	5	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	7	0	0	0

Item 01-01

[The assembly approved Item 01-01. See p. 2.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the proposed docket as follows:

**Proposed Docket
222nd General Assembly (2016)
Portland, Oregon**

Saturday, June 18:

8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.	Riverside Conversations: Preassembly Workshops for Commissioners/Advisory Delegates
11:00 a.m.	222ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2016) CONVENES Worship Commissioning Service
12:30 p.m.	Group Lunch
2:00 p.m.	BUSINESS MEETING 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee on Local Arrangements • Stated Clerk's Orientation • Moderator's Report • General Assembly Nominating Committee Report • Assembly Committee on Business Referrals Announcements Closing Prayer Recess
5:30 p.m.	Group Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Opening Prayer BUSINESS MEETING 2 Moderator's Election

Sunday, June 19:

10:00 a.m.–Noon	Worship in Local Churches (to include lunch)
1:30 p.m.	NEW BUSINESS DEADLINE
2:30 p.m.	BUSINESS MEETING 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from Special Committees Stated Clerk Nomination Committee Presbyterian Mission Agency Report Korean Task Force Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of the Vice Moderator • Commissioning of Mission Workers
4:30 p.m.	Moderator's Reception
5:30 p.m.	Group Dinner
7:30 p.m.	<i>Committee Meetings I</i>

Monday, June 20:

8:30 a.m.	Bible Study in Committees (to include the public)
9:30 a.m.	<i>Committee Meetings II</i> Lunch Break
1:30 p.m.	<i>Committee Meetings III</i> Dinner Break
7:30 p.m.	<i>Committee Meetings IV</i>

Tuesday, June 21:

8:30 a.m.	Bible Study in Committees (to include the public)
9:30 a.m.	<i>Committee Meetings V</i> Lunch Break
1:30 p.m.	<i>Committee Meetings VI</i>
Evening	Committees meet as needed (It is anticipated that all committees will be finished with business by 5:00 p.m.)

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

Wednesday, June 22:

8:30 a.m. Ecumenical Worship Service

Report Reading Time: Pay particular attention to Item 00-WCA

Lunch Break

2:00 p.m. Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 4

- Speak-out
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Stated Clerk's Orientation II
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
 - Consent agenda, Item 00-WCA: All item receiving a super majority vote in assembly committee meetings
 - Assembly Committee Reports
- Announcements

5:30 p.m. Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Dinner

7:00 p.m. Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 5

- Speak-out
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Ecumenical Greeting
 - Assembly Committee Reports
- Announcements
- Closing Prayer
- Recess

Thursday, June 23:

8:30 a.m. **BUSINESS MEETING 6**

Opening Prayer

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee Reports

11:15 a.m. Worship

Recess

Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. **BUSINESS MEETING 7**

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

5:30 p.m. Recess

Dinner Break

7:30 p.m. Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 8

- Speak-out
- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

Friday, June 24:

8:30 a.m.

BUSINESS MEETING 9

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
- GANC Report
- Assembly Committee Reports

11:15 a.m.

Worship

Recess

12:00 noon

Group Lunch

1:30 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING 10

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

5:30 p.m.

Recess

Group Dinner

7:30 p.m.

Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 11

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Ecumenical Greeting
- Assembly Committee Reports

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Recess

Saturday, June 25:

9:00 a.m.

Opening Prayer

BUSINESS MEETING 12

- Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
- Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
- Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (Financial Implications)
- Introduction of Presbytery of the Cascades Committee on Local Arrangements

Closing Worship in Plenary

11:00 a.m.

Item 01-02

[The assembly approved Item 01-02. See pp. 2, 3.]

I. Referrals in Progress**A. Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**

2014 Referral: Item 15-02. On Affirming the Importance of Sustainable Development and the Precautionary Principle—From the 221st General Assembly (2014) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 56, 57, 1021–27).

Final response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

B. General Assembly Committee on Representation

1. *2012 Referral: Item 11-17. Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as an Employer. Recommendation 2g. GACOR Shall Review Agency Policy Regarding Major Contracts to Ensure GA Entities Communicate the Church's Policy to the Contractors with Whom They Do Business—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 45, 1103–05 of the CD; pp. 33, 250–251, 1091–93 of the print copy).*

Final response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

2. *2014 Referral: Item 09-19, Recommendation 2. Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity. 2. Direct the Six Agencies to Provide Annual Status Reports on Supplier Diversity to GACOR—From the 220th General Assembly (2014) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 39, 735–37).*

Final response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

C. *Presbyterian Mission Agency*

1. *2012 Referral: Item 16-10. On Directing the Office of Collegiate Ministries to Present a Progress Report Regarding the Collegiate Ministries Task Force Report Received by Our Committee to the 221st General Assembly (2014)—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 48, 51, 1487).*

Progress Report: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has reestablished the Office of Collegiate Ministry (OCM) since the 219th General Assembly (2010) and continued in that effort by installing the mission associate for collegiate ministry to carry on the work of the office. Since 2010, the OCM has developed a strategy for mission in higher education and launched a network of collegiate ministries under the branding of UKirk Ministries. Many of these ministries are directly connected to and supported by mid councils (both presbytery and synod levels). Broadly speaking, the OCM continues to expand the network through the establishment of an advisory board, regional and national gatherings, resource development, and grant distribution.

Though efforts have been made to fulfill the strategic plan since 2012, changes in the OCM staffing over the past three years have slowed this progress. Following the departure of the originally hired associate for collegiate ministries, an interim associate was designated from within the existing PMA staff on a half-time basis (continuing his role as the associate for evangelism simultaneously). During that interim time, implementation of the strategic plan continued, albeit, at a slower rate.

A national search was conducted twice during the interim period, resulting in the hiring of a new associate for collegiate ministry, Jason Santos, in the autumn of 2014. Progress continued until the reorganization of the Evangelism and Church Growth ministry area to become part of Theology, Formation and Evangelism in summer 2015. At this point, Santos assumed a broader role overseeing and coordinating Ministries with Youth, Young Adult Ministries, Camps and Conference Ministries in addition to Collegiate Ministries. During the writing of this report, the PMA is anticipating hiring another associate for the OCM, depending on the availability of funding. The OCM has also struggled with establishing sustainable funding as budgeting pressures common to the PMA have also impacted this ministry.

Progress has been made in the 1001 New Worshiping Communities initiative, through the establishment of more than twenty collegiate and young adult-focused new communities and several others in the application process. While no notable efforts have been made toward establishing regional collegiate ministry offices, both regional and national cohort gatherings will have been established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). These cohorts are comprised of 10–12 campus ministers and/or chaplains within the PC(USA), each with designated regional leadership.

With regard to recruiting and training possibilities, more than ten internship grants were awarded to various collegiate ministries nationally over the past two years. Moreover, the OCM continues to promote a collegiate emphasis in PC(USA) seminaries both through field education placements and course work offerings. Seminaries participating in field education and coursework in collegiate ministries include Princeton, Union, Columbia, and Austin.

Since 2014, several notable efforts include the development and dispersion of UWorship (a four-year printed lectionary and liturgical resource for worship), UKirk Daily (a devotional smartphone application for collegiate students), UKirk Internship Grants (to continue in 2016), and the UKirk Cohort Project (peer-oriented gatherings for collegiate ministers).

The OCM maintains ecumenical connections through the National Campus Ministry Association, the Ecumenical Collegiate Ministry Team, and the National Association for College and University Ministries. The OCM also supports and participates in the Presbyterian College Chaplains Association and the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities. To date, the OCM serves more than seventy college chaplains nationally and more than 1,200 established collegiate ministries within the UKirk Network.

2. *2012 Referral: Item 11-05. On Calling for an End to the Practice of Corporal Punishment in Homes, Schools, and Childcare Facilities. Recommendation 3. Direct the Appropriate General Assembly Committees to Provide Limited Bibliography of Resources Presenting Alternative Effective Methods of Discipline to Corporal Punishment—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 28, 30–31, 1041–44 of the CD; p. 239 of the print copy).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

3. *2012 Referral: Item 11-05. On Calling for an End to Corporal Punishment in Homes, Schools, and Childcare Facilities. Recommendation 4. That the Listed Supporting Documentation Be Posted Online, Hosted by the Child Advocacy Office—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 28, 30–31, 1041–44 of the CD; pp. 239–40 of the print copy).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

4. *Alternate Resolution to 2012 Referral: Item 15-11. Report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of Its Engagement with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. Recommendation 2. Call for a Process of Engagement That Will Bring Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the U.S. into*

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

Effective Partnering for Study, Travel, and Social Action—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 39, 42–43, 1399–1410 of the CD; p. 285 of the print copy).

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

5. *2014 Referral: Item 07-02. The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 3. Confessing the History of Christian Domination and Supremacy Over Other Religions, Which Included Forced Conversions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Affirms a Commitment to Work for the Common Good in Society Together with People of Other Faiths and Interreligious Bodies at All Levels; and Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to Appropriately Support Emerging Partnerships for this Purpose—From the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 34, 444–53; p. 205 of the print copy).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

6. *2014 Referral: Item 07-02. The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Assist the Work of Congregations and Mid Councils by Helping Them to Share with One Another Existing Models of Interreligious Relationship Building—From the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 34, 444–53; p. 206 of the print copy).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

7. *2014 Referral: Item 08-14. A Resolution to Address Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Create New/Updated Resources Concerning Child/Youth Protection Measures in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) That Can Be Available for Synods, Presbyteries, and Individual Churches. (We Request That These Resources Be from the PC(USA) and Not Just Direction to Other Denominational Resources)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.40, 43, 531–3; pp. 231–32 of the print copy 2).*

Response: Final Response will be presented to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

8. *2012 Referral: Item 11-17. Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as an Employer. Recommendation 2.e. The Six General Assembly-Related Entities Shall Provide Biennial Status Reports on Their Achievement of Supplier Diversity Goals to GACOR, Showing the Percentage of Purchases from Women and Minority-Owned Businesses. The GACOR Shall Assess the Agencies’ Progress and Report Their Findings to the General Assembly—From the Climate for Change Task Force (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 28, 33, 1091–1114 of the CD; pp. 250–52 of the print copy).*

Progress Report: Presbyterian Mission Agency, per its standard practice, provided the 2013 and 2014 report to the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

9. *2014 Referral: Item 09-13. Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in Consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) and the other Five PC(USA) Agencies to Create a Database Comprised of Businesses That Qualify Under the Supplier Diversity Standards Reviewed by GACOR, Which All of the Six Agencies and Other PC(USA) Bodies Should Use as a Source for Supplies and Services—Report to the 221st General Assembly (2014)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 35, 38, 652–55; pp. 242–43 of the print copy).*

Progress Report: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has a diverse supplier directory that is available on the Mission Agency web site’s Supplier Diversity page. <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/purchasing/minority-vendor-information/>.

10. *2014 Referral: Item 09-19. Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity. Recommendation 2. Direct the Six Agencies of the PC(USA) to Provide Annual Status Reports on Supplier Diversity (All Strata) to GACOR—From the Committee on Representation (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 39, 735–37; p. 253 of the print copy).*

Progress Report: The Presbyterian Mission Agency, with the other five PC(USA) agencies, has prepared the Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity recommendation, and submitted this document to GACOR for their review. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, per its standard practice, provided the 2013 and 2014 report to the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

II. Final Responses to Referrals

A. *Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Final Responses to Referrals*

1. *2014 Referral: Item 09-15. A Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop Programs of Education and Advocacy for Full Voting Rights and Against Disenfranchisement Due to Racism, and Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to Update Lift Every*

Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, *Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), to Include Changes in the Voting Rights Act (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38–39, 659ff.)*.

Item 09-06: On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for Financial Reforms and Campaign Finance Reform and Other Efforts to Reduce the Influence of Special Interest Money in Politics (Including That of the Financial Sector, the Gun Lobby, the Oil Industry, etc.) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 36, 635ff.).

Response: These referrals are being answered by Item 11-13, *Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance*, being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 722 of the electronic file.)

2. *2014 Referral: Item 11-06. Refer Back to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Cuba Partners Network to Rework This Important Concept (and Future Funding Sources) in Light of the PC(USA)'s and This Assembly's Commitment to Deepening Our Relationship by Careful Analysis of the Ongoing Complex Situation in Cuba (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 832–35)*.

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 12-07, *New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A "Nuevo Momento,"* being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 905 of the electronic file.)

3. *2014 Referral: Item 09-10. On a Study of End-of-Life Issues—From the Synod of the Covenant (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 37, 647ff.)*.

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 14-14, *Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions*, being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 1018 of the electronic file.)

4. *Item 08-08. The Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church's Urban Vision—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 503ff.)*

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 11-20, *Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions*, being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 738 of the electronic file.)

B. Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

2012 Referral: Item 11-12. A Resolution to Continue the Work of Deborah's Daughters, Recommendation 2. Direct that the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, After Receiving the 2014 Report from the Review Done Through the Deborah's Daughters Program, Make Recommendations to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) That Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns. (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 28, 32–33, 1085–88)

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 10-11, *A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen*, being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 614 of the electronic file.)

C. Board of Pensions

1. *2014 Referral: Item 04-04. On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 58–59, 60, 260ff.)*.

In response to Item 04-04, the 221st General Assembly (2014) acted to:

Instruct the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA), to divest from Caterpillar, Inc., Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions, in accord with our church's decades-long socially responsible investment (SRI) history, and not to reinvest in these companies until the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee of the PC(USA) is fully satisfied that product sales and services by these companies are no longer in conflict with our church investment policy.

In accordance with the Board of Pensions Investment Manual, the Board of Pensions has added these three corporations to its Prohibited Securities Lists, which are distributed annually to all investment managers.

2. *2014 Referral: Item 09-19. Direct the Six Agencies of the PC(USA) to Provide Annual Status Reports on Supplier Diversity (All Strata) to GACOR—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 39, 735–37)*.

The Board of Pensions has complied with all data requests from GACOR on supplier diversity.

3. *2014 Referral: Item 12-03. Urge the Board of Pensions to Post on [Its] Website the Current List of the Churches Certified as Relief of Conscience Churches (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 17, 915–16)*.

The Board of Pensions has complied with this request; the website of the Board of Pensions, www.pensions.org, contains a section called Conscience and the Benefits Plan, which contains this list.

4. *2014 Referral: Item 12-12. Request the Board Of Pensions Provide an Interim Progress Report to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on This Issue of the Relief of Conscience Following Their Next Board Meeting—From the 221st General Assembly (2014) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 17, 919–20).*

The Board of Pensions complied with this request; a progress report was offered in the Summer 2014 issue of the *Board Bulletin*, a newsletter distributed widely and available on the website of the Board of Pensions at www.pensions.org.

5. *2010 Referral: Item 18-06. On Directing the Board of Pensions to Extend Benefits to Same-Gender Spouses and Domestic Partners, Comment: BOP Highly Urged to Provide Relief of Conscience for Congregations with Moral Dilemma Regarding This Issue—From the 219th General Assembly (2010) (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 54, 56, 393).*

In response to Item 18-06, the 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the following resolution:

1. Urge the Board of Pensions to adopt amendments to the Benefits Plan to extend eligibility for spousal and dependent benefits under the Plan to Benefits Plan members, their same-gender domestic partners, and the children of their same-gender domestic partners, on the same basis as, and equivalent to, benefits made available to Benefits Plan members, their spouses, and the children of their spouses.

2. Approve an increase in dues for the Benefits Plan of up to 1 percent, effective January 1, 2012, to be allocated among the plans of the Board of Pensions, including but not limited to the Pension Plan, as the Board, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to fund the cost of the additional benefits. Should the Board not implement these benefits for any reason, approval of the increase in dues is rescinded.

Comment: That the Board of Pensions be highly urged to provide relief of conscience, to be implemented simultaneously with these actions, for those congregations for whom these actions cause a moral dilemma.

The Board of Pensions has seriously and prayerfully considered the issue of “relief of conscience” on this matter since 2010. In the intervening time, the General Assembly has encouraged the Board of Pensions in this matter at both the 220th General Assembly (2012), in Item 20-11, and the 221st General Assembly (2014), in Item 12-12.

As the Board of Pensions has communicated since its initial response to this issue in 2012, a financial mechanism such as the one used in the Relief of Conscience administrative process for abortion-related expenses does not present itself in this case. The nature of the plan funding and the timeline of the benefits paid prevent such an approach.

Rather than continue to pursue this avenue, the Board of Pensions adopted a Statement of Objection approach, one that will permit employing organizations and individuals on a self-pay status—those who are paying dues that might be used to support someone else’s dependent—to declare an objection to the Board of Pensions’ decision to cover the same gender domestic partners of plan members. Just as is done in the *Minutes* of both the General Assembly and the Board of Directors of the Board of Pensions when dissents are lodged, a list of these objections was published and made generally available. In this case, management recorded the dissents on the Board of Pensions’ website, www.pensions.org, where those dissents serve as a public witness of the conscience of those congregations, other employers, and individuals. Specifically, this public record was placed in a Relief of Conscience section of the Board of Pensions’ website that already included a list of churches and other employers that had been granted Relief of Conscience for payment of abortion-related claims.

D. Committee on Theological Education

1. *2010 Referral: Item 10-10. Report, Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church. Recommendation 2.e. Request the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to Convene an Appropriately Structured Discussion Among the Seminaries on the Matter of Compensation Ranges and Sharing Economic Burdens During Recession Periods, Reporting a Digest of Their Findings to the 220th General Assembly (2012)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 34, 35, 742–72).*

Response: At the 221st General Assembly (2014), COTE stated that it had begun work and would provide a response to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). COTE referred Item 10-10 to its Theological and Church Concerns subcommittee for study and action. As a result of its study, the subcommittee determined that the seminaries already are collaborating in a structured way on the matter of compensation ranges and the sharing of economic burdens during recession periods. The seminary presidents meet annually to discuss, among other topics, the matter of institutional financial health and potential collaborative projects. COTE staff work with the presidents to establish agenda topics for conversation and to provide ample time for the conversations to take place. Additionally, the chairs of the seminary boards meet with the presidents at these annual gatherings, allowing for both administrative and trustee representation at the highest levels of the individual seminaries to be in conversation on such important topics.

The subcommittee also determined that the seminaries have structured a method of annually comparing compensation ranges among its core employee constituency of faculty members. The chief financial officer (CFO) of Pittsburgh seminary annually receives financial data, such as salary compensation, from the CFOs of the other seminaries and prepares a comparative report that, while not identifying confidential data from any particular seminary, allows the seminaries to compare

their salary ranges with those of the other schools. This structured presentation of materials has been, and will continue to be, a vital comparative resource for the seminaries.

Given the strength of these ongoing conversations, the subcommittee recommended to the full COTE that no further actions were necessary.

2. *2014 Referral: Item 14-04. Part 2: The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on Behalf of the Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee, Recommends That the 221st General Assembly (2014) ... 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Committee on Theological Education to Consult with Theological Seminaries to Develop Culturally Sensitive Curriculum, Theologies, Language, Teaching and Learning Styles for Teaching Elders and Church Leaders of All Ethnicities. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 46–52, 1000ff).*

Response: COTE accepted the lead and began with a consultation of PMA staff from the Racial/Ethnic and Women's Ministries areas and proceeded to contact seminaries with regard to their present work addressing culturally sensitive curricula and learning styles for teaching elders and church leaders of all ethnicities.

As a result of the commitments COTE and the seminaries already have to racism, racial ethnic diversity, and new immigrant worshipping communities, after being added to the consultation results, COTE:

- Unequivocally states its ongoing commitment to addressing racism, racial ethnic diversity, and new immigrant worshipping communities.
- Will write letters by the end of April 2016 to each seminary affirming what they are doing, encouraging them to deepen and extend what they are doing, and offering COTE as a supportive resource.
- Will actively support the work of the coordinator of theological education and seminary relations on R/E New Immigrant leadership issues in partnership with R/E&W Ministries, participation in programs that support R/E and New Immigrant seminarians, and development of a seminary faculty consultation on antiracism, inclusion, and seminary programs. COTE will receive the coordinator's report on these activities and consider observations and suggestions based on these activities.
- Recommits itself to continue deepening its engagement with these issues, supported and facilitated by the coordinator of theological education and seminary relations. COTE understands this response to referral to Item 14-04, Recommendation 2, to be only the first step in its ongoing response.

3. *2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 1. Direct the Transfer of the Theological Education Fund (the "Fund") from the Presbyterian Mission Agency ("PMA") to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation ("Foundation"), to Be Managed, Administered, and Distributed by the Foundation for the Benefit of Seminaries Related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Pursuant to a Fund Advisory Agreement Between the Foundation and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, on Behalf of the PMA and on Behalf of the Committee on Theological Education ("COTE"), the Fund Agreement to Provide That Future Contributions to the Fund Will Be Irrevocable Contributions to the Foundation and Distributed Only as Directed by COTE, Effective January 1, 2015 (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 2. Direct That Responsibility for Marketing and Administering the Fund Be Transferred from the PMA to the Foundation, Effective January 1, 2015, and That the Foundation and COTE Engage in a Process, as Spelled Out in a Fund Advisory Agreement, to Hire an Experienced, Full-Time Fundraiser, Whose Work Shall Be Under the Direction and Ultimate Performance Management of COTE and Dedicated Solely to Generating Financial Support for Theological Education (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 4. Direct That the Marketing Information and Databases for the Fund Be Transferred from the PMA to the Foundation, as Permitted by Applicable Law and Consistent with Written Representations or Other Appropriate Communications to Donors, to Be Used Only for Marketing of the Fund, Effective January 1, 2015 (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 5. Direct That the Responsibility for the Denomination's Relationships with PC(USA)- Related Seminaries Will Continue to Be Lodged Under COTE, and That Any Mission Program Support for COTE Will Continue to Be Provided by the PMA in Consultation with COTE (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).

Response: The Theological Education Fund was successfully transferred from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation at the beginning of 2015 pursuant to the Fund Advisory Agreement between the Foundation and the PC(USA), A Corporation, on behalf of the PMA and the Committee on Theological Education.

The Foundation hired the Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty to serve as the senior director of theological education funds development and the Reverend Nancy Benson-Nicol as associate director for theological education funds development. They both began service in these roles on January 1, 2015.

The marketing information and databases for the Theological Education Fund were transferred from the PMA to the Foundation, as permitted by applicable law and consistent with written representations or other appropriate communications with donors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency hired a coordinator for theological education, the Reverend Dr. Michelle Bartel. She began serving in March 2015. Her work entails the denominational support for theological education and PC(USA) seminars, including serving as the primary staff support for the Committee on Theological Education.

E. Office of the General Assembly

1. *2014 Referral: Item 05-09. Commissioners' Resolution. On Studying the Effectiveness of Mid Council to Mid Council Reference Checks and Clearance Procedures (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 55, 353–54).*

Response: In response to Item 05-09, the commissioners' resolution on studying the effectiveness of reference checks between mid councils, COGA appointed a task force to meet with the commissioner's presbytery. As a result, the Church Leadership Connection now includes a space for a presbytery to list the name and contact information of the person conducting such checks on its behalf.

2. *2014 Referral: Item 06-12. Special Committee to Review the Preparation for Ministry Process and Standard Ordination Exams (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 25, 73–75, 376–88).*

Response:

a. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 1. Commitment to Full Diversity of the Body of Christ (Ibid., pp. 14, 73, 376)*

Continuing: The manager for preparation for ministry in the Office of the General Assembly highlights issues around the "changing cultural landscape" in American society in training materials (see *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, pp 15–18) and training events, encouraging presbyteries to reflect these changing demographics in the country and among those entering the process in the membership of their committees and commissions on preparation.

Continuing: The need for diversity among readers and the specific need for multilingual readers is a part of all communications to the presbyteries from the manager for preparation for ministry regarding election and reporting of ordination exam readers.

Continuing: The Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) regularly emphasizes to the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) the need for diversity among General Assembly nominees to the PCC, and to provide GANC with racial ethnic persons with qualifications important to the work of the PCC to be considered for nomination.

b. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 2. Develop List of Resource Persons to Assist with Cultural Proficiency (Ibid., pp. 14, 73, 377)*

Continuing: The manager for preparation for ministry inquires of persons with these competencies encountered through training events and work with the committees of the church to ascertain their willingness to be available to provide such consultation, and facilitates connections between them and presbyteries when requested.

c. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 3. Retention of Standard Ordination Examinations (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 377)*

Continuing: The Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) continues the administration of the standard ordination examinations, and the manager for preparation for ministry provides training materials and events on the proper use of the examinations within the overall preparation for ministry process (see *Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, pp. 24–27 and 95; and online resources at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/online-trainings/>).

d. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 4. Consultation between PCC and Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 377)*

Completed: Members of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) presented a report to the 2015 Annual Meeting of the PCC based on a review of the past five years of examinations for concerns of racial ethnic bias or issues of cross-cultural accessibility. The two members of ACREC who made the report also participated in the midpoint discussion of examination questions in development.

e. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 5. Culturally Diverse Resources in Examination Reader Training Materials* (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 377)

Continuing: The Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) now formally reviews all reader training resource papers to specifically check for inclusion of materials presenting the Reformed theological insights of racial ethnic and non-European persons.

f. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 6. Broadening of Examination Formats, Including Possible Oral Presentations* (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 378)

Completed: Beginning with the July 2015 ordination examinations in the areas of Church Polity, Reformed Theology, and Worship and Sacraments, the time permitted for completion of these tests was extended from three hours to nine hours (essentially a standard work day with a one-hour break for lunch). The intent of this change, which was made without fundamentally altering the expectations of the questions on the exams, was to provide more time for reflection on and review of exam responses prior to submission. Also beginning with that exam cycle the PCC made available to the presbyteries an optional format of these exams and the Bible Exegesis exam that integrates an oral component into the standard ordination exam process (see *Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations*, pp. 16–18).

g. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 7. Contemporary Challenges of Ministry as Teaching Elders* (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 378)

Continuing: The manager for preparation for ministry encourages presbyteries and seminaries to explore financial implications of seminary education and employment as teaching elders with their inquirers and candidates through training materials and events with committees and commissions on preparation and seminary placement officers. Such materials include information on the changing nature of teaching elder calls, time to receive first calls, financial support models for ministry, etc. (see *Advisory Handbook*, pp. 8–20).

h. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 8. Use of Flexibility in the Preparation for Ministry Process* (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 378)

Continuing: The manager for preparation for ministry encourages presbyteries to utilize, in appropriate situations, the provisions of G-2.0610 through training materials and events with committees and commissions on preparation (see *Advisory Handbook*, pp. 54–56).

i. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 9. Models for Responding to Emerging Issues in Preparation for Ministry* (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 378–79)

Continuing: The Mid Council Ministries area of the Office of the General Assembly sponsors online discussion boards for moderators and members of committees and commissions on preparation for ministry to facilitate requests for and sharing of models for addressing issues related to work with inquirers and candidates. The manager for preparation for ministry develops resources that draw upon best practices across the church gleaned from interactions with leadership during training events and other contacts. Resources are continuing to be collected for the development of a preparation for ministry component on the PC(USA) training site (<http://moodle.pcusa.org>).

j. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 10. Report on Non-Teaching Elder Pastoral Leadership* (Ibid., pp. 14, 74, 379)

Completed: Report was submitted to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) at its February 2016 meeting. COGA adopted a recommendation to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in response to the report.

k. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 11. Proposed Amendments to G-2.0607* (Ibid., pp. 25, 75, 379)

Completed: Approved by the presbyteries and included in 2015–2017 *Book of Order*.

l. *Item 06-12. Recommendation 12: Proposed Amendments to G-2.0610* (Ibid., pp. 27, 72, 75, 379–80)

Completed: Approved by the presbyteries and included in 2015–2017 *Book of Order*.

3. *2014 Referral: Item 06-12, Recommendation 10, Direct the OGA and PMA to Review the Programs and Procedures Used by, or Available to, Presbyteries to Prepare, Equip, Credential, and Deploy Pastoral Leadership for Congregations Other Than the Preparation Process for Those Seeking Ordination to the Ordered Ministry of Teaching Elder, with a Report to Be Submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)* (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 74, 379).

Response: In 2014–15, the manager for preparation for ministry in Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly and the coordinator of theological education and seminary relations for the Theology, Formation, and Evangelism area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency conducted a review of the programs and procedures currently used and available to presbyteries to prepare, equip, credential, and deploy pastoral leadership other than teaching elders. This review was con-

ducted through contact with mid councils and theological education institutions in the course of their professional responsibilities as well as special conversation sessions at national and regional events including synod and multi-presbytery training events, Big Tent, and the Polity Conference.

In addition to these conversations with various constituencies, a survey was conducted in November 2015, and responses were received from 77 of the 171 presbyteries (45 percent). The presbyteries responding to the survey represented both smaller and larger presbyteries, more rural and more urban presbyteries, and fifteen of the sixteen synods. The survey included questions designed to gather numerical data as well as open-ended responses. Summaries of survey findings are included in appropriate sections of this report.

Types of non-Teaching Elder Pastoral Leaders

Presbyteries are using a broad range of persons other than teaching elders to provide pastoral leadership to their congregations and ministries. The listing and chart below provide information about the types of persons fulfilling these functions and the percentage of presbyteries among the seventy-five who responded to the question that are using one or more persons from each of the categories:

- A. Ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service (G-2.1001, sometimes called “commissioned ruling elders” or “CREs”), 93.3 percent
- B. Ruling elders without a commission, 38.7 percent
- C. Inquirers or candidates in the PC(USA) preparation for ministry process, 33.3 percent
- D. Deacons in the PC(USA), 9.3 percent
- E. Ordained ministers of “Formula of Agreement” churches through “orderly exchange,” 53.3 percent
- F. Persons ordained in another Christian church to ministry equivalent to a teaching elder, 70.7 percent
- G. Persons ordained in another Christian church to ministry not equivalent to a teaching elder, 13.3 percent
- H. Persons not ordained to any ordered ministry of the church, 9.3 percent

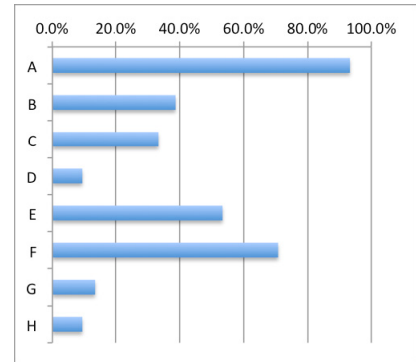


Figure 1: Presbyteries Reporting Utilization of Different Types of non-TE Pastoral Leaders

Presbyteries also report on some of these types of non-teaching elder pastoral leadership as part of their annual statistical reports to the Office of the General Assembly. In the table below, data regarding “Commissioned Ruling Elders” correlates to group “A” in the preceding list, and “Temporary Members of Presbytery” correlate to groups “E” and “F.” The totals reported by presbyteries from across the church from 2012 to 2015 (all totals at year-end except 2015, which was as of December 15) were as follows:

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total “Commissioned Ruling Elders” (CREs)	932	911	942	957
Commissioned to congregational ministry	921	895	920	925
Commissioned to other validated ministry	11	16	22	32
Total presbyteries represented	147	148	151	151
Total “Temporary Members of Presbytery”	419	397	408	418
Serving in congregational ministry	384	361	366	371
Serving in other validated ministry	35	36	42	47
Total presbyteries represented	121	119	120	120

Table 1: Non-Teaching Elders in Congregational and Validated Ministries

Both these sources of information indicate that the use of ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service (G-2.1001) are the most common types of non-teaching elder individuals currently being used by presbyteries to provide pastoral leadership to their congregations and other ministry efforts (such as “new worshiping communities,” institutional chaplaincies, etc.; see “Deploy” below). The use of commissioned ruling elders in congregational settings appears to be leveling off after years of rapid increase. In the decade from 2000 through 2009 the year-end totals reported by presbyteries rose from about 200 to almost 900, an almost 450 percent increase. However, although still small in comparison, the number of ruling elders commissioned to other validated ministries continues to rise. A similar pattern is present in “temporary membership” in presbyteries by ministers ordained by other Christian churches.

“Prepare”

In the November 2015 survey, sixty-five presbyteries responded to a question about the types of preparation they require of non-teaching elders who provide pastoral leadership in their congregations. Just over half (53.8 percent) reported that they had designed and run a program themselves, and about one-in-six (16.9 percent) reported they partnered with other mid councils in such programs. Almost half (47.7 percent) reported they used a program specifically designed by a seminary for persons not seeking ordination as teaching elders, and 6 percent reported they partnered with a local college to provide such training. Two of the sixty-five responding presbyteries (3 percent) indicated they relied upon mentoring provided by experienced teaching elder pastors.

These survey responses clearly highlight the two primary types of preparation for pastoral ministry other than the preparation for ministry process to become a teaching elder in the PC(USA): programs designed and run by mid councils, and programs designed and run by educational institutions and utilized by presbyteries.

The amount of instructional hours within training programs administered by mid councils varies widely. In the responses of thirty-five presbyteries to an open-ended question asking them to describe training programs run either by themselves or in coordination with other mid councils, many focused on the number of months necessary to complete the training rather than the number of contact/instructional hours provided during those periods. Presbyteries who reported the number of weeks or months necessary to complete the training ranged from six weeks to up to four years, with most clustering in the 12–24 month range. For those presbyteries reporting total instructional hours, the range was from a low of two hours to high of approximately 150 hours, with most requiring between 25 and 50 instructional hours. By way of comparison, a typical college course includes about 40–50 instructional hours.

Seminaries in the PC(USA) have various continuing education programs that can serve as a resource for presbyteries as they undertake the work of preparing, equipping, and credentialing Presbyterians for pastoral leadership. These trajectories in seminary education can be used apart from the preparation process for those seeking ordination to the ordered ministry of teaching elder. The resources vary from seminary to seminary, and include special certificate programs, leadership programs, continuing education workshops and programs, opportunities to take regular seminary courses without pursuing a degree, and master of arts programs in theological disciplines. Currently, the only seminary offering a specific program for certification of CREs is University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in their Christian Leadership Program. Austin Seminary offers a Certificate in Ministry in English and a *Certificado en Ministerio de Español* in Spanish.

The seminaries are consistent in their development of these educational opportunities when it comes to preparation. The programs and workshops all include elements of self-knowledge, faith development, and awareness of dynamics in church and society. These programs also provide resources for equipping congregational leaders, as elements of practical ministry and experience are incorporated.

Finally, it is important to note that, while some of our PC(USA) seminaries offer certificates and diplomas in tracks other than the master of divinity (M.Div.), a seminary cannot actually “credential” a student in these programs. All the certificate can show is that a student completed the work. This is similar to the situation with inquirers and candidates who graduate with an M.Div. degree but can only be “certified ready to be examined for ordination, pending a call” (G-2.0607) by their presbytery of care.

Among the offerings provided by PC(USA)-affiliated seminaries are the following:

Austin Seminary
Master of Arts in Ministry Practice
Certificate in Ministry, *Certificado en Ministerio de Español*

Columbia Theological Seminary
Master of Arts in Practical Theology
Christian Spiritual Formation
Spiritual Direction
Older Adult Ministry
Leadership in Ministry workshops

Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary
Institute for Worship, Preaching, and Sacred Arts

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Hispanic Ministries Network

Princeton Theological Seminary
Online Certificate in Theology and Ministry
Certificate in Youth Ministry

San Francisco Theological Seminary
 Certificate in Black Church Studies
 Certificate of Ministry Studies
 Certificate in Trauma and Spiritual Care
 Certificate in Worship Leadership
 Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction
 Diploma in Spiritual Formation Studies

Union Presbyterian Seminary
 Masters of Arts in Christian Education with Extended Campus Program
 Leadership Institute

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
 Christian Leadership Program offering certification for CREs

Beyond training programs provided by either mid councils or seminaries, it has long been acknowledged that a primary preparation for ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service was their prior experience as ruling elders within congregations and higher councils of the church. That history emerged in several comments to Item 06-08 to the 221st General Assembly (2014) requesting consideration of amending the constitution to permit presbyteries to “elect and ordain men and women to be ruling elders for the purpose of commissioning them to serve as commissioned ruling elders pursuant to G-2.1002–G-2.1004.” The committee assigned the overture recommended disapproval, and the assembly did disapprove it. Nevertheless, during the period in which this report was being prepared, Office of the General Assembly staff were informed of more than one presbytery that had arranged for congregations to elect and ordain persons as ruling elders so that they could then be commissioned to limited pastoral service in ministry settings without formal connection to the congregation that had elected and ordained the individual.

“Equip”

Just as presbyteries use a variety of training models to prepare persons other than teaching elders to provide pastoral functions before they begin such service, they also employ a variety of methods to continue to equip them during their periods of ministry in these settings. Far and away the most common type of support was the assignment of a mentor, which should not be surprising since the *Book of Order* requires mentors for ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service (“A teaching elder shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor,” G-2.1004). Of the sixty-seven presbyteries that provided information about ongoing programs to equip non-teaching elders for providing pastoral leadership in the November 2015 survey, roughly four out of five (79 percent) reported the use of mentors with several indicating mentors were assigned to ministers of other denominations serving presbytery congregations as well as to CREs. There were also, however, just over 10 percent of the presbyteries (7 of the 67 responding to the question) that indicated that they provided no form of regular support to non-teaching elders providing pastoral functions, even though mentoring was suggested as one possible form of such support in the question itself.

Other forms of ongoing support that were identified included colleague and support groups (18 percent of the responding presbyteries), continuing education beyond the preliminary training (16 percent), and supervision by a committee within the presbytery (12 percent). One presbytery reported that its only support was an “annual consultation,” and four others (6 percent) reported that non-teaching elders providing pastoral functions were encouraged to participate in training and support opportunities provided by the presbytery to its teaching elder members.

The survey responses indicate that presbyteries primarily rely upon mentors to equip and support non-teaching elders who are providing pastoral forms of leadership. However, the anecdotal information gathered during conversations about this issue across the church indicates that the quality of these mentoring relationships is inconsistent at best. Many of the mentors receive no specific training or support for these roles. It was widely reported that many mentors do not have regular contact with the persons to whom they are assigned, and that much depends upon whether or not the mentor and mentee are able to form a personal bond.

“Credential”

When asked about “which ... types of credentials does your presbytery provide or require for persons other than teaching elders who provide pastoral leadership,” 56 of the 65 responding presbyteries (86.1 percent) reported they required presbytery commissions to limited pastoral service specifically to moderate sessions, administer sacraments, or perform marriages where permitted by state law (G-2.1001). Because roughly 40 percent of these presbyteries also reported in response to a different question that they had ruling elders providing pastoral leadership “without a commission from the presbytery” it is difficult to interpret this data. Respondents may have focused on the word “provide” rather than “require” or may have been focused specifically on the functions enumerated from G-2.1001 since only 4.6 percent responded that they provide “commissions to forms of service not enumerated in the *Book of Order*.” Similarly, only 4.6 percent of these presbyteries reported that they required “educational degrees or certifications in areas such as Christian education, spiritual direction, etc.,” even

though roughly half reported that they utilized programs designed by seminaries and colleges as a form of preparation for such service. Perhaps the best interpretation of the data is that many presbyteries view a “commission to limited pastoral service” extended to a ruling elder as the only “credential” available to them in such circumstances.

That such “commissions” appear to be seen as a “credential” proper may also help to explain another point widely present in the anecdotal evidence. Such “commissions to limited pastoral service” are often considered to confer a status on the recipient as a “commissioned ruling elder” or “CRE” distinct from a commission to perform specified functions in a particular ministry setting. Thus, presbyteries can talk about their “CREs” who have completed training but not yet been assigned to serve in any ministry setting. Additionally, ruling elders who have completed periods of service specified by a commission can continue to refer to themselves as a “commissioned ruling elder.” Among other consequences of “commissions” being considered “credentials” retained by ruling elders who received them are individuals wishing to place Personal Information Forms (PIFs) in the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) system so they might be considered by congregations looking for such leadership; individuals seeking to transfer from one presbytery to another as a CRE; and individuals offering themselves to congregations as CREs apart from prior presbytery involvement with the congregation in developing its mission strategy, including administration of the sacraments and officiating at weddings by personal invitation.

Another issue raised by the statistical data on the breadth of persons being utilized to provide pastoral functions other than teaching elders (and those holding equivalent ordinations in other Christian churches) and ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service is whether there needs to be some other form of constitutionally recognized means for a presbytery to formally authorize such ministry. In the past, a presbytery was permitted to extend “licensure” to “preach the gospel” to candidates who had completed the preparation process for ordination as a teaching elder and been examined by the presbytery but not yet received a call; however, such licenses could not include authorization “to be the moderator of a session, to administer the sacraments, or to perform a marriage ceremony” (1979–80 *Book of Order* of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States, G-49.07–49.10). New immigrant worshiping communities have raised the issue of whether some form of formal authorization should be available for a presbytery to extend to persons in the ordered ministry of deacon or another category of ordered ministry conferred by Reformed churches elsewhere in the world (such as “evangelist”). As indicated earlier in this report, some presbyteries are responding to the absence of such alternatives by working with congregations to elect and ordain individuals as ruling elders specifically for the purpose of then commissioning those persons to limited pastoral service in other ministry settings.

“Deploy”

As reported in Table 1 above, 151 of the 171 presbyteries (88.3 percent) reported in 2015 that they had commissioned ruling elders to perform one or more of the pastoral functions provided for in G-2.1001 (moderate sessions, administer the sacraments, or perform marriages). Of those ruling elders the vast majority (96.7 percent) were commissioned to congregational ministry settings. In the November 2015 survey, just over three-quarters (77.7 percent) of the sixty-three presbyteries who responded to the question indicated they have such commissioned ruling elders serving in “solo pastor” settings, and about one-in-five (20.6 percent) had such persons serving in what could be described as “associate pastor”-type positions. At least one presbytery reported they had commissioned a ruling elder to perform the pastoral functions in G-2.1001 in their capacity as either a co-pastor, leader of a new church development, Christian educator, or member of presbytery staff.

There is some indication that presbyteries may be under-reporting to the Office of the General Assembly their use of ruling elders commissioned to perform pastoral functions in validated ministry settings. Whereas only thirty-two individual ruling elders had been reported to OGA as serving in such capacities for 2015, more than a quarter (28.1 percent) of sixty-three presbyteries responding to a question in the November 2015 survey about their deployment of such ruling elders indicated they had granted commissions for “ministry settings other than congregations.” The vast majority of these validated ministry settings were identified as institutional chaplaincy roles (at hospitals, hospice centers, prisons, and educational campuses), although one presbytery reported the representative of Presbyterian Women on its administrative council had been commissioned and another reported a commission to perform weddings without identifying a particular ministry setting.

4. *2014 Referral: Item 08-07. On Fairness in Ministry Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 41–42, 495–501).*

Response: The Office of the General Assembly, Church Leadership Connection, posted the report, *Fairness in Ministerial Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity* electronically and encouraged “mid council staff and elected leaders” to review the report. It is available at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/>.

5. *2014 Referral: Item 15-04. On Recognizing the Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to Affirm and Promote the Civil and Human Rights of Immigrants in Our Communities—From the Presbytery of Central Florida. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 58, 1030–33).*

Response: The Office of the General Assembly hired a new manager for advocacy, Laura Polk, who began work in the Office of Immigration Issues in January of 2015. The Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative (PIDI), facilitated by the manager for advocacy in the Office of Immigration Issues, has met on a monthly basis to inform each other of the advocacy

work being done on the ground, connecting with others doing similar work, and strategizing on ways to strengthen the national network of Presbyterian advocates.

F. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

1. *2014 Referral: Item 04-04. On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of New Covenant. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 58–59, 60, 260ff).*

Following the directive from the 221st General Assembly (2014), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation completed divestment from all direct holdings in Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, and Motorola Solutions. The estimated total of all holdings was \$3 million out of the \$1.7 billion in total Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation assets. The securities were added to the 2015 Prohibited Securities List, which in turn was distributed to all Foundation investment advisors, money managers, and New Covenant Funds. The 2016 prohibited securities list continues to have Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, and Motorola Solutions included on the list.

2. *2014 Referral: Item 04-06. On Affirming Occupation-Free Investment in Palestine—From the Presbytery of Mackinac. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 61–62, 271–75).*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation is grateful for the assembly’s commendation. Through its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, the Foundation offers positive, transformational investment strategies designed to create conditions for peace in the region. In addition, New Covenant Trust Company has enhanced its securities screening capability to further serve agencies, presbyteries, congregations, and members with customized, screened investment portfolio strategies. These Mission Driven Investment Portfolios enable Presbyterians to align their investments with their values.

3. *2014 Referral: Item 04-10. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Declaring That Zionism Unsettled Does Not Represent Views of PC(USA)—From the 221st General Assembly (2014) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 62, 296–98).*

The Presbyterian Foundation has not produced any catalogs or resources that promote or reference “Zionism Unsettled.”

4. *2014 Referral: Item 09-13. A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—Report to the 221st General Assembly (2014)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 35, 38, 652–55).*

Representatives from the six agencies (including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation) and members of the GACOR consulted over the past year regarding supplier diversity policies. A database of eligible businesses has been compiled and will be updated on a continual basis by all representatives to assist the six agencies when selecting vendors for their organizations.

5. *2014 Referral: Item 09-19. Developing a Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity and Any Related Terms or Criteria Necessary—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 39, 735–37).*

The six agency representatives, members of the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), and consulting partners from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, combined efforts to develop a standard definition of supplier diversity, supplier categories, and supplier groups. These will serve as guidelines for preparing annual status reports to GACOR.

6. *2014 Referral: Item 09-22. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Encouraging Parental Leave Policy—From the 221st General Assembly (2014). (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 39–40, 740–42).*

The Foundation does not have a parental leave policy. Short-term disability is provided for the birth mother in coordination with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and FMLA leave may be used when adopting a child. A father may also utilize FMLA upon the birth or adoption of a child. FMLA is unpaid leave, but the employee may use paid time off in order to receive pay.

7. *2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81).*

Five General Assemblies (198th in 1986, 205th in 1993, 219th in 2010, 220th in 2012, and 221st in 2014) called on the PC(USA) and COTE to strengthen the funding mechanism for our PC(USA) seminaries through the Theological Education Fund (TEF) and Theological Schools Endowment Fund (TSEF). The 221st General Assembly (2014) agreed with a Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions (Item 13-07) and the COTE that moving the fiduciary responsibility of the TEF and TSEF from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation would reduce expenses and enlarge the possibilities for theological education support. In the Fall of 2014, and in accordance with the 221st General Assembly (2014), a new position was created by the Foundation as directed by the COTE and another staff position was transferred to lead the Seminary Support Network. The senior director (new role) and associate director (transferred role) job

descriptions were approved, persons were called by the COTE Executive Committee (The Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty as senior director and the Reverend Nancy Benson-Nicol as associate director), with both beginning January 1, 2015. A TEF Fund Advisory Agreement was signed February 9, 2015, to implement all the 221st General Assembly (2014) mandated actions. The Executive Committee of COTE functions as the TEF Advisory Committee monitoring the transfer and progress of the project and partnering with Foundation staff regularly in 2015 and 2016.

G. *Presbyterian Mission Agency*

1. *2014 Referral: Item 14-04. Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report. Recommendation 4. Direct the Six Agencies of PC(USA) to Distribute Essential Documents in Multiple Languages, as Appropriate—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 46–52, 1000–09; p. 316 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications has on staff one Spanish-language translator and one Korean-language translator. Their full-time work is to translate essential documents into Spanish and Korean, principally for the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The documents that are considered “essential” vary depending on the different constituencies, and the Spanish and Korean caucuses have taken an active role in defining what they wish to have translated.

On the Spanish side, highlights of our translator’s work include General Assembly overtures; important media releases, memos, statements, newsletters, and prayers from the Stated Clerk and General Assembly Moderator; elder-training monthly columns and materials for Special Offerings; and a special edition published by *Presbyterians Today* called *Welcome to the Presbyterian Church*.

Highlights of our Korean translator’s work include General Assembly overtures; media releases, memos, statements, newsletters, and prayers from the Stated Clerk and General Assembly Moderator; ruling elder materials; Confession of Belhar; Parliamentary Procedures; materials about the 1001 New Worshiping Communities initiative; and materials for Special Offerings.

The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program has one document it considers essential (their Offering Circular) that has been translated into both Spanish and Korean.

The Presbyterian Foundation had its agency overview piece translated into both Spanish and Korean. Their *Composing a Legacy* brochure (overview of Foundation services) was translated into Spanish, and their Spending Formula piece (explanation of the total return policy of the Foundation for endowment funds) was translated into Korean.

Although the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation does not consider any of its materials essential, the agency is working with OGA to publish *How to Be a Presbyterian Ruling Elder* in Spanish and Korean. Their hymnal committee was intentional about including hymns with Spanish and Korean lyrics, as well as some settings in other languages. They have also produced various *Thoughtful Christian* studies and a hymnal (*El Himnario*) in Spanish.

The Board of Pensions offers most of its resources about plans, programs, and benefits in Spanish and Korean.

Within the Presbyterian Mission Agency, staff members from the Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries area have been instrumental in securing translations of essential documents into other languages, largely by using teams of volunteers. The Asian Congregational Support office has translated the *Book of Order* into Chinese and Indonesian; *Presbyterians Today* Advent and Lenten devotionals into Chinese, Indonesian, Taiwanese, Thai, and Vietnamese; news stories about ordination changes and same-gender marriage into Chinese and Vietnamese; a summary (published by *The Presbyterian Outlook*) of actions taken by the 221st General Assembly (2014) into Chinese; and various other documents into Burmese with its multiple dialects. Their webpage also includes multilingual instructions (Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Thai, Filipino, Taiwanese) to use the Google translate tool to get rough translations of other materials. The Portuguese Congregational Support office has translated the *Book of Order* and a letter from the Moderator into Portuguese.

2. *Alternate Resolution to 2004 Referral: Item 04-12. Recommendation 2. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council Office of Theology and Worship Undertake an Analysis of the Directory of Worship with the Goal of Evaluating Its Influence and Effectiveness in Guiding Sessions, Pastors, and Higher Governing Bodies in Planning and Conducting Worship That Is Authentically Reformed and Culturally Appropriate—From the 216th General Assembly (2004) (Minutes, 2004, Part I, p. 86).*

2014 Referral: Item 13-02. The 221st General Assembly (2014) Forwards the Draft of the Proposed Directory for Worship to the Church for Study and Comment in Consideration of Submitting It to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for Approval. All Comments Should Be Directed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly by July 1, 2015—From the 221st General Assembly (2014) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 24, 25, 956ff).

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 14-04, *Revised Directory for Worship*, being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 978 of the electronic file.)

3. *2012 Referral: Item 11-20. A Statement on the Housing and the Mortgage Crisis. Recommendation. MRTI to Report Back to the 221st General Assembly (2014) on Ways for the Church to Respond to the Housing and Mortgage Crisis—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 28, 34, 1118–22 of the CD; p. 253 of the print copy).*

Response: The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and its ecumenical partners engaged major banks and financial institutions (some of which had absorbed subprime lenders as part of its regular work on the subject of mortgage servicing and foreclosure avoidance. Immediately after the crisis hit in late 2008, MRTI and its ecumenical partners urged banks to modify loans as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) had done in mid-2008 in its takeover of IndyMac Bank. The Treasury Department was slow during 2009 through 2011 in adequately developing the major federal response, its Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) modification program, and MRTI et al. continued to press banks to use alternative modification programs to cover those borrowers not covered by the Treasury modifications. Unfortunately, a major portion of these delinquent mortgages from this crisis had been securitized, so MRTI also had to pressure the bank mortgage servicers to provide modifications.

These banks and financial institutions were under intense scrutiny by government officials and regulators, and were subject to legal actions by states. The initial pressure for bank reform came from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the Federal Reserve, which received all the background papers written for the ecumenical partners, and they were followed by the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010. Public ranking of individual lenders on a consistent basis first came from the 2012 National Mortgage Settlement with 49 State Attorneys General, HUD, and the Department of Justice. Shareholder advocacy reinforced this effort, and led to reforms and more transparency.

At the same time, underwriting standards were tightened and lenders eliminated stated income and most subprime loans. MRTI has also advocated for reforms in the securitization of mortgage loans, in auto loans, and in other products prone to abuses. Attention to the financial sector has been and will be a key component of MRTI's work.

4. *2012 Referral: Item 12-09. A Resolution to Recognize the Commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Making Just Immigration a Reality. Recommendation. Direct the Office of Immigration Issues and the Office of Theology, Worship and Education to Collaborate in the Development of Accessible Worship and Study Resources That Will Assist Presbyterians in Understanding, Engaging, and Integrating an Ecclesiology of 'Being Church Together'—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 55, 60, 1155–57 of the CD; p. 263 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Immigration Services and the Office of Theology and Worship conducted a consultation in early 2015 and will have resources available to the church at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/>.

5. *2012 Referral: Item 21-01. On Instructing MRTI to Study and Report Corporate Practices of Health Insurance Companies and Possible Divestment of Same. Recommendation 1. The MRTI Committee Is Instructed to Request Information and Explanations of Health Insurance Company Policy and Practice on: State and Federal Lobbying Expenditures and Political/Campaign Contributions, Government Subsidies and Profit Margins Related to Provisions of the Healthcare 'Reform' Legislation, Aggregate Data on Increases in Premiums and Deductibles Over the Past Ten Years, Categories and Percentages of Claims Denied, and Percentages of Profits Used in Compensating Top Executives in Comparison with Return to Shareholders—From the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 64, 1687–92 of the CD; p. 341 of the print copy).*

2012 Referral: Item 21-01. On Instructing MRTI to Study and Report Corporate Practices of Health Insurance Companies and Possible Divestment of Same. Recommendation 3. MRTI Is Asked to Evaluate the Variance Between Church Principles of Universal Access and Affordability and Corporate Objectives, to Assess the Likelihood of Significant Change in Corporate Behavior, and to Recommend to the GAMC and General Assembly, Including Possible Divestment, That Would Strengthen the Integrity of the Church's Practice—From the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 64, 1687–92 of the CD; p. 341 of the print copy).

2012 Referral: Item 21-01. On Instructing MRTI to Study and Report Corporate Practices of Health Insurance Companies and Possible Divestment of Same. Recommendation 4. The GAMC, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Board of Pensions Are Requested to Report on Their Actions to the 221st and the 222nd General Assembly (2014) and (2016), with an Eye to Guiding Individual Presbyterians, Congregations, and Mid Councils in Relation to Their Own Investment Holdings in This Major Part of the Economy—From the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 64, 1687–92 of the CD; p. 341 of the print copy).

Response: Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has collaborated with ecumenical partners to engage health insurance companies around affordable and accessible health care. Primarily this has focused on increasing participation in the state exchanges as part of the Affordable Care Act. Access to health care, both domestically and internationally, is a key issue for the faith-based investment community. However, MRTI has found no interest among its partners for divestment as a strategy. The engagement process, including dialogues, shareholder resolutions, and proxy voting is the preferred

strategy. Further detailed analysis was not feasible due to financial constraints. For more information on shareholder engagement on health issues, see MRTI's web site at www.pcusa.org/mrti.

6. *2014 Referral: Item 04-04. On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking. Recommendation 5. Call for All Foreign Aid Given by the U.S. Government—including Aid to Israel and the Palestinian Authority—to Be Comprehensively and Transparently Accounted to the American People and Held to the Same Standards of Compliance with All Applicable Laws—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 58–59, 60, 260–67; p. 182 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 04-04. On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking. Recommendation 6. Call for Church Advocacy for Foreign-Aid Accountability to Be Directed Toward Its Universal Adherence Rather Than Targeted for Selective Application to Some Recipients and Not Others—From the Presbytery of New Covenant (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 58–59, 60, 260–67; p. 182 of the print copy).

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) has been working through the Faith Forum on Middle East Peace to advocate for accountability in U.S. foreign aid to all countries in the Middle East. We have sent letters to congress as well as to the administration to call for clear accountability to U.S. laws particularly in aid to Israel and Syrian rebel forces. We have had several meetings with the State Department to begin the process to ensure that military aid to Israel and other countries is in compliance with the Leahy Law.

7. *2014 Referral: Item 04-12. Commissioners' Resolution. On Reaffirming the Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine. Recommendation 4. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Engage in Advocacy and Public Witness for the Human Rights of Children in Palestine and Israel in Relation to the Listed Items (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 60, 62–64, 300–305; pp. 187–88 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency has witnessed and advocated for the human rights of children in Palestine and Israel in several ways. The Office of Public Witness (OPW) supported a congressional briefing on the treatment of Palestinian children. Young adult volunteers from the Office of Public Witness led the worship service at an Interfaith Vigil on the International Day for Protection of Children that focused on the issue of Palestinian children in Israeli detention and on the need to protect all children in Israel, Palestine, the United States, and around the world. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations worked with members of the United Nations Security Council on their actions relating to children in armed conflict, raising specific concerns for children in Israel and Palestine. The Israel-Palestine Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Working Group at the United Nations, of which the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations is a member, sent a letter to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressing deep concern that he failed to include the Israeli Defense Forces and Palestinian armed groups on his list of those who committed grave violations against children in 2014 despite the report of the special representative on children in situations of armed conflict that such violations were committed during the 2014 Israeli incursion into Gaza.

8. *2014 Referral: Item 04-12. Commissioners' Resolution. On Reaffirming the Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine. Recommendation 5. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Create Information Documents, Study Guides, or Other Educational Materials to Be Made Available Through Digital Download at the PC (USA) Website, as Well as Links to Materials and Research from Other Organizations (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 60, 62–64, 300–05; pp. 187–88 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency provided educational opportunities on the situation of violence against children in Israel and Palestine. The organization Defense for Children—Palestine led a workshop at the 2015 Compassion, Peace, and Justice training day. Speakers at Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations seminars on Israel and Palestine and on children's rights addressed the need to work to end violence against children in Israel and Palestine. Due to the material from other organizations working on this issue, the Presbyterian Mission Agency did not create new materials. Links to informational documents, study guides, research, and other educational materials are available on the Web page of Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. Links to these materials are also shared through the social media platforms of various Presbyterian Mission Agency offices. <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/un/>.

9. *2014 Referral: Item 04-13. Commissioners' Resolution. On a Commitment to Prayer for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine. Recommendation 4. Facilitators Shall Be Directed to Resources from the Reconciliation Program of Presbyterian World Mission and the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Interfaith Relations Office That Promote Constructive Conversation and Meaningful Dialogue (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 64, 306–08; pp. 188–89 of the print copy).*

Response: A variety of resources have been made available on the PC(USA) website, <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/interfaith/interfaith-resources/>, as well as in print and periodical publications, including several articles in *Presbyterians Today*, *Presbyterian News Service*, and the spring issue of *Mission Crossroads*. World Mission staff and PMA interfaith relations staff have been available for consultation.

10. *2014 Referral: Item 06-12. Special Committee to Review the Preparation for Ministry Process and Standard Ordination Exams. Recommendation 10. Direct the Office of General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Review the Programs and Procedures Used by, or Available to, Presbyteries to Prepare, Equip, Credential, and Deploy Pastoral Leadership for Congregations Other Than the Preparation Process for Those Seeking Ordination to the Ordered Ministry of Teaching Elder, with a Report to Be Submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 74, 376–88; pp. 200-201 of the print copy).*

Response: This referral is being answered by the Office of the General Assembly in II. Final Responses to Referrals, E. Office of the General Assembly, 2. *Item 06-12* above. (See p. 97 of the electronic file.)

11. *2014 Referral: Item 07-02. The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate and Work Toward Meeting Human Needs, Seeking Justice and Reconciliation, and pursuing Peace Through Interreligious Peacemaking, Disaster Assistance, and Solidarity Efforts That Attend to Respectful Interactions with Persons of Different Cultural and Religious Traditions in Both the United States and International Contexts—From the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 34, 444–53; p. 205 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Mission Agency regularly engages in advocacy and mission that meets human needs, seeks justice, reconciliation, and peacemaking in a respectful, interreligious context. Some of the highlights of this ongoing work include:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has adopted a Code of Conduct that guides PDA every time it responds to a disaster: http://pda.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/pda/pdfs/codeofconduct.pdf. This Code of Conduct explicitly states that:
 - Aid is given regardless of the race, creed, or nationality of the recipients. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
 - Aid is not used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
 - We respect culture and custom.

PDA has responded to the Syrian refugee crisis by providing educational support for Syrian children living in camps in Lebanon. Our ecumenical partner, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, is facilitating this response, mindful of cultural and religious differences and sensitive to the trauma these children have experienced.

PDA continues to be engaged in a substantive response in the Philippines (2013 Super Typhoon Haiyan) and the Nepal Earthquake (April 2015). Both of these recovery efforts are serving multiple religious communities.

In Iraq, PDA provided swamp coolers and other shelter-related resources to Yazidi and Sunni refugee camps on the outskirts of Kirkuk, working through the Presbyterian Church in Kirkuk.

- The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program is sponsoring “Mosaic of Peace,” a conference in the Holy Land April 4–16, 2016. The goal of the conference is to engage with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders, experience contextual theology, and study peacemaking practices within the framework of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy.
- <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/mosaic-peace> The majority of the advocacy work carried out by the Office of Public Witness in Washington (OPW) is done through ecumenical and interreligious coalitions. OPW has engaged in significant interreligious advocacy work around trade issues, specifically the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). This work is done through the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment. OPW has also engaged in peacemaking advocacy on drones through the Interfaith Working Group on Drones, including the [Interfaith Drones Conference in Princeton in January 2015](#), the [May 15, 2015 letter to President Obama on behalf of faith leaders expressing concerns with lethal drone use](#). The Interfaith Working Group has also coordinated meetings and helped organize the Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare. An interreligious Syria Refugee Working group has just been formed.

- The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations also engages in advocacy related to issues of freedom of religion through the Religious Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Committee and International Religious Freedom Committee.

12. *2014 Referral: Item 07-02. The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Build Capacity for Strong and Mutual Interreligious Relationships Throughout Its Ministry Areas, to Develop and promote Resources That Support the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at All Levels in the Church’s Efforts to Build and Strengthen Those Relationships, and Facilitate Cooperative Efforts with Other Religious Traditions for Social Justice. Among These New Resources Would Be “The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and an Accompanying Study Guide—From the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 34, 444–53; p. 206 of the print copy).*

Response: Within the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Interfaith Relations works with World Mission to offer training to mission co-workers on interfaith relationships, and to hold workshops for congregations and at PMA sponsored conferences. We are developing resources for congregations and members with the Young Adult Interfaith Cohort based on the Interreligious Stance's spheres. Supporting materials can be found at [http://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/interfaith/the_interreligious_stance_pc\(us\)1.pdf](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/interfaith/the_interreligious_stance_pc(us)1.pdf)

13. *2014 Referral: Item 07-02. The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Cooperate with Youth and Young Adults in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Their Interreligious Engagements That Support the Larger Efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Respectful and Mutual Interreligious Relationships on Behalf of Justice, Peace, Reconciliation, and the Common Good—From the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 34, 444–53; p. 206 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Theology and Worship and the Office of Interfaith Relations has created a Young Adult Interfaith Cohort of Presbyterians engaged in interfaith work throughout the church and in the world. The cohort is a two-year commitment that offers mentorship and works with young adults in the creation of resources for the church. More information can be found at <http://whatsnextwhatsnow.org/issue/interfaith/>.

14. *2014 Referral: Item 08-05. Resolution to Define and Interpret Standards for PC (USA) Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges. To Refer the Following Recommendation to the Already Established Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Task Force. The Committee Would Like the Task Force to Have at Least Six (6) People. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in Consultation with the Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges Presidents Roundtable, to Convene a Racially Diverse Special Task Force of Six People with Expertise in the Field of Education to Define and Interpret the Standards for Racial Ethnic Schools Related to the PC (USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41, 489–91; p. 221 of the print copy).*

Response: A special task force, including racial ethnic schools and colleges presidents and other diverse leaders, met in the fall of 2014 to define and interpret the standards for racial ethnic schools related to the PC(USA). A report was presented to and approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board at its April 2015 meeting. The report can be found on the Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges website (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/resc/schools-colleges).

15. *2014 Referral: Item 08-06. A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Using Existing Racial Ethnic Ministries, Consultation with the Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force, the Advocacy Committee for Racial-Ethnic Concerns, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and Engagement with Experienced Practitioners as Appropriate, to Update and Revise Churchwide Antiracism Policies and Develop Implementing Procedures Similar to the Existing Antidiscrimination Policies and Procedures—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41, 491–95; pp. 221–22 of the print copy).*

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 11-22, “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community,” to be approved at the April 2016 Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Meeting being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 770 of the electronic file.)

16. *2014 Referral: Item 08-06. A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop and Implement Criteria for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Current Churchwide Antiracism Training Programs and to Report Back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) Regarding Its Findings and Any Corrective Actions Taken or Proposed and Results Achieved—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41, 491–95; pp. 221–22 of the print copy).*

Response: See II. Final Responses to Referrals, G. Presbyterian Mission Agency, 75. “Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Current Churchwide Antiracism Trainings Report,” below. (See p. 125.)

17. *2014 Referral: Item 08-06. A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop Tools, Assessment Instruments, and Training Materials for the Presbyteries and Congregations in Order to Develop Clear and Effective Understanding of Systemic Racism, Including White Privilege, Power, and Prejudice in Relation to Race—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41, 491–95; pp. 221–22 of the print copy).*

Response: Training materials and assessment tools on antiracism have been developed and revised. These materials include modules on white privilege, power, and prejudice. These training materials are available for presbyteries and congregations. Staff from the office of Gender and Racial Justice are available to visit presbyteries and congregations to offer training and/or to train antiracism trainers. An antiracism trainer is available to train groups in the church. The antiracism manual is available for trained facilitators.

18. *2014 Referral: Item 08-08. The Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church's Urban Vision. To Refer Item 08-08 to the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to Convene an Urban Ministry Roundtable with Groups and Individuals Engaged in*

Urban Ministry Including, But Not Limited to, ACSWP, ACWC, ACREC, and Racial Ethnic Caucuses for the Purpose of Developing a Method of Fulfilling the Goals of Item 08-08 and to Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 503–16; pp. 222–23 of the print copy).

Response: Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) contracted with a part-time consultant to rebuild the Urban Ministry Roundtable, a network of pastoral leadership engaged in urban ministry. PMA hosted a leadership/organizing team of eleven Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastors in Chicago, October 26–28, 2015. The leadership/organizing team is planning regional consultations (dates and places not yet confirmed) on “Race, Class, and the Current Challenges of Urban Ministry.” PMA developed a website for resource sharing and networking: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/urbanministry>.

19. *2014 Referral: Item 08-09. For-Profit Prisons, Jails, and/or Detention Centers Be Added to the List of Companies for Divestment and/or Proscription of Investment Ownership. That the Category of Publicly Traded Corporations That Directly Manage or Operate for-Profit Prisons, Jails, and/or Detention Centers Be Added to the List of Companies from Which the General Assembly Urges Divestment and/or Proscription of Investment Ownership—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 516–17; p. 224 of the print copy).*

Response: Since the General Assembly approved the policy of divesting and/or proscribing investment ownership in publicly traded corporations that directly manage or operate for-profit prisons, jails, and/or detention centers, this category has been included in the General Assembly’s divestment and/or proscription list. Updated annually, the list currently includes Corrections Corporation of America, The GEO Group, Inc., G4S, the leading U.S. Security Company, and Serco Inc.

20. *2014 Referral: Item 08-10. Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Plan a Women of Color Consultation (WoCC) That Focuses on the Inclusion of Women of Color of All Ages in Leadership and Decision-Making in Presbyteries and Synods and/or Their Successor Bodies. The Next WoCC Shall Be Held No Later Than the Fall of 2015 and Be Reported to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) with Recommendation for Further Action and Study—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 42, 518–22; p. 224 of the print copy).*

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 10-09, “Empowered and Hopeful: Women of Color Consultation Report,” being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 611 of the electronic file.)

21. *2014 Referral: Item 08-10. Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Make Available Print and Electronic Resources on Cultural Competency, Antiracism, and Antisexism to Mid Councils and the Larger Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 42, 518–22; p. 224 of the print copy).*

Response: Print and electronic resources on cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism are available to mid councils and the larger church through the office of Gender and Racial Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Staff from the office of Gender and Racial Justice are available to visit presbyteries and congregations to train individual antiracism trainers or teams of trainers. An antiracism trainer is available to train groups in the church. The antiracism manual is available for trained facilitators.

22. *2014 Referral: Item 08-10. Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Collect Information from Mid Councils on the Implementation of Cultural Competency, Antiracism, and Antisexism Training for Committees on Ministry and Committees on Preparation for Ministry and to Report Its Findings to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) —From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 42, 518–22; p. 224 of the print copy).*

Response: See II. Final Responses to Referrals, G. Presbyterian Mission Agency, 76. “Implementation of Cultural Competency, Antiracism and Antisexism Trainings in Mid Councils Report,” below. (See p. 129 of the electronic file.)

23. *2014 Referral: Item 09-05. On a Two-Year Study to Discern How to Advocate for Effective Drug Policies. Recommendation 2. Urge All Publications and Other Communication Vehicles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Develop Articles, Reports, and Other Materials Designed to Educate, Motivate, and Activate Church Members and Congregants to Learn About the History, Development, and Implementation of U.S. Drug Policies—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 35, 36, 630–35; pp. 236–37 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations attended the Civil Society Hearing on “Preparation for the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Special Session on Drugs” and other events related to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs that will be held during 2016. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations joined the New York Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Committee on Drugs, a global committee of more than ninety NGOs that works to support civil society in engaging with the UN system on international drug policy and practice, facilitating the exchange of information between civil society organizations and UN agencies, member states, and other relevant UN bodies. Information gathered has been shared with the study team and with the wider church through social media.

There have been numerous articles relating to Drug Policy and the overall issue of drugs, addiction, and crime published in *Unbound*, the social justice journal from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ASCWP). A few of them are excerpts from testimonies at the hearings the task force held.

- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/leading-my-own-fight-for-what-will-heal-me/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/the-drug-wars-impact-on-latino-communities/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/violence-human-rights-and-the-drug-war-in-mexico/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/violence-is-itself-the-enemy/>.

The following articles also deal pretty specifically with “the history, development, and implementation of U.S. drug policies”:

- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/re-examining-our-nations-responses-to-drugs/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/faith-leaders-influencing-the-debate-on-drug-sentencing/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/a-biblical-and-theological-reflection-on-consumption-addiction-and-prejudicial-drug-policy/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/seek-ye-first-the-rat-park/>;
- <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/justice-and-responsibility-the-drug-war-in-colombia/>.

During the course of 2016, several of these issues will be feature articles on the Presbyterian News Service as well as incorporated into the two existing monthly newsletters for Compassion, Peace and Justice.

24. *2014 Referral: Item 09-05. On a Two-Year Study to Discern How to Advocate for Effective Drug Policies. Recommendation 3. Recommend that the Criminal Justice Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association Focus Criminal Justice Sunday in 2015 on Issues Related to the Impact of Drug Prohibition—From the Presbytery of San Francisco (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 35, 36, 630–35; pp. 236–37 of the print copy).*

Response: Because national drug policy is currently in a fluid state, the leadership of the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Network (PCJN) is reluctant to develop resources that could be out of date before congregations have a chance to use them. PCJN leaders anticipate working with members of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s Drug Policy Reform Study Team and others to address this theme in a future Criminal Justice Sunday resource.

While understanding that changing times require that the majority of planning meetings to be conducted via Skype, GoToMeeting, or conference call, the leadership of PCJN believes that resources could more effectively be developed if funding was available for an initial face-to-face meeting. Just as the Drug Policy Task Force determined that it was necessary to conduct some of its meetings in person as it created a comprehensive policy document, so too does the PCJN leadership believe that the development of denominational resources would benefit from at least one face to face meeting.

25. *2014 Referral: Item 09-06. On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform. Recommendation 1. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for the Following: 1. Financial and Political Reforms (a) Aimed at Eliminating and/or Regulating Closely the Practices of the Financial Sector, Which Caused the Great Recession; and (b) Affirmative Efforts by the Department of Treasury, Securities and Exchange Commission, and Other Regulatory Bodies to Protect Ordinary Citizens, to Revise Bankruptcy Laws to Protect Borrowers and Those Holding ‘Underwater’ Mortgages, and to Enable National, State, and Local Efforts to Provide Refinancing Through Repurchasing and Restructuring Mortgages and Public Capital Projects—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 36, 635–38; p. 238 of the print copy).*

Response: Office of Public Witness engaged in advocacy to support the creation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (created by Dodd-Frank, but languished under congressional inaction over the confirmation of the new director). The Office of Public Witness director has also met several times with the newly appointed director, Richard Cordray, to discuss a variety of methods to protect consumers from financial predators. The meetings have largely focused around predatory lending.

26. *2014 Referral: Item 09-06. On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform. Recommendation 2. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for Appropriate Investigations and Prosecutions of Individuals, Companies, and Industries Engaged in Fraudulent Behaviors, Regardless of Position or Size, That Justice May Be Applied Equally to All. This Will Include Advocating for Strategies That Address the Lack of Prosecution of the Individuals and Financial Institutions Responsible for the 2008 Meltdown of the U.S. Economy—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 36, 635–38; p. 238 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Public Witness has been an active participant in the Faithful Democracy whose goal is to reduce the undue influence of private money in politics.

27. *2014 Referral: Item 09-06. On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform. Recommendation 3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for Campaign Finance Reform and Other Efforts to Reduce the Influence of Special Interest Money in Politics (Including That of the Financial Sector, the Gun Lobby, the Oil Industry, Etc.)—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 36, 635–38; p. 238 of the print copy).*

Response: Office of Public Witness (OPW) has been heavily engaged in advocacy in support of a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens' United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)* and other campaign finance reform efforts. The OPW actively participates in the interfaith coalition “Faithful Democracy” whose goal is to reduce the undue influence of private money in politics. As of May 2015, the OPW has published nine blog posts and two action alerts on campaign finance reform. In October 2014, OPW staff person wrote an article on money in politics for Presbyterian Women’s *Horizons* magazine and in May 2015 we hosted a conversation on money in politics on <http://ecclesio.com/> that comprised five articles examining the role of money in politics through different lenses. Finally, the director coauthored an op-ed on campaign finance and immigrant detention in the *Houston Chronicle* in May 2015.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), working in collaboration with the Office of Public Witness (OPW), has developed an addition to the 2010 resolution that will be distributed electronically in January 2016 to all presbyteries and synods and through other channels across the church.

28. *2014 Referral: Item 09-07. On Gun Violence Prevention. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to a. Provide Models for Congregational and Local Ecumenical Forums to Explore the Dynamics of Gun Violence in Their Areas, and to Select Appropriate Initiatives for Witness and Action in Their Communities, and b. Assist in the Formation of Support, Healing, and Advocacy Groups for Those Who Have Experienced Gun Violence in Their Families—From the Presbytery of Hudson River (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 32, 36–37, 638–42; pp. 238–40 of the print copy).*

Response: Several model forums have been conducted across the church since the 221st General Assembly (2014). Congregational and mid council forums have occurred as well as ecumenical and community forums. Many have been modeled on the forum suggested in the screening toolkit for “Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence,” which brings together an array of community leaders to address the implications of gun violence from diverse perspectives. The four-session study guide for “Trigger” as well as a series of studies produced by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF) continue to be available and utilized in study groups. A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gun violence network is under development with plans to begin sometime in 2016.

Our PC(USA) camps and conference centers have conducted camps for victims and survivors of gun violence. Youth and collegiate conferences have conducted workshops for those impacted by gun violence, including the 2015 Montreat Collegiate Conference “Peace Bound,” which included Virginia Tech students. More needs to be done in 2016 to fulfill this referral, including an adaptation of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance’s (PDA) work on trauma recovery to families impacted by gun violence.

29. *2014 Referral: Item 09-11. Affirming the Importance of Maternal and Child Nutrition over 1000 Days. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with Presbyterian Women in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., to identify resources for Presbyterians to learn more about maternal and child nutrition—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 649–50; pp. 241–42 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries have collaborated with Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to identify resources for Presbyterians to learn more about maternal and child nutrition. Information on the maternal and child nutrition in the first 1,000 days movement can be found on the Gender Justice website (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/gender-justice-ministries), Presbyterian Women’s website (www.presbyterianwomen.org/justice), and on the AllWomen in the Church website (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/all-women).

30. *2014 Referral: Item 09-11. Affirming the Importance of Maternal and Child Nutrition Over 1000 Days. Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for Policies That Promote Good Nutrition in the 1,000 Days Window—From the Presbytery of National Capital (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 649–50; pp. 241–42 of the print copy).*

Response: Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), through our Office of Public Witness (OPW), has advocated for maintaining the level of international development assistance (through which 1,000 Days is funded) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits within the U.S.A. WIC, in particular, targets nutrition for children in the 1,000-Day window. We have advocated for reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was also part of a coalition statement of support for the Global Food Security Act in both the House of Representatives and the Senate and we continue to do advocacy on that issue.

31. *2014 Referral: Item 09-12. On Providing a Trauma Crisis Counseling Consultation to Train in Best Practices in Caring for Survivors of Homicide Victims. To Commit the Necessary Financial and Programmatic Resources to Provide for a Trauma Crisis Counseling Consultation Within Twelve Months of the 221st General Assembly (2014). The Attendees*

Would Be Trained by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Mental Health Professionals, and Community Stakeholders in Some of the Best Practices for Caring for the Bereaved Survivors of Homicide Victims and traumatized Community Members—From the Presbytery of Nevada (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 650–52; p. 242 of the print copy).

Response: Churchwide trauma consultation was planned, staffed, and scheduled as a pre-conference event prior to Big Tent. Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) (through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and the Mid Council office) advertised the conference among all mid council partners, with special attention to communities that have experienced high levels of public violence. Regrettably, enrollment was extremely low. The event was therefore re-envisioned as a series of TED-Talk style short videos that will be made available churchwide, at no cost to pastors, congregations, and mid councils. The talks incorporate trauma professionals teaching best practices for non-clinical support and intervention following trauma, as well as congregational, community, and liturgical strategies to support wholeness and healing following trauma. Additionally PDA and Presbyterian Camps and Conference Centers have initiated a model for “healing camps” to support children and youth after public violence or trauma and are establishing a churchwide network of camps able to support such initiatives in their regions after traumatic violence affecting children.

32. 2014 Referral: Item 09-14. National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force Report. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to Hold a National Consultation on Developing Regional Racial Ethnic Ministries in 2015 for Twenty-Five Participants Over a Two-Day Period. This Consultation Will Have a Planning Team of Ten People and Shall Include Developing a Vision and Structure so Each Ministry May Create Its Own Unique Way of Doing Ministry—From the Task Force on National Racial Ethnic Ministries (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 655–59; p. 243; p. 243 of the print copy).

Response: Twenty-five leaders from across the United States gathered in Louisville, Kentucky, on May 27–29, 2015, for a national consultation on developing regional racial ethnic ministries. The consultation leaders developed a resource for congregations and mid councils to use on developing regional racial ethnic ministries. The resource was shared with participants in a workshop at the 2015 Polity Conference, sponsored by the Office of the General Assembly, in October 2015 in Portland, Oregon. The resource can be found on the Intercultural Ministries website (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/intercultural-ministries/further-study).

33. 2014 Referral: Item 09-14. National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force Report. Recommendation 3. Call for a Churchwide Conference on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity in 2015. In Addition, Direct the Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Appoint a Planning Team of Ten People for This Event in Consultation with Groups Named in a. Through f; g. A Report Will Be Submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on These Matters—From the Task Force on National Racial Ethnic Ministries (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 655–59; p. 243 of the print copy).

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 11-24, “Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report,” being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to be voted on at April PMA meeting. (See p. 787 of the electronic file.)

34. 2014 Referral: Item 09-15. A Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to prepare Educational Materials (Web-Based or Print) for Use in Congregations and Mid Councils Specifically on How Voter Suppression Impacts Our Democracy Theologically, Ecclesiologicaly, and Culturally—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38–39, 659–63; p. 244 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 09-15. A Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Lift Up Voters’ Rights in Election Years 2014 and 2016 Through Its Communications Channels and Recognize the Need to Educate the Grassroots on the Effects of Voter Suppression on Church and Society—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38–39, 659–63; p. 244 of the print copy).

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) created a “Get Out the Vote” Action Alert for the 2014 mid-term election that was also shared via *Unbound*, a bimonthly online journal published by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), which advocates for and promotes Christian social justice issues. This alert can be viewed at the following link: <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/today-is-election-day-get-out-the-vote>.

The OPW is currently writing a congregational study guide on voter suppression titled “We Shall Not Be Moved: Advocacy in the New Age of Voter Suppression.” It will be housed on the “resources” section of the OPW website <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/washington/about-us/>. As a participating sponsor for the Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference held in April 2016, Compassion, Peace and Justice has made suppression of political rights a key component to its training day, which is part of a larger three-day conference devoted to advocating for a more transparent and participatory government. Information on the conference can be found at <http://officeofpublicwitness.blogspot.com/2015/11/register-now-for-advocacy-training.html>.

The Office of Public Witness wrote curriculum for a discussion series on voter suppression for use in congregations and mid councils. The OPW also released and publicized a statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, and a Voting Rights Manifesto. In May 2015, an OPW staff member wrote an expose for *Horizons* magazine on the 50th anniversary of the act and the Supreme Court decision that gutted it.

35. *2014 Referral: Item 09-15. A Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression. Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop Advocacy Strategies to Work Against Voter Suppression and for Greater Freedom in Voting and Access to Voting, and to Share News of These Efforts Across the Church—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38–39, 659–63; p. 244 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) is currently writing a congregational study guide on voter suppression titled “We Shall Not Be Moved: Advocacy in the New Age of Voter Suppression” to engage congregations in local, regional, and national voter turnout efforts and prevent voter suppression. It will be housed on the “resources” section of the OPW website <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/washington/about-us/>. The OPW staff and young adults wrote a five-part educational series for ecclesio.com on the injustices of corporate money in politics: <http://www.ecclesio.com/2015/05/>.

36. *2014 Referral: Item 09-16. Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age. Recommendation II.1. The 221st General Assembly (2014) Invites All Members, Congregations, and Councils and Directs the Appropriate Officers of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Encourage Study and Discussion of This Report and to Represent Its Positions in the Consideration of Tax and Related Legislation at All Governmental Levels, and Directs the Stated Clerk to Communicate This Report Electronically and Through a Limited Number of Print Copies to Members, Ecumenical Partners, and Governmental Bodies, with Guidance from the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 32, 39, 663–96; pp. 244–51 of the print copy).*

Response: The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) has distributed this policy primarily by an on-line link to the booklet and three-page summary of key positions: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/tax-justice-christian-response-second-gilded-age/>. It has been distributed to church partners in the National Council of Churches; to college, university, and seminary professors in the Social Ethics Network; provided in limited copies at the Presbyterian Training Day and Ecumenical Advocacy Days, the Polity Conference, and Big Tent, where a workshop on the resource was provided. There has been some on-line discussion of the report among those involved in tax policy. ACSWP celebrates the creation of an informal Presbyterian Tax Justice Network of interested persons in New York City, Long Island, and Boston presbyteries. In addition, a class on tax justice has been taught at Harvard Divinity School for the past two years, and the report has been presented at a symposium at Loyola Marymount University.

37. *2014 Referral: Item 09-17. The Self-Study Report of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the 221st General Assembly (2014). Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Uphold the Instruction Given by the 205th General Assembly (1993) to Ensure Programmatic Advocacy: “Under the Leadership of Those Working in the Areas of Racial Ethnic Ministries and Women’s Ministries, ... Ensure Advocacy and Monitoring Functions ... Throughout the Ministries and Agencies of the General Assembly—From the Advocacy Committee on Women’s Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 39, 696–735; p. 252 of the print copy).*

Response: Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries’ staff meet regularly with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and with the associate for advocacy committee support to ensure programmatic advocacy and empowerment for women. Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries engaged in programmatic advocacy at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the Presbyterian Women Churchwide Gathering, the African American Clergywomen’s Gathering, the Native American Women’s Gathering, the Study on the Status of Women Theological Consultation, the Women of Color Consultation, and in racial ethnic and women’s leadership institutes. Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries also held several women’s listening visits across the country and shared its findings with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns at a meeting held in 2015, and with the Study on the Status of Women Theological Consultation planning team at the theological consultation in the fall of 2015. The ministry area in collaboration with the Office of Research Services and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is also working together to study the status of women. Racial Ethnic & Women’s staff also led a national Staff Development Day workshop with an ACWC member and the associate for advocacy committee support in Louisville, Kentucky, in November 2015. Ecumenical and interfaith conversations surrounding issues of gender and race also took place at the Women of Color in Ministry event, the White Privilege Conference, and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

38. *2014 Referral: Item 09-23. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Requesting the Release from Prison of Mr. Oscar Lopez Rivera. The 221st General Assembly (2014) Referred Item 09-23 to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk for Further Study and Discernment and, if Appropriate, Take Timely Action (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 40, 742–43; p. 254 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) Director J Herbert Nelson co-authored a letter with Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons to President Obama urging him to commute the sentence of Oscar Lopez Rivera.

39. *2014 Referral: Item 11-02. On Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World. Recommendation 4. Direct the Office for Public Witness and the Presbyterian Office at the United Nations to Inform and Equip Presbyterians to Advocate for Just Peace Throughout the Middle East—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65–66, 823–26; pp. 261–62 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 11-02. On Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World. Recommendation 6. Calling on the Government of the United States to Examine Its Role in the Middle East, to Seek to Ensure That Future Involvements in the Region Be Consistent with the Promotion of Justice and Freedom for All, Including Religious Liberty, and ‘to Ensure That Military Intervention of Any Kind Is Undertaken as a “Last Resort” and Reflects a High Consensus Among Democratic Nations That It May Serve a “Just Peace”—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65–66, 823–26; pp. 261–62 of the print copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) has advocated for just peace in the Middle East with permanent and elected members of the United Nations Security Council. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has attended human rights briefings held by United Nations Economic and Social Council that focus on a just peace throughout the Middle East. The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations participates in nongovernmental organizations (NGO) committees that focus on religious freedom, religion, and human rights in the Middle East, all conditions of a just peace. Through social media, seminars, and presentations by persons from the Middle East, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has informed and equipped Presbyterians to advocate for a just peace.

The Office of Public Witness (OPW) has sent action alerts and provided information through social media to members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to inform and help them to advocate for peacemaking in the Middle East, particularly in regards to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq as well as Israel and Palestine. We have also held webinars and briefings concerning those conflicts.

Through various coalitions, including the Faith Forum on Middle East Peace and Churches for Middle East Peace, the Office of Public Witness have advocated with congress and the administration for nonviolent diplomatic solutions to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and Israel/Palestine, and for a nonviolent negotiated settlement to the conflict with Iran. This has been done in visits to congress and the administration as well as letters and action alerts to constituents.

40. *2014 Referral: Item 11-02. On Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World. Recommendation 5. Direct Presbyterian World Mission and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to Consult with Mission Partners in the Middle East, and Seek Increased Financial Support Through Church-Wide Appeals to Support Mission Partners’ Efforts to Provide Relief for Christian Refugees in/from the Region—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65–66, 823–26; pp. 261–62 of the print copy).*

Response: World Mission and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance staff have been in consultation with Presbyterian churches in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, and have provided support for their relief programs, including rebuilding houses in Homs, Syria, and providing electric generators for internally displaced people in Iraq. World Mission has planned a few connectional trips to Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Palestine-Israel for PC(USA) constituents to help establish congregation-to-congregation relationships and collaboration in ministry. More than ten PC(USA) mission coworkers serve in the Middle East with sister denominations in a variety of ministries.

41. *2014 Referral: Item 11-03. On Removing Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Recommendation 1. Petition the President of the United States and the U.S. Department of State to Remove Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism as Soon as Possible—From the Presbytery of Long Island (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65, 66, 826–27; p. 262 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 11-03. On Removing Cuba from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for This Result in Cooperation with the Appropriate Denominational and Ecumenical Organizations in Washington—From the Presbytery of Long Island (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65, 66, 826–27; p. 262 of the print copy).

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) met with members of the administration including the State Department and the National Security Council to encourage the removal of Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. We sent letters to Secretary Kerry as well as to members of congress urging them to support this action. On May 29, 2015, Cuba was taken off the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

42. *2014 Referral: Item 11-05. On Lifting All Travel Restrictions for U.S. Citizens Traveling to Cuba. Recommendation 1. Petition the president of the United States, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control to Remove All of the Restrictions on Travel by U.S. Citizens to Cuba, Which It Is Legally Possible for Them to Do, and to Openly and Vigorously Advocate to Congress the Repeal of All Laws Restricting the Constitutional Right of U.S. Citizens to Travel to Cuba—From the Presbytery of St. Augustine (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65, 66, 830–31; p. 263 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 11-05. On Lifting All Travel Restrictions for U.S. Citizens Traveling to Cuba. Recommendation 2. Petition the Majority and Minority Leaders of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives to Work to Repeal All of the Laws Restricting Travel to That Nation—From the Presbytery of St. Augustine (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65, 66, 830–31; p. 263 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-05. On Lifting All Travel Restrictions for U.S. Citizens Traveling to Cuba. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for This Change in Policy in Cooperation with Other Appropriate Denominational and Ecumenical Organizations in Washington—From the Presbytery of St. Augustine (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65, 66, 830–31; p. 263 of the print copy).

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) has been continuously advocating for the lifting of the travel ban to Cuba. Through work with the Latin America Working Group and the Ecumenical Working Group on Cuba, we have participated in meetings with congress, sent out action alerts and signed on to letters advocating for Congress to lift the travel ban. We also participated in Cuba Summit sponsored by Latin America Working Group (LAWG) and Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). We have also helped set up several meetings for delegations from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and our Cuban partners to advocate the lifting of the travel ban.

43. 2014 Referral: Item 11-07. On Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Recommendation 4. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to a. Encourage Appropriate Observance of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Designating Sunday April 26, 2015, as the 100 Year Anniversary Commemoration Day in Presbyterian Churches Including the Preparation of Educational and Liturgical Resources, and Other Memorials to Be Made Available on the Web at Least Two Months Prior to 4/26/2015; b. Encourage the United States to Endorse the Highest Human Rights Standards for All Agencies and Actions of the United States Government; c. Work Cooperatively with Other Churches and Communions in Both Advocacy and Encouraging Appropriate Artistic, Musical, and Other Cultural Forms of Remembrance—From the Presbytery of Los Ranchos (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.65, 67, 835–40; pp. 264–65 of the print copy).

Response: Complete resources for education, liturgy, and wider engagement were released on the web for all congregations starting January 2015 leading up to commemoration of the Armenian genocide centenary on April 26 (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/armenian-genocide/2015>). Observance was encouraged all year. At a Jinishian Memorial Program event with interchurch partners in June, the City of Los Angeles officially recognized the PC(USA) for supporting the Armenian community as the first Protestant denomination to acknowledge the genocide. The “America, We Thank You” campaign also gave tribute to Presbyterian aid and human rights advocacy, along with other churches during WWI. The Jinishian Memorial Program hosted an ecumenical pilgrimage study tour to Armenia through World Mission Initiative at Pittsburgh Seminary in October.

44. 2014 Referral: Item 11-08. Western Sahara: Occupied, Non-Self-Governing Territory, and Test Case for International Law. Recommendation 1. Urge the U. S. Department of State and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to Continue to Call Upon the Community of Nations to Support Self-Determination for the People of the Region Known as Western Sahara in Accord with Prior UN Resolutions and Determinations of International Courts—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.15, 67, 840–46; pp. 265–66 of the print copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, sent the requested letter to the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

45. 2014 Referral: Item 11-08. Western Sahara: Occupied, Non-Self-Governing Territory, and Test Case for International Law. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Work with Ecumenical and Interfaith Partners and Other Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Support of These Efforts on Behalf of Western Sahara, and to Give Attention as Feasible to Justice Issues in Other Non-Self-Governing Trust Territories, Territorial Possessions, and Occupied Territories—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.15, 67, 840–46; pp. 265–66 of the print copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has worked with faith-based and secular partners to monitor the situation in Western Sahara and other non-self-governing trust territories, territorial possessions, and occupied territories, advocating for justice when the opportunity presented itself.

46. 2014 Referral: Item 11-08. Western Sahara: Occupied, Non-Self-Governing Territory, and Test Case for International Law. Recommendation 3. Direct the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) to Monitor the Activities of International Corporations in Western Sahara in Which the Foundation or Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) May Be an Investor, Including the Potash Corporation, Initiating Correspondence on the Impacts of That Firm’s Mineral Extraction, and Recommending Appropriate Further Corporate Social Responsibility Measures Consistent with the Concerns Noted Above—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.15, 67, 840–46; pp. 265–66 of the print copy; pp. 265–66 of the print copy).

Response: The Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee has integrated Western Sahara into its human rights work, and regularly monitors corporate activity in the country and its territorial waters.

47. *2014 Referral: Item 11-08. Western Sahara: Occupied, Non-Self-Governing Territory, and Test Case for International Law. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, to Monitor Matters of Human Rights and Religious Liberty in Western Sahara and Other Countries Across the Northern Africa region Where Ethnic and Religious Tensions and Undemocratic Governance May Threaten International Peace and Security, and Make Recommendations on Public Policy and Economic Witness as Appropriate—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.15, 67, 840–46; pp. 265–66 of the print copy).*

Response: The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) has supported the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations in its monitoring the process of The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) of the UN, which continues to support a referendum of self-determination for the inhabitants of Western Sahara. The Presbyterian Mission Agency World Mission ministries and the Middle East Staff Team follow different ethnic and religious struggles across Northern Africa from Northern Nigeria and Cameroon, through Libya and South Sudan, to Egypt, Somalia, and Yemen.

48. *2014 Referral: Item 11-09. A Resolution on Behalf of Dominicans of Haitian Descent and any Others Impacted by the Decision 168/13 of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to a. Engage in Advocacy for International and Local Support in Favor of Dominicans of Haiti Descent and Any Others Impacted by the Decision 168/13 of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic, b. Speak Out Against Statelessness and Deportation for Dominicans of Haitian Descent and Any Others Impacted by This Law, c. Advocate in Favor of Equal Treatment and Access to Basic Human Rights, Privileges, and Public Services for All Dominicans Regardless of the Nationality of Their Ancestors—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67, 846–47; p. 266 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) has monitored the situation faced by Dominicans of Haitian descent. The ministry has worked with ecumenical partners in the United Nations (UN) community to advocate on this matter. With these partners, the ministry cosponsored an event advocating for the human rights of all Dominicans. Staff from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations raised concerns about Dominicans of Haitian descent in a meeting with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Office of Public Witness (OPW) participates in the Haiti Working Group, an interfaith working group chaired by Church World Service. We have signed on to letters to congress and the administration lifting up the rights of Haitians in the Dominican Republic (DR) and have partnered with World Mission in promoting a day of prayer and action for Dominicans of Haitian Descent. We have also partnered with the PMUN and World Mission in participating in high level meetings with the administration and at the United Nations.

49. *2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation A.3. Urges the United States Congress to Pass Legislation Governing Military Drones. These Laws Should Articulate Procedures That Put Checks on Executive Power and Establish Civilian Oversight.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation A.4. Urges the U.S. to Make Public and Submit Its Rules for Military Drones to Institutions of the International Legal Community for Analysis and Evaluation. Together with Other Nations, We May Develop International Conventions Governing Their Use and Prevent a ‘Drone Race’—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation A.5. In the Absence of Conventions Outlawing Drone Use in Combat or Counterterrorism, Urges That Targeted Killings of Suspected Terrorists Be Given More Effective Judicial and Congressional Review Through the Use of Warrants, Advocates for the Accused, and Regular After-the-Fact Public Reporting by Any and All Secret Courts, so That Elected Bodies May Evaluate the Costs and Benefits of Counterterrorism Measures and Find Alternatives, and so That No One Person, Even a President Acting in Military Capacity, Could Order the Killing or Indefinite Detention of a Suspected Enemy Exempt from Judicial Review—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation A.6. Urges, in Cases Where the Proposed Targeted Killing of Suspects Amounts to the Declaration of War, That Congressional Approval (Beyond Surveillance Court Approval) Be Sought, as for Other Wars, and That Any Such Declaration or Approval Include Tax Revenues Sufficient to Cover All Costs Expected from These Military Operations—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation A.8. Instructs the Appropriate Offices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, in Ecumenical and Interfaith Cooperation Whenever Possible, to Advocate for Such Legal Protections of Human Rights and Regulation of Military Drones (UAVs), and to Produce Resources to Interpret and Assist Discussion and Exploration of the Use of Remotely Piloted Air-

craft and Related Technologies—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation B.2. Recommends That the United States Congress, Other Federal, State, and/or Local Agencies, as Appropriate, Pass Legislation and/or Regulations Governing the Use of Domestic Drones so That Constitutional Rights Are Upheld—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation B.3. Urges the Adoption of Policies That Would Prevent Domestic Drones from Being Weaponized—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-10. Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance. Recommendation C.2. Recommends the United States Congress Pass Legislation to Increase Accountability of Surveillance Agencies and Commercial Contractors Engaged in Surveillance.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 67–68, 847–60; pp. 267–69 of the print copy).

Response: The Office of Public Witness (OPW) helped to plan and participated in the Interfaith Conference on Drones in January of 2015. The conference brought together faith leaders from across the country to learn and then take action concerning the United States' use of drones. The OPW is an active member of the Interfaith Working Group on Drones. Through this coalition we have sent letters, action alerts, and held meetings and briefings with congress and the administration advocating the items in Item 11-10.

50. 2014 Referral: Item 11-11. Risking Peace in a Violent World: Affirmations for Presbytery Consideration. Recommendation 5. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Continue to Help Interpret the Discernment Process Outlined in Recommendations 1.–3.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 68–69, 860–87; pp. 269–70 of the print copy).

Response: Peacemaking and ACSWP staff persons prepared a summary document for presbyteries that included an overview of the discernment process, the action of the assembly, a brief theological basis, and summary rationales for each of the five affirmations. We worked with the OGA to create an online reporting form for presbyteries to log their votes and comments. We contacted presbyteries to encourage them to docket time to review the affirmations. In several cases, presbyteries consulted with us for guidance prior to their meetings and/or we attended their meetings. We continue to interpret the Five Affirmations even as the report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) is prepared.

51. 2014 Referral: Item 11-11. Risking Peace in a Violent World: Affirmations for Presbytery Consideration. Recommendation 6. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Work with the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy as It Develops Resources and Assists Networks to Support International Peacemaking on Current and Emerging Challenges Such as South Sudan and Areas in Need of Reconciliation and Reconstruction Such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Colombia, While Addressing Domestic Peacemaking in Such Areas as Gun Violence, Violence in Families, and Concern for Returning Veterans—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 68–69, 860–87; pp. 269–70 of the print copy).

Response: In 2014 and 2015 International Peacemakers were invited from our partners in South Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Colombia, Rwanda, South Africa, and other countries engaged in reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. Many of these peacemakers met with our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission networks to support and strengthen these partnerships.

52. 2014 Referral: Item 11-12. On Helping to Remedy the Tragic Conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for Public Policy That Is Consistent with the Objectives Set Out in Recommendation 1, Building on Existing Treaties and Encouraging International Cooperation, Collective Security, and Accountable Monitoring Processes for the DRC and Those of Its Neighbors Facing Similar Threats—From the Presbytery of Boston (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 69, 887–90; pp. 270–71 of the print copy).

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN) advocated with members of the United Nations Security Council guided by this policy and in consultation with World Mission staff, the Congo Mission Network, and our church partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Staff from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations participated in a World Council of Churches consultation on the Democratic Republic of Congo and shared the information from that consultation with Presbyterian Mission Agency staff members and the Congo Mission Network.

The Office of Public Witness (OPW) has been advocating for support for a peaceful end to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo through work with the Advocacy Network on Africa. We have also been providing staff support to the Congo Mission Network's Advocacy Committee. Our young adult volunteer is producing a congregational resource that addresses the major issues in Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly sexual- and gender-based violence, the recruitment of child soldiers, conflict mineral and the extractives industry, and support for improving the educational system assistance to the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to rebuild and strengthen the country's educational system. We have

been particularly focused on the extractive industry and have signed letters and made hill visits with the Publish What You Pay coalition. <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/washington/washington-report-presbyterians/>

53. *2014 Referral: Item 11-12. On Helping to Remedy the Tragic Conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Recommendation 3. Direct Mission Responsibility Through Investment to Study the Merits, Costs, and Logistics of Making the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) “Conflict-Free” with Regard to Investments in Extractive Industries by Its Agencies and to Report Its Findings to 222nd General Assembly (2016), and to Initiate Usual Processes of Corporate Engagement with Firms Operating or Trading with the DRC—From the Presbytery of Boston (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 69, 887–90; pp. 270–71 of the print copy).*

Response: Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) with its ecumenical partners has engaged corporations on their relationship with minerals from conflict regions. It should be noted that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), after considerable public pressure, now requires companies to disclose information on the subject in their annual filing of the 10-K report to the SEC. MRTI and its partners remain vigilant about efforts to eliminate that requirement. MRTI believes that its continuation of such work is the best strategy at present.

54. *2014 Referral: Item 11-13. A Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Assist the Reference and Study Task Group in the Research Process—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 69, 890–92; p. 271 of the print copy).*

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations hosted a meeting of the study task group at the United Nations and made connections with human trafficking experts from the United Nations system and civil society groups. Staff from the ministry has provided information to the study task group as requested.

55. *2014 Referral: Item 11-14. Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update. Recommendation 2. Commend Legislative and Military Leaders Involved in Developing Policies to Eliminate Sexual Violence within the Armed Services, Including a. Through g.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 69–70, 892–97; pp. 271–72 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 11-14. Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of Public Witness, and Encourage the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel, to Urge Legislative and Military Leaders Involved in Developing Policies to Eliminate Sexual Violence within the Armed Services by Doing a. Through c.—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 69–70, 892–97; pp. 271–72 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-14. Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Support the Implementation of Policies to Prevent Sexual Violence by U.S. and Other Military Personnel Engaged in Joint Jurisdictions Such as United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping and North American Treaty Organization (NATO), Both Within These Forces and Among Vulnerable Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Civilian Populations—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 69–70, 892–97; pp. 271–72 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 11-15. On Encouraging Use of the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Maintain Current Information on the Status of Companies That Have Signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism and to Continue to Partner with and Support ECPAT-USA—From the Presbytery of New York City (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 70, 897–900; pp. 272–73 of the print copy).

Response: A summary of policies and links to specific policies within the U.S. military are as follows:

SUMMARY AND COMPILATION:

Summary and Compilation of Military Sexual Assault Policies.

<http://usawc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=582097&sid=4798135>

U.S. AIR FORCE:

U.S. Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program. USAF Policy Directive 90-60 dtd May 21, 2015. <http://www.sexualassaultpreventionresponse.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-150105-015.pdf>

U.S. Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program Instruction 90-6001 dtd 21 May 2015. http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_cvs/publication/afi90-6001/afi90-6001.pdf

U.S. ARMY:

U.S. Army Command Policy. U.S. Army Regulation 600-20 dtd September 20, 2012. http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/files/r600_20.pdf

U.S. COAST GUARD:

U.S. Coast Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program. COMDINST M1754.10D (Series), April 2012. http://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/1000-1999/CIM_1754_10D.pdf

U.S. NAVY:

U.S. Navy Policy on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. OPNAVINST 1752.1C dtd 13 August 2015. <http://www.navy.mil/docs/OPNAVINST-1752-1C.pdf>

SECNAV Instruction 1752.4B dtd 08 August 2013. <http://doni.daps.dla.mil/Directives/01000%20Military%20Personnel%20Support/01-700%20Morale,%20Community%20and%20Religious%20Services/1752.4B.pdf>

56. *2014 Referral: Item 11-17. Commissioners' Resolution. On Iran. Recommendation 7. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Nurture Relationships That the PC (USA) Shares with the Churches in Iran Through Our Common Membership in Ecumenical Bodies; Also to Continue to Look for Ways of Supporting and Building Relationships with the Christian Communities in Iran (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 71, 903–05; pp. 274–75 of the print copy).*

Response: World Mission continues to maintain relationship with the Evangelical Church in Iran (ECI), which was established by Presbyterian missionaries starting in 1834. Direct communication with ECI is very difficult because of U.S.–Iran relations. Endowments funds designated for ministry of ECI are available but have been awaiting license from the U.S. Government Office of Foreign Assets Control.

57. *2014 Referral: Item 11-18. Commissioners' Resolution. On Concern, Prayer, and Action for Syria and Iraq. Recommendation 4. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Other Presbyterians and Congregations to Advocate for the United States and Other Governments to Do What Is Possible to Mediate a Just and Peaceful Settlement of Those Conflicts (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 71, 905–08) ; p. 275 of the print copy.*

Response: The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations advocated for a just and peaceful settlement of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq with ambassadors of member states of the United Nations Security Council. This advocacy took place through the ministry's participation in the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Working Group on the Security Council and in consultation with other offices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and our church partners in Syria and Iraq.

The Office of Public Witness (OPW) has continued to call for a nonviolent diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria and Iraq. We have sent letters, met with members of Congress and the administration, and sent out action alerts advocating for a peaceful end to the conflict.

58. *2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 1. Direct the Transfer of the Theological Education Fund (the "Fund") from the Presbyterian Mission Agency ("PMA") to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation ("Foundation"), to Be Managed, Administered, and Distributed by the Foundation for the Benefit of Seminaries Related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Pursuant to a Fund Advisory Agreement Between the Foundation and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, on Behalf of the PMA and on Behalf of the Committee on Theological Education ("COTE"), the Fund Agreement to Provide That Future Contributions to the Fund Will Be Irrevocable Contributions to the Foundation and Distributed Only as Directed by COTE, Effective January 1, 2015 (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 2. Direct That Responsibility for Marketing and Administering the Fund Be Transferred from the PMA to the Foundation, Effective January 1, 2015, and That the Foundation and COTE Engage in a Process, as Spelled Out in a Fund Advisory Agreement, to Hire an Experienced, Full-Time Fundraiser, Whose Work Shall Be Under the Direction and Ultimate Performance Management of COTE and Dedicated Solely to Generating Financial Support for Theological Education (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 4. Direct That the Marketing Information and Databases for the Fund Be Transferred from the PMA to the Foundation, as Permitted by Applicable Law and Consistent with Written Representations or Other Appropriate Communications to Donors, to Be Used Only for Marketing of the Fund, Effective January 1, 2015 (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 13-07. Report of the Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions. Recommendation 5. Direct That the Responsibility for the Denomination's Relationships with PC (USA)-Related Seminaries Will Continue to Be Lodged Under COTE, and That Any Mission Program Support for COTE Will Continue to Be Provided by the PMA in Consultation with COTE (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 25, 979–81; p. 312 of the print copy).

Response: The Theological Education Fund was successfully transferred from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation at the beginning of 2015 pursuant to the Fund Advisory Agreement between the Foundation and the PC(USA), A Corporation, on behalf of the PMA and the Committee on Theological Education.

The Foundation hired the Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty to serve as the senior director of theological education funds development and the Reverend Nancy Benson-Nicol as associate director for theological education funds development. They both began service in these roles on January 1, 2015.

The marketing information and databases for the Fund were transferred from the PMA to the Foundation, as permitted by applicable law and consistent with written representations or other appropriate communications with donors.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency hired a coordinator for theological education, the Reverend Dr. Michelle Bartel. She began serving in March 2015. Her work entails the denominational support for theological education and PC(USA) seminars, including serving as the primary staff support for the Committee on Theological Education.

59. *2014 Referral: Item 13-08. On Celebrating the 500th Birthday of John Knox. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to Develop and Disseminate Worship Aids, Including Public Prayers and Resource Materials for the Month—From the Eastern Korean Presbytery (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 24, 25, 981–83; p. 312 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of Theology and Worship developed a web resource, <http://www.presbyterianmiss.org/ministries/worship/john-knox-500/>, to celebrate John Knox’s 500th birthday in 2014, including a Reformation day liturgy, an essay on Knox and prayer, excerpts from the Scots Confession, and a short biographical sketch.

60. *2014 Referral: Item 14-02. Educate a Child, Transform the World. Recommendation 3. Launch a Churchwide Initiative That Will Inspire, Equip, and connect Our Congregations, Mid Councils, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Improve the Quality of Education for 1,000,000 Children in the U.S. and Globally Over the Next Four Years—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 45, 996–98; p. 315 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 14-02. Educate a Child, Transform the World. Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Shape and Guide This Initiative, Developing Tangible Metrics to Determine Success and Impact, and to Report Back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Sharing Progress Made and Identifying Strategies for Deeper Engagement in 2016–18—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 45, 996–98; p. 315 of the print copy)

Response: The “Educate a Child, Transform the World” initiative continues in collaboration with Compassion, Peace and Justice (domestic component) and World Mission (international component). The international component led by Frank Dimmock, catalyst addressing the root causes of global poverty, was launched at the 221st General Assembly (2014). The initiative has its own website (pcusa.org/global-poverty), webinar (youtube.com/watch?v=42Q_cRrCPNw&feature=youtu.be), Facebook page ([facebook.com/GlobalPovertyPCUSA](https://www.facebook.com/GlobalPovertyPCUSA)), and blog (pcusa.org/blogs/global-poverty). It has been featured in various articles that relate stories and practices of partnerships in education. Projects are being developed with global partners in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, strengthening quality education for many children. The national component, pcusa.org/child, was launched in April 2015 at Compassion, Peace, and Justice (CPJ) Training Day in Washington, D.C. The Reverend Dr. Eileen Lindner was hired as a consultant.

The question of developing and utilizing metrics to evaluate the impact of the initiative has required significant research and thoughtful reflection. Measuring quality learning is a challenge that continues to confront education experts globally. World Mission will collect standard output indicators, provided by ministries of education in partner countries, and indirect measures related to partner education programs. Examples of this would include: numbers of children receiving scholarships, training and mentoring of teachers, upgrading school infrastructures, developing and utilizing child protection policies, etc. The national component of this initiative will utilize three distinct styles of metrics: Baseline Metrics; Contextual Metrics; and Contact (or Participatory) Metrics.

The initiative’s team members are currently seeking to foster deeper engagement in 2016–2018 through a variety of means, including an “Educate a Child Toolkit,” <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/child/toolkit/>. Deeper engagement has already been fostered and will continue to be fostered through social media, webinars, workshops, leadership training events, and other measures of support for congregations in new or existing educational ministries both within the U.S. and globally.

61. *2014 Referral: Item 14-02. Educate a Child, Transform the World. Recommendation 7. Urge Those Developing This Initiative and Its Metrics to Build Upon Values, Traditions, and Analysis Embodied in Previous General Assembly Policy on Public Education and the Impacts of Poverty, and to Consider Ways That This Initiative Continues the Work of Child Advocacy Approved by Previous Assemblies—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 45, 996–98; p. 315 of the print copy).*

Response: This initiative is firmly rooted in the analysis, values, and recommendations of the 2010 social witness policy “Loving Our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education.” One of the Presbyterians convened at the Proctor Institute in July 2015 was a member of the task force that developed that policy, and he continues to work with the national component’s staff team.

The 2010 public education policy is made available as one of the very first suggested resources for study and reflection. Other resources from past PC(USA) child advocacy also continue to be distributed via the website, including worship resources from the Year of the Child at <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/child/> and <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/child/resources/>. People involved with the Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network (PCAN) and more general with the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) have been involved in conversations about this initiative from the beginning. This initiative continues to promote Children’s Sabbath, an ecumenical and interfaith weekend dedicated to celebration of and advocacy for children, of which Presbyterians have long been supporters.

Given the racial ethnic and poverty-related disparities in education opportunities and outcomes in the U.S. and globally, this initiative is also a response to past General Assembly pronouncements related to race, economic inequality, and poverty alleviation.

62. *2014 Referral: Item 14-04. Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Committee on Theological Education to Consult with Theological Seminaries to Develop Culturally Sensitive Curriculum, Theologies, Language, Teaching and Learning Styles for Teaching Elders and Church Leaders of All Ethnicities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 46–52, 1000–09; p. 316 of the print copy).*

Response: The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) accepted the lead and began with a consultation of Presbyterian Mission Agency staff from the Racial/Ethnic and Women’s Ministries (RE&WM) ministry area and proceeded to contact seminaries with regard to their present work addressing culturally sensitive curricula and learning styles for teaching elders and church leaders of all ethnicities.

As a result of the commitments COTE and the seminaries already have to addressing racism, racial ethnic diversity, and new immigrant worshipping communities, along with consideration of the results of the consultation, COTE:

- *Unequivocally states* its ongoing commitment to addressing racism, racial ethnic diversity, and new immigrant worshipping communities.
- *Will write letters* by the end of April 2016 to each seminary affirming what they are doing, encouraging them to deepen and extend what they are doing, and offering COTE as a supportive resource.
- *Will actively support* the work of the coordinator of theological education and seminary relations on R/E new immigrant leadership issues in partnership with RE&WM, participation in programs that support R/E and new immigrant seminarians, and development of a seminary faculty consultation on antiracism, inclusion, and seminary programs. *COTE will receive the coordinator’s report* on these activities and consider observations and suggestions based on these activities.
- *Recommits* itself to continue deepening its engagement with these issues, supported and facilitated by the coordinator of theological education and seminary relations. COTE understands this response to referral, Item 14-04, Recommendation 2, to be only the first step in its ongoing response.

63. *2014 Referral: Item 14-04. Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report. Recommendation 3. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to Collaborate with Mid Councils to Establish Regional Certified Ministry Training Programs to Prepare Racial Ethnic and Immigrant Church Members to Serve Worshipping Communities—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 46–52, 1000–09; p. 316 of the print copy).*

Response: Staff in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries and the coordinator for mid council relations in the Office of the General Assembly collaborated with mid council leaders on the establishment of regional certified training program for racial ethnic and immigrant leaders. Representatives from mid councils and leaders from across the country met in Rock Island, Illinois, in 2015, to determine current training opportunities in the church for racial ethnic and immigrant leaders serving worshipping communities. The meeting between the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of the General Assembly and mid council leaders was a helpful collaboration. The group concluded that there are many resources currently available for regional certified ministry training programs, such as the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary training for commissioned ruling elders, offered in Spanish (www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=3189) and/or the Theocademy program of the Synod of Mid America (synodma.org/theocademy), which provides web-based training resources.

64. *2014 Referral: Item 14-04. Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report. Recommendation 5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Mid Councils to Create a Network of Racial Ethnic and New*

Immigrant Coaches Trained to Address the Culturally Specific Needs of Racial Ethnic and New Immigrant Congregations—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 46–52, 1000–09; p. 316 of the print copy).

Response: Racial ethnic and new immigrant congregational leaders were recruited and invited to attend the Racial Ethnic and New Immigrants Coaches Training held November 11–13, 2015, in Greensboro, North Carolina. Twenty-two racial ethnic and new immigrant leaders attended the training. This gathering of African-, African American-, Hispanic/Latino-a-, Korean-, Asian-, Middle Eastern-, Native American-, and Portuguese-language coaches discussed how to address the culture- and language-specific needs of the racial ethnic and new immigrant congregations and leaders for whom they will provide coaching. These coaches are planning to work in collaboration with mid council leaders and with Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries staff to support the growth, sustainability, and transformation of new and existing racial ethnic, bilingual, and intercultural worshipping communities.

65. *2014 Referral: Item 14-04. Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report. Recommendation 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Mid Councils to Consult with Each Other to Consider Expanding the Criteria for Accepting the Ordination Credentials of New Immigrant Leaders—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 44, 46–52, 1000–09; p. 316 of the print copy).*

Response: The coordinator for intercultural ministries in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, the coordinator for mid council relations in the Office of the General Assembly, and mid council leaders consulted in 2015 on expanding the criteria for accepting the ordination credentials of new immigrant leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The group focused on G-2.0505a.(1) in the *Book of Order* of the PC(USA) on the “Transfer of Ministers of Other Denominations,” which reads, “In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a denomination, even though at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, and provide such educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister’s successful ministry in the presbytery.” The group reminds the church that this gives great latitude to presbyteries to expand the criteria for accepting the ordination credentials of a teaching elder of an immigrant fellowship or congregation, and it also calls upon presbyteries to continue the education of that leader, as needed, for her/his successful ministry in the presbytery. The group determined that it will remind presbyteries of G-2.0505 a.(1) in the *Book of Order* and will share resources, as needed, to presbyteries who are working with new immigrant leaders on ordination.

66. *2014 Referral: Item 15-01. On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies. Refer the Subject Matter to the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for Action and discernment in Accordance with Its Long-Standing and Detailed Procedures to Engage with Individual Corporations to Advance Their Actions in Support of Important Social Policy Issues—From the Presbytery of Boston (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 56, 1013–21; p. 319 of the print copy).*

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 09-09, “MRTI Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies,” being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 543 of the electronic file.)

67. *2008 Referral: Item 08-12. Funding Christ’s Mission Throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Attachment 1, Recommendation A2. 2. We Propose That the General Assembly Council Gradually Transition the Two Current Forms of Designated Mission Giving, Direct Mission Support and Extra Commitment Opportunities, into “Funding for Specific Mission” Over a Five-Year Period Beginning in 2009—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 22, 24, 664–704 of the print copy).*

Response: The 218th General Assembly (2008) directed the General Assembly Council (now the Presbyterian Mission Agency) to simplify giving opportunities presented to donors, as the older categories of “Directed Mission Support (DMS)” (originally specifying gifts considered to be given inside the General Assembly Mission Budget) and “Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO)” (originally specifying gifts considered to be “over and above” the General Assembly mission budget) were proving to be confusing to donors. In 2008, the General Assembly Council regularly distributed catalogs for potential donors. The DMS catalog had listings of nearly every possible way to designate gifts within the mission budget. At the same time, the ECO catalog offered other opportunities, leaving donors to struggle with, “Do I want to give within the budget or over and above the budget?” Which catalog do I need?

In the years since 2008, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has wrestled with how to simplify giving. It is increasingly transparent to donors whether they are using a DMS account or an ECO account. There is no longer any distinction between giving within the budget or giving outside of the budget. The opportunities to give with impact are plentiful. Internally, DMS accounts are now used for congregations who wish to designate a portion of their congregational mission giving toward particular causes. ECO accounts are now used by individual donors who want to have specific impact on mission around the world. Internal distinctions between these account types allow individual donors to receive a tax deduction for gifts to ECO accounts, while this is not important for gifts to DMS accounts from churches.

The effort to simplify giving, which began in 2008, has culminated in the development of a new Presbyterian Mission website that makes it very easy for donors to make gifts, without having to know individual account numbers or account

types. Organized around the experience of the potential donor, the website responds with options based on information given by the potential donor. DMS and ECO accounts still exist as different types of funding for specific mission, but the donor is not required to understand anything about the types in order to make a gift.

68. *2014 Referral: Item 03-06. A Resolution to Support Hotel and Hospitality Workers Through the Adoption of Just Policies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly to Include Protective Language in Every Hotel Contract so That if There Is a Labor Dispute at the Contracted Hotel, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Can Pull Out of the Contract Without Penalty—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 21, 193; p. 167 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 03-06. A Resolution to Support Hotel and Hospitality Workers Through the Adoption of Just Policies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly to adopt a policy that gives preference to hotels where workers’ rights are protected either by organization, or through the fair practices of their employers, and commits to honoring and upholding boycotts that are directly related to workers’ wages and working conditions—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 21, 193; pp. 167–68 of the print copy).

Response: The following policy “Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly Policy Supporting Hotel and Hospitality Workers” was approved by the February 4–5, 2016, meetings of The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB).

Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly Policy Supporting Hotel and Hospitality Workers

Staff of the PMA and OGA tasked with researching hotel locations for upcoming meetings and events of those agencies will consult the Unite Here* Fair Hotel directory (<http://www.fairhotel.org/hotels-search/states>) or similar guides for “socially responsible union hotels” in the area(s) under consideration, and include those hotels in the site selection process.

Staff of the PMA and OGA will also consult the boycott list at <http://www.fairhotel.org/boycott-list> and refrain from booking hotels that appear on this list or similar guides for PC(USA) meetings or when traveling on PC(USA) business.

PMA and OGA staff will include protective language relating to termination in the event of labor disputes in every hotel contract. A hotel must agree to this clause** (or alternate language deemed acceptable by Legal Services and the Stated Clerk) in order to proceed to a final contract with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

In the event of a boycott, strike, picketing or another dispute directly related to workers’ wages and working conditions that is announced or occurs at a hotel after a contract is signed, the PC(USA) will first urge the hotel to settle the dispute, ensuring the hotel is aware of the labor dispute clause and the PC(USA)’s intention to terminate the contract if it the dispute is not satisfactorily resolved.

In the event that resolution is not assured well before the scheduled event, the group may and should seek an alternative location and invoke the labor dispute clause to terminate the contract. Additional costs (higher hotel rates, meeting room rental, ground transportation, etc.) to the meeting budget are a likely consequence.

This policy does not require a group to relocate the scheduled event when the dispute occurs within 60 days of the first date of the event, and efforts to secure suitable alternate venue(s) in the same city (using the same airport) are unsuccessful. In these situations, the Executive Director of the PMA or the Stated Clerk of the OGA will review the circumstances and approve the decision.

*Unite Here (unitehere.org) is a labor union that represents workers in the hotel, gaming, food service, and other industries across North America. It maintains an on-line directory of hotels across U.S. and Canada whose workers are represented by Unite Here. It also maintains a list of hotels that are under a boycott or at risk of dispute.

**Recommended contract clause:

This agreement may be terminated without liability by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) if performance hereunder would foreseeably involve the Group in or subject it to the effects of a boycott, strike, picketing or other labor dispute. (Provided that the Group may not withhold, delay or cancel performance based on a labor dispute involving its own employees.) The Hotel agrees to notify the Group in writing within 10 days after it becomes aware of any labor relations dispute involving the Hotel and its employees including, but not limited to, union picketing, the filing of an Unfair Labor Practice charge by a union, the expiration of a negotiated labor contract, an existing or impending strike or lockout, or any other matter which could reasonably be construed as a labor- management relations dispute.

69. *2014 Referral: Item 04-10. Commissioners’ Resolution. On Declaring That Zionism Unsettled Does Not Represent Views of PC(USA). The 221st General Assembly (2014) Declares That Zionism Unsettled Does Not Represent the Views of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Directs All Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Entities to Express This Statement in All Future Catalogs, Print or Online Resources (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 13, 62, 296–98; p. 186 of the print copy).*

Response: Immediately following the 221st General Assembly (2014) a statement was prepared for inclusion in copies of the resource in line with the directive in this General Assembly action. On June 27, 2014, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency took the further step to discontinue promotion and distribution of “Zionism Unsettled” by the denominational offices in order to most clearly support and communicate the decisions of the General Assembly (<http://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/6/27/zionism-unsettled-no-longer-sold-pcusa-website/>).

70. *2014 Referral: Item 08-07. Fairness in Ministerial Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity, a Response to Two Referrals. Recommendation 1. Request the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Review Churchwide Ministerial Salary Data as Context for Its Review of Presbyterian Mission Agency Salaries—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41–42, 495–503; p. 222 of the print copy).*

Response: Salary ranges of positions within the Presbyterian Mission Agency are reviewed, at a minimum, every two years by analyzing data from comparable religious/faith-based, nonprofit, and some for-profit organizations. A review of churchwide ministerial salary data is included in this analysis. One source of this data is the Board of Pensions report on “Clergy Effective Salaries.” A review of churchwide ministerial salary data has been added to the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s compensation philosophy, which is described in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Compensation Program document.

71. *2014 Referral: Item 10-NB. Recommend Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly Engage in the Process of Working Together with Churches in the Task of Reconciliation, Starting with Visiting Each Presbytery and Serving as a Resource for Each Presbytery’s Discussion of These Actions in Congregations and the Presbytery At-Large and Present Voices of Reconciliation for the Unity of the Church (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.29, 31, 33, 55, 819; p. 260 of the print copy).*

Response: The Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency have taken the following actions:

- A webpage <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga221/ga221-reconciliation/> was created for use by mid councils listing resources for the work of reconciliation
- A “concierge service” has been created in response to a request by mid council leaders. This is one phone number to be called when a member of the national staff is requested for a presbytery meeting or other gathering. The purpose of the service is to provide a way for mid council leaders to make one contact for such request to be sure that someone will be available.
- A conversation was held at the Polity Conference in 2014 asking mid council leaders to share their reflections on the idea of reconciliation and to share their ideas about how to achieve it.
- The Mid Council Engagement application has been used by PMA staff to keep track of their contacts with presbyteries and synods. Those making these contacts, whether in person or by other means, have been urged to spend time asking about the stresses and celebrations in those mid councils and to offer help as needed.
- The senior staff of PMA and senior staff of OGA participated in a one-day retreat led by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center to explore issues of highly anxious systems and ways to lead in the face of such anxiety.

72. *2014 Referral: Item 08-03. Proposed Revisions to the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Refer Back to Presbyterian Mission Agency, with the Following Comment: Consult with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) —From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 40, 476–86; p. 217 of the print copy).*

Response: This referral is being answered by Item 10-07, “Proposed Changes and Updates to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action,” being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 591 of the electronic file.)

73. *2014 Referral: Item 14-03. Living Missionally. Recommendation 3. Launch a Churchwide Initiative That Will Inspire, Equip, and Connect Presbyterians to Continue to Go Beyond the Walls of Their Congregations and Increase Their Engagement in Service to Their Communities and the World—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 45–46, 998–1000; pp. 315–16 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 14-03. Living Missionally. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop Tangible Metrics to Determine Success and Impact and Report Back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Sharing Progress Made and Identifying Strategies for Deeper Engagement in 2016–18— From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 45–46, 998–1000; pp. 315–16 of the print copy).

Response: These referrals are being answered by Item 10-10, “Living Missionally,” being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 613 of the electronic file.)

74. *2014 Referral: Item 08-13. Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Recommendation 1. Continue Its Commitment to the Churchwide Goal of \$20 Million by 2020, by Affirming a. through e. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 528–31; pp. 230–31 of the print copy).*

2014 Referral: Item 08-13. Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Recommendation 3. Enact or Maintain the Structural Arrangements with Respect to Each of the Offerings (See Items a. through d.)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 528–31; pp. 230–31 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 08-13. Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Recommendation 4. Recommend That the Next Special Offerings Review Task Force a. Review Progress Toward Attaining the \$20 Million by 2020 Goal; b. Align Offering Recipients with the Strategic Objectives of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; c. Examine the Timing and Programmatic Emphases Within Each Offering Based on Theological Soundness, the Liturgical Calendar, and Fundraising Strategy; and d. Evaluate Progress on the Aforementioned Recommendations—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 528–31; pp. 230–31 of the print copy).

Response: These referrals are being answered by Item10-08, “Report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force,” being presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). (See p. 603 of the electronic file.)

75. 2014 Referral: Item 08-06. A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy. Recommendation 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop and Implement Criteria for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Current Churchwide Antiracism Training Programs and to Report Back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) Regarding Its Findings and Any Corrective Actions Taken or Proposed and Results Achieved—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41, 491–95; pp. 221–22 of the print copy).

Response:

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Current Churchwide Antiracism Trainings Report

The Presbyterian Mission Agency, in developing and implementing criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of churchwide antiracism training, worked in collaboration with the Office of Research Services in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Research Services conducted a survey of participants (and those invited to participate) in antiracism trainings held at the 221st General Assembly (2014) and at the 2011 and 2013 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Big Tents. These trainings were offered by the Office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries.

Research services could find no record of persons who participated in the 221st General Assembly (2014) antiracism trainings, so the entire population of individuals who had the opportunity to participate in the trainings were invited to respond to the survey. In addition, those who participated in antiracism trainings at the PC(USA)’s Big Tents in 2011 and 2013 were invited to take the survey. Research Services also received feedback from those who have participated in similar antiracism trainings elsewhere and those who have never participated in any antiracism trainings.

This evaluation of current churchwide antiracism trainings involved a web-based survey of persons participating (or invited to participate) in antiracism trainings and also a series of interviews were conducted with antiracism trainers. Thus, persons who have participated in antiracism trainings, persons who were invited to participate in trainings, and the trainers themselves were included in this research.

Survey Respondents

A total of 855 persons were invited to participate in the survey, of which seventy-three had invalid email addresses. And, a total of 248 people from this population completed the survey (32 percent of those receiving an email invitation to participate in the survey).

Sixteen percent of respondents indicated that they participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings. (Of these, 21 percent participated within the past year, 42 percent participated one to three years ago, 26 percent participated more than three years ago, and 11 percent do not remember when they participated in the training).

Impact of PC(USA) Antiracism Trainings (Summary)

Those who participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings were asked what ongoing personal impact the training had on them. Sixty-nine percent responded that PC(USA) antiracism training has impacted their personal attitudes about racism; 60 percent responded that the training has impacted their understanding of what racism means; 54 percent responded that the training has impacted their personal attitudes about white people; and 49 percent responded that the training has impacted their personal attitudes about people of color.

Seventy-six percent of participants agree with the information presented in the antiracism training in which they participated; 66 percent felt it was worth their time; and, a minority (24 percent) felt that antiracism training was focused on making white people feel ashamed for being born white.

Observations

In answering questions designed to measure more subtle forms of racism prevalent in society, awareness scores of those who took PC(USA) antiracism trainings do not differ significantly from the scores of the other respondents.

The respondents who have taken PC(USA) antiracism trainings are significantly more likely to agree with the statement that race is a social construct, compared to those who took similar trainings elsewhere or those with no training. Between these groups, there are no significant differences in agreement or disagreement of the other statements in the survey.

Overall, 51 percent of respondents say they are doing some work to dismantle white privilege. Those who have participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings responded that they feel significantly more empowered to address white privilege. Respondents generally agree that white privilege is not a myth, that it bothers them, and that they try to be cognizant of it.

Those who have taken PC(USA) antiracism trainings are significantly more likely than those who have never had antiracism training to say they have been accused of racism (54 percent of antiracism participants versus 32 percent of those with no training).

These findings seem to indicate that those who have taken PC(USA) antiracism trainings are more aware of racism and more willing to address their racism. Those who have participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings are significantly more likely to say they have confronted someone for saying or doing something racist.

*Survey Results**Goals*

The Building the Beloved Community: A Training Manual for Antiracism Facilitators (4th edition, 2014), states the goals of antiracism training as follows:

The goal of antiracism work is to help people recognize the relationship between conscious and subconscious beliefs and behavior at the cultural and institutional levels. This will enable them to understand how oppressive social behavior is institutionalized and perpetuated in the values, beliefs, structures and institutions of society. If the foundational beliefs and values of a society are biased against a segment of the population based on racial characteristics, a racist or race-based system of oppression will result. Understanding this connection will enable people to see how their own attitudes and behavior are influenced by prevailing racial norms. This is called deconstruction—understanding how something is put together is a prerequisite for dismantling it. This is the beginning of the change process.

The survey indicates that the PC(USA)'s antiracism trainings are achieving their goals in some respects, but are still falling short. Those who have participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings generally feel that the experience has had the greatest impact on

1. their personal attitudes about racism, and
2. their understanding of what racism means. However, there is no difference in overall racism awareness between those who took the trainings and those who did not.

Also, only 59 percent of those who participated in PC(USA) trainings feel that the training has had an impact on their understanding of how racism operates systematically in the United States today.

Challenges

Part of the challenge is that the PC(USA) antiracism training was originally designed to be an eight-hour training scheduled for 1–2 days. The time scheduled for trainings has been cut back, as most organizations have been reticent to give this much time to antiracism training. The training at the 221st General Assembly (2014) and at the 220th General Assembly (2012), for example, was scheduled for forty-five minutes. To increase the training time, the trainers offered two, forty-five minute sessions (1½ hours total) in 2012 and named them Part I and Part II, encouraging commissioners and others to stay for both parts. At the 221st General Assembly (2014), only an overview of antiracism could be offered in the two, forty-five minute trainings offered. It is difficult to help participants understand how institutional racism and white privilege operates in the United States in such a short timeframe.

Even so, the Office of Gender and Racial Justice has seen signs of increased interest and requests for antiracism and cultural humility (formerly named “cultural proficiency”) trainings in the last few years. For example, in 2014 and 2015, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary requested that staff from the Office of Gender and Racial Justice provide training to its incoming class of seminarians as part of their orientation. This training was scheduled for three hours. Also, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board dedicated a full day of its board meeting this fall to cultural humility training. This training was scheduled for seven hours, not including the lunch break. Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries staff have also offered trainings at churches and conferences, including the Big Tent 2009, 2011,

2013, and 2015, and worship-based resources have been shared with the larger church, following high profile racial justice cases in the nation in 2014 and 2015. A Cultural Humility Team was created in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and in 2015, it offered a Mission Staff Cultural Humility Day, a Strategy and Coordination Leadership Team Cultural Humility Day, training at a Presbyterian Mission Agency Board meeting (as referenced above), cultural humility was a major focus of an All Staff Mission and Budget Update, and the team has advised the Human Resources area in offering ongoing trainings.

Another area of concern is the significant minority of PC(USA) participants (24 percent) who feel that antiracism trainings focus on making white people feel ashamed for being born white. These respondents are, in large part, also the same respondents who did not feel that antiracism trainings were worth their time and who did not agree with the information the trainings provided. Of individuals who attended antiracism trainings and also those who did not attend any antiracism trainings but participated in the survey, about one out of every four respondents are resistant to its message, in part because they have yet to be convinced there is a problem. This minority is contrasted with 74 percent of respondents who agree that racial discrimination is still a problem in the United States. Nevertheless, 28 percent of these respondents also believe that people of color are too quick to blame racism for their problems, and 39 percent of them think the media makes things out to be about race when it is really not about this.

A challenge also lies in people's attitudes about racism in general. Those who think that people of color are too quick to blame racism for their problems are more likely to rate lower on the racism awareness scale. And, they are also more likely to believe that the best way to end racial inequality is to ignore race. These findings point to a potential focusing of antiracism trainings. In other words, it may be fruitful to focus on the dynamics of "colorblind racism" in future antiracism trainings, that is just because some choose to disregard racial characteristics in their everyday lives and decision-making, thus seemingly providing the grounds for people to be treated equally, does not mean that racism and white privilege has gone away. This simply allows persons to ignore institutional racism and the disadvantages and lack of opportunities for people of color to fully flourish and live out their calls in the church and society.

Although attitudes about racism vary, understanding of what race is remains consistent. PC(USA) antiracism trainings have successfully educated participants on the meaning of race as a social construct. People who participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings generally understand that race is not biological, that it is a human construct. However, what is distressing is that these same people are not taking the next step towards understanding what a social construct is. This difficulty in understanding, however, is much less pronounced in those who participated in PC(USA) antiracism trainings than with those who did not.

Respondents reported that the PC(USA)'s antiracism trainings are influencing their actions. Those who took PC(USA) antiracism trainings are significantly less likely to say they don't know what they can do about white privilege, and are significantly more likely to say they have confronted someone for saying or doing something racist.

One of the most significant findings of this research is that older adults, those with less education, and those who self-identify politically as independents are the least aware of racism and its systemic impacts. Thus, for greater impact when considering which specific populations within the church to invite to participate in antiracism trainings, inviting these groups specifically may provide good opportunities for learning. Or, it may be a better investment to focus energies on the groups that are more aware of racism and its systemic impacts and ask these groups to join the antiracism movement, such as young adults, for example, many of whom have come of age in a more intercultural society.

Results of Interviews of Antiracism Trainers (Summary)

As stated earlier, this research involved a web-based survey of persons participating (or invited to participate) in antiracism trainings. A second part of the research was to conduct a series of interviews with antiracism trainers. The trainers interviewed were generally happy with the PC(USA)'s antiracism and cultural humility trainings and indicated that they are committed to these trainings in the church. It had been seventeen years since the Presbyterian Mission Agency (formerly the General Assembly Council) held an introduction to antiracism training. Antiracism training was first held at its 1997 meeting, and the agency recommended that an introduction to antiracism training also be planned for commissioners to the 211th General Assembly (1999). After seventeen years of training in the church, the antiracism trainers offered the following observations for future trainings:

1. The PC(USA) will need to set more realistic goals for antiracism and cultural humility trainings.
2. The PC(USA) will need to make antiracism and cultural humility trainings a higher priority.
3. Not only individuals, but teams will need to be trained to facilitate future antiracism and cultural humility trainings.
4. Congregations, mid councils, and agencies will need to have trainers check back in with them after the training to provide support.

5. Encourage congregations, mid councils, and agencies to join existing antiracism organizations, partner with others, and share what they've learned through the web or through national gatherings.
6. The language used to describe antiracism and cultural humility trainings should suggest and provide opportunities for mutual learning.
7. As the church moves into a new era, some new activities and presentations (some of which we have been using) will need to be added to the antiracism manual to replace older exercises and modules. Also, the antiracism manual will need to be updated to reflect recent advances in research and language.
8. As organizations are requesting trainings be held in less time than originally designed by the antiracism manual, the manual will need to be adapted to provide facilitators and trainers with direction on how to adapt the activities and presentations for different timeframes, in order to reduce the trainer's preparation time. And, the training design will also need to have an intentional directional flow.
9. Also, as less time is being offered for trainings, there should be guidelines for prioritizing which activities and presentations need to be covered, at a minimum, during the trainings.
10. Develop an antiracism curriculum for use at the local level that will be available at no cost to congregations and mid-councils. Or, receive permission from Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA) and the resource writer to adopt their newest antiracism curriculum created by an antiracism trainer entitled, *Becoming the Beloved Community*, available with or without a DVD and available through Presbyterian Distribution Service. Packet with DVD is item PWR10045, \$24.95 plus shipping. Packet without DVD is item PWR10046, \$14.95 plus shipping.

Future Directions for Antiracism and Cultural Humility Trainings

The foundation has been laid by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to engage in antiracism and cultural humility trainings. Seventeen years ago, the church created an antiracism policy, *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community*. This report evaluating the effectiveness of current churchwide antiracism trainings is presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) with the hope that commitment to implementing antiracism and cultural humility trainings in the church will result in a new vision and recommitment to building an antiracism organization and living into the vision of God's intercultural community.

Racism and white privilege exist in the church and in society. Racism is the "interlocking systems of advantage (as well as disadvantage) based on race. Unless we learn to recognize the interlocking effects of privilege at these levels we will not recognize how easily some of us enjoy privileges because of our racial identity that are not equally available to all our neighbors."¹

Systemic racism has significantly impacted the society and the church for many years in the ways we gather for worship, the ways we function and relate as the Body of Christ, and the ways we build trust and engage individually with one another. Racism has directly or indirectly influenced the allocation of limited resources for mission, the staffing of leadership positions within the church, the calling of leaders to serve in local congregations, as well as the process of ordination and preparation towards ordered ministry.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) received and approved the Climate for Change Task Force report and approved the recommendation made that "cultural proficiency and antiracism training be mandatory for all employees of all six agencies, and provide periodic or continuing education courses or training in this area, which will be monitored by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns."²

As a country, we have made progress regarding the understanding of race and the reality of racism. However, there is still staggering evidence of the continuing reality of white privilege—as seen in comparisons of wealth, education, health care, and mortality rates between the so-called races in the United States.³ As long as this disparity exists, the church must continue antiracism training and so bear witness to the conviction that all people are made in God's good image.

While some progress has been made in society at large, the church continues to struggle. In some locations within the church, there is little evidence that the sin of racism has been identified or that privilege and power are appropriately shared between people of different "races."

The Confession of Belhar affirms that "the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others."⁴

Endnotes

1. Nancy J. Ramsay, “Why Is It so Difficult to Talk about Racism?” *The Thoughtful Christian Racism Study Pack*, 2009.
2. Climate for Change Task Force, “Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as an Employer,” Item 11-17 from the 220th General Assembly (2012), *Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 1091ff (electronic version).
3. Thomas Shapiro, Tatjana Meschede, Sam Osoro, “The Roots of the Widening Racial Wealth Gap: Explaining the Black-White Economic Divide,” Brandeis University, Institute on Assets and Social Policy, <http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/2013/Roots_of_Widening_RWG.pdf> (23 January 2014); Rakesh Kochar, Richard Fry, Paul Taylor, “Twenty to One: Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics,” Pew Research Center 2011 <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/07/SDT-Wealth-Report_7-26-11_FINAL.pdf> (23 January 2014) ; Ed. Chanelle P. Hardy, Esq., “National Urban League 2013 Equality Index” in *2013 State of Black America: Redeem the Dream*, (National Urban League: 2013), 12–59. <<http://iamempowered.com/node/74570>> (23 January 2014).
4. *Confession of Belhar*, adopted by Synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa September 1986.

76. *2014 Referral: Item 08-10. Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Collect Information from Mid Councils on the Implementation of Cultural Competency, Antiracism, and Antisexism Training for Committees on Ministry and Committees on Preparation for Ministry and to Report Its Findings to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)*—*From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 42, 518–22; p. 224 of the print copy).*

Response:

Implementation of Cultural Competency, Antiracism and Antisexism Trainings in Mid Councils Report

The 221st General Assembly (2014) directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop and implement criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of current churchwide antiracism trainings and to collect information from mid councils on the implementation of cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism trainings for committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry, and to report its findings to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

The Office of Gender and Racial Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency contacted the 171 presbyteries and 16 synods in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to inquire if their committees on ministries and committees on preparation for ministry had engaged in cultural competency, antiracism, and/or antisexism training. The question sent to the mid councils was: “If your committees on ministries and committees on preparation for ministry have held cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism trainings?” This survey of mid councils involved an initial email sent to the mid councils, followed up by phone calls for those who did not respond to the email. The mid councils were quite responsive, returning the information in a timely manner. Their responses provided valuable information in whether or not mid councils implement these kinds of trainings, and what the ramifications are for people of color, women, and marginalized groups when mid councils are not aware of bias or privilege when it comes to ordination and preparation towards ordered ministries.

Survey Responses

A total of 171 presbyteries were surveyed, of which nearly 45 percent responded, representing 76 presbyteries. Of the 76, a total of 68 presbyteries reported that they had engaged in no cultural competency, antiracism, and/or antisexism trainings. This represents 90 percent of the respondents. Seven of the presbyteries responded affirmatively, reporting yes, that they had engaged in either cultural competency, antiracism, or antisexism trainings. Of the respondents, this represents nearly 9 percent. One presbytery refused to provide an answer to the question, representing less than 1 percent.

To provide a little more analysis, the presbyteries that reported that no trainings occurred in their committees on ministries or committees on preparation for ministry, said that conversations on these matters have taken place or are in the process of being planned. However, many of these are not specifically with committees on ministries or committees on preparation on ministry.

A report by the General Assembly Committee on Representation in 2014 reported that of the sixteen synods in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a total of seven synods reported that they had engaged in no cultural competency or antiracism trainings. Four of the synods responded affirmatively, reporting yes, that they had engaged in either cultural competency or antiracism trainings. Five synods provided no report.

Observations

Overall, the majority of the committees on ministries or committees on preparation on ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have not engaged in cultural competency, antiracism, and/or antisexism trainings. This survey may seemingly indicate that 90 percent of these committees in mid councils may not recognize, see the need for, or agree that racism, gender bias, or discrimination is a problem in their candidates’ ordination or call processes. Or they may have not

had the resources to provide such training, and in some cases, this may be on a mid council's "to do" list. If it is true that committees on ministry or committees on preparation for ministry do not believe that there are problems in the church related to racism and sexism, this may, in fact, perpetuate discrimination. Just because some people chose to disregard racial characteristics or gender differences in their everyday lives and decision-making, does not mean that racism, sexism, and/or white privilege has gone away. This simply allows persons to ignore racism, sexism, and disadvantages for people of color, women, and/or new immigrants in the church. This also may mean that individuals in these groups, which are often marginalized, are unable to fully live out their calls in the church and society.

The reason for antiracism, antisexism, and cultural humility trainings is to combat issues that have been reported by women of color and those who work with women of color in ministry, such as that:

1. Persons of color, especially women of color, seeking ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), face difficulty navigating the call system; and
2. Persons of color, especially women of color, are subject to frequent and various forms of discrimination.

Antiracism trainings have successfully educated participants on the meaning of race as a social construct, and anti-sexism trainings help us to be aware and counter gender bias. Cultural humility trainings highlight cultural differences and explore tools for antiracism in order to build and deepen culturally diverse relationships that lead to personal transformation and impact organizational change.

Findings in surveys on the benefit of PC(USA) antiracism and antisexism trainings seem to indicate that those who have taken these trainings are more aware of racism and sexism, and are more willing to address their racism. Those who have participated in PC(USA) antiracism and cultural humility trainings are significantly more likely to say they have confronted someone for saying or doing something racist or sexist.

In 2014, Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries conducted Women's Listening Visits with PC(USA) women leaders in different geographical areas throughout the country. Some of the findings were:

1. That trainings for committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry "on how to talk with and treat women in ministry and women candidates is crucial, and it is important for committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry to become aware of the disparity between the treatment of men and women candidates."
2. That "our denomination's current standards and practices for approving candidates for ordination leaves little room and creates a difficult road for candidates whose cultural and/or educational background does not fit."
3. That there are "silos of cultural groups in the PC(USA) and the presbyteries," and "structural inflexibility limits options such as the ordination of immigrant pastors and new pastors who have not yet received a call."
4. That the "culture of the PC(USA) is a hindrance to diversity" and that there is a need to "facilitate conversations and feedback on national, local and presbytery levels dealing with the needs of racial ethnic communities"; and
5. That racial ethnic women are not receiving as many calls to serve as solo pastors or heads of staff in congregations as others in the church are, and sometimes, women of color "do not feel supported by male pastors in their presbyteries, and they often have to survive on their own."

Conclusion

The 221st General Assembly (2014) urged mid councils to provide training and education on cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism to its committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry with an expectation that issues that are addressed in this training will be disseminated throughout the presbytery at least once every three years beginning in 2015 (Item 08-10, Recommendation 3). If our findings are accurate, then the majority of the presbyteries have not yet responded to this urging by the General Assembly.

Also, the 220th General Assembly (2012) received and approved the Climate for Change Task Force report and approved the recommendation made that "cultural proficiency and antiracism training be mandatory for all employees of all six agencies, and provide periodic or continuing education courses or training in this area, which will be monitored by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns."¹

As long as disparity exists, the church must continue antiracism, antisexism and cultural humility trainings, and bear witness to the conviction that all people are made in God's good image.

Endnote

1. Nancy J. Ramsay, "Why Is It so Difficult to Talk about Racism?" *The Thoughtful Christian Racism Study Pack*, 2009.

Item 01-03

[The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals approved Item 01-03. See pp. 2, 3.]

<i>Item#</i>	Title	Sponsor
01-01	Proposed Docket	COGA
01-02	Referrals in Progress and Final Responses to Referrals	Various
01-03	Referral of Business to Committees	
01-04	On Amending Articles of Agreement A.8. to Include “Pacific Islander.”	Sacramento
03-01	On Amending Standing Rule E.2. Concerning Resources and Oral Presentation to Assembly Committees. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Carlisle, Florida, Great Rivers, Huntingdon, New Covenant	Central Florida
03-02	On Revising the Racial Ethnic Composition Component of the Session Annual Report of Church Statistics. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of New York City, Northumberland	Elizabeth
03-03	On Directing COGA to Bring to the 223rd GA Proposals Regarding Changes in the Moderator’s Election and Assembly Committee Meetings Process. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Foothills, New Harmony, Western Kentucky	St. Andrew
03-04	On Adding the Category “Multi-Racial” to the Listing of Racial Classifications in the Annual Report from Congregations. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, Southeastern Illinois.	Greater Atlanta
03-05	On Amending the Annual Statistical Report to Include a New Category “Partners in Ministry.” <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Foothills, Huntingdon, Northumberland, Santa Fe	Arkansas
03-06	On Adding New Standing Rule B.5.b., Assembly Committee Moderators.	COGA
03-07	Amendment to Standing Rule B.3.a., Presbyterian Women.	COGA
03-08	Election of Associate Stated Clerk.	COGA
03-09	Site Selection for the 225th General Assembly (2022).	COGA
03-10	Recommended Benchmarks for OGA and PMA.	GACOR
<u>03-11</u>	<u>On Amending Standing Rules B.4. and F.5.d. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions are Considered by the General Assembly.</u>	<u>Grand Canyon</u>
<u>03-12</u>	<u>Approve "A Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity."</u>	<u>GACOR</u>
<u>03-13</u>	<u>Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for General Assembly Per Capita Budgets 2016–2018</u>	<u>COGA</u>
<u>03-14</u>	<u>Approve Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.</u>	<u>COGA</u>

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

03-A	Minutes, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly	OGA
03-B	Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society	PHS
03-C	Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation	GACOR
03-Info	GACOR Agency Summary	GACOR
03-Info	GACOR Report on the AAEEEO and Supplier Diversity (SD) Achievements of the Six Agencies, 2014–2016	GACOR
03-Info	General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary	GANC
04-01	On Amending G-3.0503 and G-6.04 Regarding Meetings of the General Assembly and Amending the Constitution. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills
04-02	On Amending Standing B.2.b.to Add the Category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates.” <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Covenant, New Harmony	Foothills
04-03	On Amending G-6.04e.to Require a Two-Thirds Majority Vote to Amend the Constitution. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills
04-04	On Adding G-3.0105c. to Permit a Presbytery to Abstain on Constitutional Changes. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, Yukon.	Foothills
04-05	On Adding a New Standing Rule L.2. Identifying the Right of Presbyteries and Synods to Submit Overtures Changing the Standing Rules. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony, South Louisiana	Foothills
04-06	On Amending G-3.05 On the Review of the Manual of the General Assembly. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills
04-07	On Merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a Single Entity. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries de Cristo, Sierra Blanca	Santa Fe
04-08	On Authorizing the Hiring of a Consultant to Assess the Relationship of OGA and PMA and the Need for Their Continued Existence as Two Separate Entities. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Charleston-Atlantic, Huntingdon, Mid-South, New Harmony, Southeastern Illinois	St. Andrew
04-09	On Creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew the Practice of our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, New Harmony	Foothills
04-10	On Amending Book of Order G-6.04 and Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) to Require Two-Thirds Vote on Constitutional Changes. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Grand Canyon	de Cristo

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

04-11	Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency	PMA Review Committee
04-12	Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.	OGA Review Committee
<u>04-13</u>	<u>On Amending Book of Order, G-6.04e, Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly.</u> <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery de Cristo.	<u>Grand Canyon.</u>
<u>04-Report</u>	<u>When We Gather at the Table.</u>	<u>COGA</u>
05-01	On Rescinding the Actions of the 221st General Assembly which Directed the Establishment of a New Configuration of Synod Boundaries (Item 05-04). <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boise, Cascades, Cimarron, de Cristo, Eastern Oregon, Nevada, Plains and Peaks, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Jose, Sierra Blanca, Stockton; Synod of the Covenant. <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast, Kendall.	Santa Fe
05-02	On Restoring the Boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific to its Status Prior to the 2012 Revisions. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Huntingdon, Santa Barbara	So. California & Hawaii (S)
05-03	[Not Referred for Lack of a Concurrence.]	
05-04	[Not Referred for Lack of a Concurrence.]	
05-05	On Amending G-3.0106 Requiring All Councils to Adopt a Dependent Care Policy. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of New Castle, Santa Fe	Great Rivers
05-06	On Developing a National Child Protection Policy Model. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley	Susquehanna Valley
05-07	On Amending the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c Concerning Non-Geographic Presbyteries. <u>Concurrence:</u> Midwest Hanmi Presbytery	Eastern Korean
05-08	On Replacing the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c with New Text. <u>Concurrence:</u> Midwest Hanmi Presbytery	Eastern Korean
05-09	A Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA).	ACWC
05-10	A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies.	ACWC
05-11	Task Force on Korean Speaking Congregations Report.	TF
05-12	Request for Constitutional Interpretation of Resolving Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Synod of the Northeast	ACC
05-13	Synod Report Regarding Synod Boundaries.	Synods
<u>[05-14</u>	<u>On Merging the Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast.</u>	<u>Alaska-Northwest (S)]</u>

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

[05-15	<u>On Requesting Exemption on any Action the Assembly Might Take to Reduce the Number of Synods.</u>	<u>Alaska-Northwest (S)]</u>
05-A	Review of Synod Minutes	
06-01	On Amending G-2.0509 by Deleting Recently Added Language Dealing with Renunciation of Jurisdiction. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Charlotte, Cimarron	New Covenant
06-02	On Amending G-2.0607c. to Add Training in Evangelism. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Huntingdon, Kiskiminetas.	Tampa Bay
06-03	Item 06-03 became Item 09-11. There is no Item 06-03.	
06-04	On Amending G-3.0203 to Allow for Virtual Attendance in Session Meetings When Appropriate Technology is Available. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Florida, Huntingdon, Palo Duro, Pittsburgh, Southeastern Illinois	Lake Erie
06-05	On Amending G-3.0109 Regarding Parity in Committees of Councils Above the Session. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Foothills, Mid-South	St. Andrew
06-06	On Adding Section G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA). <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of East Iowa, Florida, Minnesota Valleys, New Castle, San Jose	Central Nebraska
06-07	On Amending G-2.0509 to Clarify the Relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of a Person Who has Renounced the Jurisdiction of the Church. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Southeastern Illinois, Western Reserve	Greater Atlanta
06-08	On Amending the Book of Order to Clarify Titles to Ordered Ministry. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Charleston Atlantic, Huntingdon, Minnesota Valleys, New Castle <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbytery of Santa Fe	Great Rivers
06-09	On Amending G-2.0301, "Ruling Elder Defined" To Allow for Individually Commissioned Ruling Elders. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Monmouth, Newton	Northeast (S)
06-10	On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to Clarify the Relationship to the PC(U.S.A.) of a Person Who Has Renounced Jurisdiction of the Church. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Cimarron	Twin Cities Area
06-11	On Amending G-3.0104 to Clarify the Role of Ecclesiastical Officers. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of East Iowa, Minnesota Valleys.	Detroit
06-12	On Amending Book of Order G-6.02 and G-6.04 and Standing Rules B.4. and F.5. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions are Considered by the General Assembly. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery de Cristo	Grand Canyon
06-13	On Amending Section G-2.1001 to Clarify the Discretion Given presbyteries to Utilize Commissioned Ruling Elders. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Grand Canyon	de Cristo

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

06-14	On Creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force Charged with Revising the Rules of Discipline.	Chicago
06-15	Recommendation to Amend G-2.1101, Forms of Certified Church Service, in the Book of Order and also Approve National Certifying Bodies.	COGA
06-16	A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence.	ACWC
06-Info	Mid Councils Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions	GAPJC
06-Info	General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission	GAPJC
06-Info	Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary.	ACL
06-Info	ACC Agency Summary	ACC
<u>06-Info</u>	<u>Voting on Amendments</u>	<u>OGA</u>
06-Self-Study	Report of the Self-Study Committee of the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).	PCCEC
07-01	Delegation to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.	GACEIR
07-02	Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.	GACEIR
07-03	Confession of Belhar	
07-A	Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations	
07-Info	General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary	GACEIR
07-Self-Study	The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations 2016 Self-Study	GACEIR
08-01	On Boycott of All HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Products.	Covenant (S)
08-02	On Advocating for the Safety and Wellbeing of Children of Palestine and Israel. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, Southeastern Illinois	Covenant (S)
08-03	On Upholding Peoples And Partners In The Middle East and In The United States. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cascades, Chicago, Cimarron, Grace, Los Ranchos, Providence	New York City
08-04	On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, San Francisco, Santa Fe	Redwoods
[08-05	Not Referred for Lack of a Concurrence.]	

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

08-06	Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace.	ACSWP
08-07	<u>On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).</u> <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Palisades.	<u>New Hope</u>
09-01	On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boston, Cascades, Chicago, East Tennessee, Genesee Valley, Geneva, Greater Atlanta, Mid-Kentucky, Monmouth, Muskingum Valley, National Capital, New Castle, Newton, Pacific, Redwoods, Sacramento, San Jose, Southern New England, Twin Cities Area, Western North Carolina. <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbyteries of Giddings-Lovejoy, Heartland, Hudson River.	San Francisco
09-02	On An Alternative to Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Grace, Huntingdon, Palo Duro, South Louisiana, Tres Rios, Wyoming.	New Covenant
09-03	On Faithful Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change. <u>Concurrence:</u> Upper Ohio Valley	New Covenant
09-04	On Faithful Response to Climate Change. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, Winnebago.	New Covenant
09-05	On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Lauda- to Si”. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Cimarron	Santa Fe
09-06	On Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or Internally Displaced. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cascades, Grace, Los Ranchos, Provi- dence, Upper Ohio Valley	New York City
[09-07	Item 09-07 Became Item 14-13. There is no Item 09-07.]	
09-08	On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Great Rivers	Seattle
09-09	Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies.	PMA
09-10	Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship	BOP, OGA, FDN, PMA, PILP, PPC
09-11	On Amending G-1.0304, The Ministry of Members, by Adding “Car- ing for God’s Creation.” <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boston, the Cascades, Homestead, In- land Northwest, Lake Michigan, Monmouth, Northern New England. <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbytery of Heartland	New Castle
09-12	On Advocacy Against Factory Farming <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Hudson River, Northern Plains	Monmouth
10-01	On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery From the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses Which the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business.	Newark
10-02	Regarding the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee.	Charleston- Atlantic.

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

10-03	On Taking Specific Action to Address the Worsening Plight of the African American Male. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic, Upper Ohio Valley	Pittsburgh
10-04	Approve the Revised Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations	PMA
10-05	Rescind the 1990 "General Assembly Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures."	PMA
10-06	Amendments to the Organization for Mission.	PMA
10-07	Proposed Changes and Updates to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.	PMA
10-08	Report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force.	PMA
10-09	"Empowered & Hopeful"—Women of Color Consultation Report.	PMA
10-10	Living Missionally Recommendation—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.	PMA
10-11	A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen.	ACWC
10-12	A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed via Third Party Contractors—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.	ACWC
10-13	On Achieving a 5:1 Ratio Between the Highest Paid and Lowest Paid Employees of PMA.	Newton
10-14	2017–2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Work Plan.	PMA
10-15	Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church.	PMA
10-A	Presbyterian Mission Agency—Women of Faith Awards	PMA
10-B	Minutes, PC(USA) A Corp.	PMA
10-C	Audit	PMA
10-D	Sam and Helen Walton Awards	PMA
10-Info	Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress	PMA
10-Info	Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees	PMA
10-Info	Report of Changes to the Appendices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations.	PMA
11-01	On Adding a New Standing Rule F.5.c. Regarding Social Witness Policy Statements or Resolutions at the General Assembly. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

11-02	On Setting Aside “Forming Social Policy” at the Next Three General Assemblies. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills
11-03	On Choosing to be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Hudson River, National Capital, Long Island, Monmouth, Sheppards and Lapsley	Cascades
11-04	Item 11-04 became Item 12-09. There is no Item 11-04.	
11-05	On the Admission of, and Apology for, Harms Done to the LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Chicago, Genesee Valley	New York City
11-06	On Resources for Learning, Reflection, and Reconciliation. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, Milwaukee	John Knox
11-07	Item 11-07 became Item 12-10. There is no Item 11-07.	
11-08	On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Santa Fe, Upper Ohio Valley; Synod of the Southwest	Baltimore
11-09	On Celebrating a Significant Social Witness Anniversary. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Santa Fe	Chicago
11-10	On Reconciliation and Engagement in a New Civil Rights Movement. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Baltimore	Giddings-Lovejoy
11-11	Item 11-11 became Item 09-12. There is no Item 11-11.	
11-12	On the PC(USA) Continuing its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of New Castle, National Capital	Baltimore
11-13	Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance.	ACSWP
11-14	Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions.	ACSWP
11-15	Item 11-15 became Item 03-12. There is no Item 11-15.	
11-16	On Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS.	National Capital
11-17	On Reviewing The Doctrine of Discovery	National Capital
11-18	A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).	ACREC
11-19	ACREC Recommendations to the General Assembly	ACREC
11-20	The “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision.”	ACSWP
11-21	Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale	ACSWP
11-22	Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community.	PMA

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

11-23	On Therapies Purporting to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity.	Covenant (S)
11-24	Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report.	PMA
11-25	Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs.	ACSWP
11-26	On the Economic Crisis in Puerto Rico.Presbiterio.	Del Noroeste
11-Info	The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary 2014–2016	ACWC
11-Info	ACSWP Agency Summary	ACSWP
11-Info	Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary	ACREC
11-Self-Study	Self-Study Report of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).	ACREC
12-01	On Acknowledging and Reconciling for Killing Korean Civilians in July 1950. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, Northumberland.	Cayuga-Syracuse
12-02	On Celebrating the Completion of the Six-Year Discernment on Peacemaking. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Baltimore, Hudson River, National Capital, Southeastern Illinois.	Mission
12-03	[should have been listed as concurrence to 028.]	
12-04	Overture Pertaining to the Congo.	Chicago
12-05	On Affirming Non-Violent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Genesee Valley	Muskingum Valley
12-06	Risking Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations.	ACSWP
12-07	New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento.”	ACSWP
12-08	On Urging PC(USA) Members to Promote Non-Violent Resolution to Disagreements.	National Capital
12-09	On Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boise, Detroit, Southeastern Illinois	Covenant (S)
12-10	On Committing to Play an Active Part in the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Denver, Elizabeth, Mission, New Castle, New Covenant, New York City.	Southern New England
13-01	[Should be an Info piece.See at 13-Info.]	
13-02	PPC Board of Directors	PPC

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

13-03	Confirm Election of Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.	FDN
13-04	Churchwide Gifts Program	FDN
13-05	Confirm Individuals to PILP Board of Directors	PMA
13-06	PMA Election to the Board of Pensions.	PMA
13-07	Confirm the Election of the President of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program.	PILP
13-A	Minutes, Board of Pensions	BOP
13-B	Minutes, Presbyterian Church Foundation	FDN
13-C	Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	PPC
13-D	Minutes, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program	PILP
13-Info	PPC Agency Summary	PPC
13-Info	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary	FDN
13-Info	New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.	FDN
13-Info	The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)	PILP
14-01	On Amending W-4.9000 by Replacing with New Text. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, Eastern Korean, Mid-west Hanmi, Mississippi, San Fernando	Kiskiminetas
14-02	Regarding Endorsing the Clergy Letter Project. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley	Cascades
14-03	On Amending W-2.4011 by adding Language Regarding Who can Access the Lord's Supper. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, Florida, Huntingdon, Palo Duro.	Southeastern Illinois
14-04	Revised Directory for Worship	PMA
14-05	Mountain Retreat Association Board of Directors.	PMA
14-06	Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions--From the Committee on Theological Education	COTE
14-07	Approve the Presidents of Columbia Theological Seminary and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE
14-08	Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord's Supper--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE
14-09	Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE
14-10	Request for Docket Time for the Late President of Columbia Theological Seminary--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE

14-11	Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education--From the Committee on Theological Educations.	COTE
14-12	Recommendation to Create a Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.	COGA
14-13	On Approving an “Affirmation of Creation. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Cascades, Milwaukee, Wabash Valley.	Boston
14-A	Minutes, Committee on Theological Education	COTE
14-Info	Committee on Theological Education Agency Summary	COTE

Item 01-04

The Assembly Committee on Business Referral voted not to refer Item 01-04 because the Articles of Agreement is a historical document and cannot be amended. [See pp. 2, 3.]

On Amending Articles of Agreement, Section 8.2, to Include “Pacific Islander”—From the Presbytery of Sacramento.

The Presbytery of Sacramento overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to revise Section 8.2 of the Articles of Agreement as found in Appendix A of the *Book of Order* as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“8.2 Governing bodies of the Church shall be responsible for implementing the Church’s commitment to inclusiveness and participation which provides for the full expression of the rich diversity within its membership. All governing bodies shall work to become more open and inclusive and to correct past patterns of discrimination on the basis of racial ethnic background.

“Racial ethnic members in the United States (Presbyterians of African, Hispanic, ~~and~~ Asian, *and Pacific Islander* descent and Native Americans) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision-making of the Church, and shall be able to form caucuses.

“Participation and representation of racial ethnic membership shall be assured by the Committees on Representation (8.1).”

Rationale

The PC(USA) is committed to inclusion and seeks to ensure we hear the voices of those who are not the majority via Article 8, which is intended to ensure racial ethnic representation, participation, and organization.

This change seeks to more fully and accurately reflect the racial ethnic diversity in the PC(USA) by language that includes Pacific Islanders consistent with the intent of Article 8.

Personnel and/or committee affected: All committees, commissions, boards, and other official entities of the PC(USA).

Rationale for adding “and Pacific Islander”: It is included by the city, county, state, and the U.S. Census as an ethnic group representing those of the Hawaiian Islands, Guam, American Samoas, Northern Mariana Islands, etc. Let us embrace our people/cultures of the Pacific Islands.

Item 01-05

[The assembly approved Item 01-05. See pp. 2, 3.]

<i>Item#</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<u>Recommendation/</u> [PREVIOUS ACTION]
01-01	Proposed Docket	COGA	[APPROVED]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

01-02	Referrals in Progress and Final Responses to Referrals	Various	[APPROVED]
01-03	Referral of Business to Committees		[APPROVED]
01-04	On Amending Articles of Agreement A.8. to Include "Pacific Islander."	Sacramento	[TO NOT REFER]
03-01	On Amending Standing Rule E.2. Concerning Resources and Oral Presentation to Assembly Committees. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Carlisle, Florida, Great Rivers, Huntingdon, New Covenant	Central Florida	[TO REFER]
03-02	On Revising the Racial Ethnic Composition Component of the Session Annual Report of Church Statistics. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of New York City, Northumberland	Elizabeth	[TO REFER]
03-03	On Directing COGA to Bring to the 223rd GA Proposals Regarding Changes in the Moderator's Election and Assembly Committee Meetings Process. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Foothills, New Harmony, Western Kentucky	St. Andrew	[TO REFER]
03-04	On Adding the Category "Multi-Racial" to the Listing of Racial Classifications in the Annual Report from Congregations. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, Southeastern Illinois.	Greater Atlanta	[TO REFER]
03-05	On Amending the Annual Statistical Report to Include a New Category "Partners in Ministry." <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Foothills, Huntingdon, Northumberland, Santa Fe	Arkansas	[TO REFER]
03-06	On Adding New Standing Rule B.5.b., Assembly Committee Moderators.	COGA	[TO REFER]
03-07	Amendment to Standing Rule B.3.a., Presbyterian Women.	COGA	[TO REFER]
03-08	Election of Associate Stated Clerk.	COGA	[TO REFER]
03-09	Site Selection for the 225th General Assembly (2022).	COGA	[TO REFER]
03-10	Recommended Benchmarks for OGA and PMA.	GACOR	[TO REFER]
<u>03-11</u>	<u>On Amending Standing Rules B.4. and F.5.d. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions are Considered by the General Assembly.</u>	<u>Grand Canyon</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>03-12</u>	<u>Approve "A Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity."</u>	<u>GACOR</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 11-15)</u>
<u>03-13</u>	<u>Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for General Assembly Per Capita Budgets 2016-2018</u>	<u>COGA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>03-14</u>	<u>Approve Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.</u>	<u>COGA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
03-A	Minutes, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly	OGA	[TO REFER]
03-B	Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society	PHS	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

03-C	Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation	GACOR	[TO REFER]
03-Info	GACOR Agency Summary	GACOR	[TO REFER]
03-Info	GACOR Report on the AAEEEO and Supplier Diversity (SD) Achievements of the Six Agencies, 2014–2016	GACOR	[TO REFER]
03-Info	General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary	GANC	[TO REFER]
04-01	On Amending G-3.0503 and G-6.04 Regarding Meetings of the General Assembly and Amending the Constitution. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-02	On Amending Standing B.2.b.to Add the Category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Covenant, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-03	On Amending G-6.04e.to Require a Two-Thirds Majority Vote to Amend the Constitution. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-04	On Adding G-3.0105c. to Permit a Presbytery to Abstain on Constitutional Changes. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, Yukon.	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-05	On Adding a New Standing Rule L.2. Identifying the Right of Presbyteries and Synods to Submit Overtures Changing the Standing Rules. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony, South Louisiana	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-06	On Amending G-3.05 On the Review of the Manual of the General Assembly. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-07	On Merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a Single Entity. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries de Cristo, Sierra Blanca	Santa Fe	[TO REFER]
04-08	On Authorizing the Hiring of a Consultant to Assess the Relationship of OGA and PMA and the Need for Their Continued Existence as Two Separate Entities. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Charleston-Atlantic, Huntingdon, Mid-South, New Harmony, Southeastern Illinois	St. Andrew	[TO REFER]
04-09	On Creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew the Practice of our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
04-10	On Amending Book of Order G-6.04 and Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) to Require Two-Thirds Vote on Constitutional Changes. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Grand Canyon	de Cristo	[TO REFER]
04-11	Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency	PMA Review Committee	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

04-12	Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.	OGA Review Committee	[TO REFER]
<u>04-13</u>	<u>On Amending Book of Order, G-6.04e, Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly.</u> <u>Concurrence: Presbytery de Cristo.</u>	<u>Grand Canyon.</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>04-Report</u>	<u>When We Gather at the Table.</u>	<u>COGA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
05-01	On Rescinding the Actions of the 221st General Assembly which Directed the Establishment of a New Configuration of Synod Boundaries (Item 05-04). <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boise, Cascades, Cimarron, de Cristo, Eastern Oregon, Nevada, Plains and Peaks, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Jose, Sierra Blanca, Stockton; Synod of the Covenant. <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast, Kendall.	Santa Fe	[TO REFER]
05-02	On Restoring the Boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific to its Status Prior to the 2012 Revisions. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Huntingdon, Santa Barbara	So. California & Hawaii (S)	[TO REFER]
05-03	[Not Considered for Lack of a Concurrence]		
05-04	[Not Considered for Lack of a Concurrence]		
05-05	On Amending G-3.0106 Requiring All Councils to Adopt a Dependent Care Policy. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of New Castle, Santa Fe	Great Rivers	[TO REFER]
05-06	On Developing a National Child Protection Policy Model. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley	Susquehanna Valley	[TO REFER]
05-07	On Amending the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c Concerning Non-Geographic Presbyteries. <u>Concurrence:</u> Midwest Hanmi Presbytery	Eastern Korean	[TO REFER]
05-08	On Replacing the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c with New Text. <u>Concurrence:</u> Midwest Hanmi Presbytery	Eastern Korean	[TO REFER]
05-09	A Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA).	ACWC	[TO REFER]
05-10	A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies.	ACWC	[TO REFER]
05-11	Task Force on Korean Speaking Congregations Report.	TF	[TO REFER]
05-12	Request for Constitutional Interpretation of Resolving Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Synod of the Northeast	ACC	[TO REFER]
05-13	Synod Report Regarding Synod Boundaries.	Synods	[TO REFER]
<u>105-14</u>	<u>On Merging the Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast.</u>	<u>Alaska-Northwest (S)</u>	<u>Refer</u>

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

<u>105-15</u>	<u>On Requesting Exemption on any Action the Assembly Might Take to Reduce the Number of Synods.</u>	<u>Alaska-Northwest (S)</u>	<u>Refer</u>
05-A	Review of Synod Minutes		[TO REFER]
06-01	On Amending G-2.0509 by Deleting Recently Added Language Dealing with Renunciation of Jurisdiction. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Charlotte, Cimarron	New Covenant	[TO REFER]
06-02	On Amending G-2.0607c. to Add Training in Evangelism. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Huntingdon, Kiskiminetas.	Tampa Bay	[TO REFER]
06-03	Refer Item 06-03 to Committee 09, to become Item 09-11.		
06-04	On Amending G-3.0203 to Allow for Virtual Attendance in Session Meetings When Appropriate Technology is Available. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Florida, Huntingdon, Palo Duro, Pittsburgh, Southeastern Illinois	Lake Erie	[TO REFER]
06-05	On Amending G-3.0109 Regarding Parity in Committees of Councils Above the Session. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Foothills, Mid-South	St. Andrew	[TO REFER]
06-06	On Adding Section G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA). <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of East Iowa, Florida, Minnesota Valleys, New Castle, San Jose	Central Nebraska	[TO REFER]
06-07	On Amending G-2.0509 to Clarify the Relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of a Person Who has Renounced the Jurisdiction of the Church. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Southeastern Illinois, Western Reserve	Greater Atlanta	[TO REFER]
06-08	On Amending the Book of Order to Clarify Titles to Ordered Ministry. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Charleston Atlantic, Huntingdon, Minnesota Valleys, New Castle <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbytery of Santa Fe	Great Rivers	[TO REFER]
06-09	On Amending G-2.0301, "Ruling Elder Defined" To Allow for Individually Commissioned Ruling Elders. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Monmouth, Newton	Northeast (S)	[TO REFER]
06-10	On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to Clarify the Relationship to the PC(U.S.A.) of a Person Who Has Renounced Jurisdiction of the Church. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Cimarron	Twin Cities Area	[TO REFER]
06-11	On Amending G-3.0104 to Clarify the Role of Ecclesiastical Officers. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of East Iowa, Minnesota Valleys.	Detroit	[TO REFER]
06-12	On Amending Book of Order G-6.02 and G-6.04 and Standing Rules B.4. and F.5. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions are Considered by the General Assembly. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery de Cristo	Grand Canyon	[TO REFER]
06-13	On Amending Section G-2.1001 to Clarify the Discretion Given presbyteries to Utilize Commissioned Ruling Elders. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Grand Canyon	de Cristo	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

06-14	On Creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force Charged with Revising the Rules of Discipline.	Chicago	[TO REFER]
06-15	Recommendation to Amend G-2.1101, Forms of Certified Church Service, in the Book of Order and also Approve National Certifying Bodies.	COGA	[TO REFER]
06-16	A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence.	ACWC	[TO REFER]
06-Info	Mid Councils Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions	GAPJC	[TO REFER]
06-Info	General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission	GAPJC	[TO REFER]
06-Info	Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary.	ACL	[TO REFER]
06-Info	ACC Agency Summary	ACC	[TO REFER]
06-Info	Voting on Amendments	OGA	[TO REFER]
06-Self-Study	Report of the Self-Study Committee of the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).	PCCEC	[TO REFER]
07-01	Delegation to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.	GACEIR	[TO REFER]
07-02	Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.	GACEIR	[TO REFER]
07-03	Confession of Belhar		[TO REFER]
07-A	Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations		[TO REFER]
07-Info	General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary	GACEIR	[TO REFER]
07-Self-Study	The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations 2016 Self-Study	GACEIR	[TO REFER]
08-01	On Boycott of All HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Products.	Covenant (S)	[TO REFER]
08-02	On Advocating for the Safety and Wellbeing of Children of Palestine and Israel. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, Southeastern Illinois	Covenant (S)	[TO REFER]
08-03	On Upholding Peoples And Partners In The Middle East and In The United States. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cascades, Chicago, Cimarron, Grace, Los Ranchos, Providence	New York City	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

08-04	On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, San Francisco, Santa Fe	Redwoods	[TO REFER]
08-05	[Not Considered for Lack of a Concurrence.]		
08-06	Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace.	ACSWP	[TO REFER]
<u>08-07</u>	<u>On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).</u> <u>Concurrence: Presbytery of Palisades.</u>	<u>New Hope</u>	<u>Refer</u>
09-01	On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boston, Cascades, Chicago, East Tennessee, Genesee Valley, Geneva, Greater Atlanta, Mid-Kentucky, Monmouth, Muskingum Valley, National Capital, New Castle, Newton, Pacific, Redwoods, Sacramento, San Jose, Southern New England, Twin Cities Area, Western North Carolina. <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale:</u> Presbyteries of Giddings-Lovejoy, Heartland, Hudson River.	San Francisco	[TO REFER]
09-02	On An Alternative to Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Grace, Huntingdon, Palo Duro, South Louisiana, Tres Rios, Wyoming.	New Covenant	[TO REFER]
09-03	On Faithful Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change. <u>Concurrence:</u> Upper Ohio Valley	New Covenant	[TO REFER]
09-04	On Faithful Response to Climate Change. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, Winnebago.	New Covenant	[TO REFER]
09-05	On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si”. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Cimarron	Santa Fe	[TO REFER]
09-06	On Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or Internally Displaced. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cascades, Grace, Los Ranchos, Providence, Upper Ohio Valley	New York City	[TO REFER]
09-07	Refer Item 09-07 to Committee 14, to become Item 14-13.		
09-08	On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Great Rivers	Seattle	[TO REFER]
09-09	Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies.	PMA	[TO REFER]
09-10	Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship	BOP, OGA, FDN, PMA, PILP, PPC	[TO REFER]
<u>09-11</u>	<u>On Amending G-1.0304, The Ministry of Members, by Adding “Caring for God’s Creation.”</u> <u>Concurrence: Presbyteries of Boston, the Cascades, Homestead, Inland Northwest, Lake Michigan, Monmouth, Northern New England.</u> <u>Concurrence with Additional Rationale: Presbytery of Heartland</u>	<u>New Castle</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 06-03)</u>

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

<u>09-12</u>	<u>On Advocacy Against Factory Farming</u> <u>Concurrence: Presbytery of Hudson River, Northern Plains</u>	<u>Monmouth</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 11-11)</u>
10-01	On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery From the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses Which the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business.	Newark	[TO REFER]
10-02	Regarding the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee.	Charleston-Atlantic.	[TO REFER]
10-03	On Taking Specific Action to Address the Worsening Plight of the African American Male. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic, Upper Ohio Valley	Pittsburgh	[TO REFER]
10-04	Approve the Revised Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-05	Rescind the 1990 "General Assembly Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures."	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-06	Amendments to the Organization for Mission.	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-07	Proposed Changes and Updates to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-08	Report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force.	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-09	"Empowered & Hopeful"—Women of Color Consultation Report.	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-10	Living Missionally Recommendation—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-11	A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen.	ACWC	[TO REFER]
10-12	A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed via Third Party Contractors—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.	ACWC	[TO REFER]
10-13	On Achieving a 5:1 Ratio Between the Highest Paid and Lowest Paid Employees of PMA.	Newton	[TO REFER]
<u>10-14</u>	<u>2017–2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Work Plan.</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>10-15</u>	<u>Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church.</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
10-A	Presbyterian Mission Agency—Women of Faith Awards	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-B	Minutes, PC(USA) A Corp.	PMA	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

<u>10-C</u>	<u>Audit</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>10-D</u>	<u>Sam and Helen Walton Awards</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
10-Info	Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-Info	Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees	PMA	[TO REFER]
10-Info	Report of Changes to the Appendices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations.	PMA	[TO REFER]
11-01	On Adding a New Standing Rule F.5.c. Regarding Social Witness Policy Statements or Resolutions at the General Assembly. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
11-02	On Setting Aside “Forming Social Policy” at the Next Three General Assemblies. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony	Foothills	[TO REFER]
11-03	On Choosing to be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Hudson River, National Capital, Long Island, Monmouth, Sheppards and Lapsley	Cascades	[TO REFER]
11-04	Refer Item 11-04 to Committee 12 to become Item 12-09		
11-05	On the Admission of, and Apology for, Harms Done to the LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Chicago, Genesee Valley	New York City	[TO REFER]
11-06	On Resources for Learning, Reflection, and Reconciliation. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, Milwaukee	John Knox	[TO REFER]
11-07	Refer Item 11-07 to Committee 12, to become Item 12-10.		
11-08	On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Santa Fe, Upper Ohio Valley; Synod of the Southwest	Baltimore	[TO REFER]
11-09	On Celebrating a Significant Social Witness Anniversary. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Santa Fe	Chicago	[TO REFER]
11-10	On Reconciliation and Engagement in a New Civil Rights Movement. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Baltimore	Giddings-Lovejoy	[TO REFER]
11-11	Refer Item 11-11 to Committee 09, to become Item 09-12.		
11-12	On the PC(USA) Continuing its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of New Castle, National Capital	Baltimore	[TO REFER]
11-13	Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance.	ACSWP	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

11-14	Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions.	ACSWP	[TO REFER]
11-15	Refer Item 11-15 to Committee 03, to become Item 03-12.		
11-16	On Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS.	National Capital	[TO REFER]
11-17	On Reviewing The Doctrine of Discovery	National Capital	[TO REFER]
11-18	A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).	ACREC	[TO REFER]
11-19	ACREC Recommendations to the General Assembly	ACREC	[TO REFER]
11-20	The “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision.”	ACSWP	[TO REFER]
<u>11-21</u>	<u>Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale</u>	<u>ACSWP</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 09-XX)</u>
<u>11-22</u>	<u>Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community.</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>11-23</u>	<u>On Therapies Purporting to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity.</u>	<u>Covenant (S)</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>11-24</u>	<u>Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report.</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Refer</u>
<u>11-25</u>	<u>Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs.</u>	<u>ACSWP</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 09-XX)</u>
<u>11-26</u>	<u>On the Economic Crisis in Puerto Rico.Presbiterio.</u>	<u>Del Noroeste</u>	<u>Refer</u>
11-Info	The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary 2014–2016	ACWC	[TO REFER]
11-Info	ACSWP Agency Summary	ACSWP	[TO REFER]
11-Info	Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary	ACREC	[TO REFER]
11-Self-Study	Self-Study Report of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).	ACREC	[TO REFER]
12-01	On Acknowledging and Reconciling for Killing Korean Civilians in July 1950. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, Northumberland.	Cayuga-Syracuse	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

12-02	On Celebrating the Completion of the Six-Year Discernment on Peacemaking. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Baltimore, Hudson River, National Capital, Southeastern Illinois.	Mission	[TO REFER]
12-03	[should have been listed as concurrence to 12-02, OVT-28.]		
12-04	Overture Pertaining to the Congo.	Chicago	[TO REFER]
12-05	On Affirming Non-Violent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Genesee Valley	Muskingum Valley	[TO REFER]
12-06	Risking Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations.	ACSWP	[TO REFER]
12-07	New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento.”	ACSWP	[TO REFER]
12-08	On Urging PC(USA) Members to Promote Non-Violent Resolution to Disagreements.	National Capital	[TO REFER]
<u>12-09</u>	<u>On Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination.</u> <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Boise, Detroit, Southeastern Illinois	<u>Covenant (S)</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 11-04)</u>
<u>12-10</u>	<u>On Committing to Play an Active Part in the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic.</u> <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Denver, Elizabeth, Mission, New Castle, New Covenant, New York City.	<u>Southern New England</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 11-07)</u>
13-01	[Should be an PILP Info piece. See at 13-Info.]		[REFERRED AS ITEM 13-Info]
13-02	PPC Board of Directors	PPC	[TO REFER]
13-03	Confirm Election of Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.	FDN	[TO REFER]
13-04	Churchwide Gifts Program	FDN	[TO REFER]
13-05	Confirm Individuals to PILP Board of Directors	PMA	[TO REFER]
13-06	PMA Election to the Board of Pensions.	PMA	[TO REFER]
<u>13-07</u>	<u>Confirm the Election of the President of the PC(USA) Investment and Loan Program.</u>	<u>PILP</u>	<u>Refer</u>
13-A	Minutes, Board of Pensions	BOP	[TO REFER]
13-B	Minutes, Presbyterian Church Foundation	FDN	[TO REFER]

01 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS REFERRALS

13-C	Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	PPC	[TO REFER]
13-D	Minutes, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program	PILP	[TO REFER]
13-Info	PPC Agency Summary	PPC	[TO REFER]
13-Info	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary	FDN	[TO REFER]
13-Info	New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.	FDN	[TO REFER]
13-Info	The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)	PILP	[REFERRED AS ITEM 13-01]
14-01	On Amending W-4.9000 by Replacing with New Text. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, Eastern Korean, Mid-west Hanmi, Mississippi, San Fernando	Kiskiminetas	[TO REFER]
14-02	Regarding Endorsing the Clergy Letter Project. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley	Cascades	[TO REFER]
14-03	On Amending W-2.4011 by adding Language Regarding Who can Access the Lord's Supper. <u>Concurrence:</u> Presbyteries of Cimarron, Florida, Huntingdon, Palo Duro.	Southeastern Illinois	[TO REFER]
14-04	Revised Directory for Worship	PMA	[TO REFER]
14-05	Mountain Retreat Association Board of Directors.	PMA	[TO REFER]
14-06	Approve New Trustees Elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions--From the Committee on Theological Education	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-07	Approve the Presidents of Columbia Theological Seminary and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-08	Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord's Supper--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-09	Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-10	Request for Docket Time for the Late President of Columbia Theological Seminary--From the Committee on Theological Education.	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-11	Recognize Persons for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education--From the Committee on Theological Educations.	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-12	Recommendation to Create a Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.	COGA	[TO REFER]

<u>14-13</u>	<u>On Approving an “Affirmation of Creation. Concurrence: Presbytery of Cascades, Milwaukee, Wabash Valley.</u>	<u>Boston</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 09-07)</u>
<u>14-14</u>	<u>Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions</u>	<u>ACSWP</u>	<u>Refer (formerly Item 11-14)</u>
14-A	Minutes, Committee on Theological Education	COTE	[TO REFER]
14-Info	Committee on Theological Education Agency Summary	COTE	[TO REFER]

Item 01-06

[The assembly approved Item 01-06. See pp. 2, 3.]

The Assembly Committee on Business Referrals recommends that Standing Rule A.2.a. be suspended in order to receive late business:

00-03: GANC Nominations, 6/14/16

05-06: GA Youth/Child Protection Policy, 5/19/16

11-21: Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. 4/6/16

11-25: Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. 5/4/16

14-06: Approve New Trustees Elected by PC(USA) Theological Institutions—From the Committee on Theological Education, 3/29/16

14-07: Approve Presidents of Columbia Theological Institution and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Institutions, 3/29/16

14-08: Grant Permission to Theological Institutions to Celebrate the Lord’s Supper—From the Committee on Theological Education, 3/29/16

14-09: Covenant Between General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico—From the Committee on Theological Education, 3/29/16

14-10: Request for Docket Time for Late President of Columbia Theological Seminary—From the Committee on Theological Education, 3/29/16

14-11: Recognize Person for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Theological Education—From the Committee on Theological Education, 3/29/16

14-Info: Agency Summary—From the Committee on Theological Education, 3/29/16

Item 02-01

[The assembly received Item 02-01. See pp. 7, 16.]

A. For Information—Referral of Commissioners' Resolutions:

1. CR-001 (now Item 10-16)—*Commissioners' Resolution. To Withdraw the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).* Referred to Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (10). Vote: 32-0.
2. CR-002 (now Item 14-15)—*Commissioners' Resolution. The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.* Referred to the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions. Referred to Assembly Committee on Theological Issues & Institutions (14). Vote: 32-0.
3. CR-003 (now Item 07-04)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Prayer for the Persecuted Church.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. Referred to Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations (07). Vote: 32-0.
4. CR-004 (now Item 06-17)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding Church Property.* Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 referred to Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06); and that Recommendation 3 be declined based upon the following rationale: Recommendation 3. implies an authoritative interpretation, which, under Standing Rule A.6.e., is not allowed in commissioners' resolutions. Vote: 32-0.
5. CR-005—*Commissioners' Resolution. Regarding the Use of Two States for Two Peoples.* Declined. Vote: 32-0.
6. CR-006 (now Item 08-08)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (08). Vote: 32-0.
7. CR-007 (now Item 12-12)—*Commissioners' Resolution. On Affirming Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation in the Number of Displaced Person/Refugees.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking & International Issues (12). Vote: 32-0.
8. CR-008 (now Item 12-11)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Reaffirming the Ministry of Sanctuary by Congregations.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues. Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking & International Issues (12). Vote: 32-0.
9. CR-009 (now Item 13-08)—*Commissioners' Resolution. On Creating a Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and General Assembly Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Service.* Referred to Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation (13). Vote: 32-0.
10. CR-010 (now Item 12-13)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Peacemaking & International Issues (12). Vote: 32-0.
11. CR-011 (now Item 07-05)—*Commissioners' Resolution. Recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.* Referred to Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations (07). Vote: 32-0.
12. CR-012—*Commissioners' Resolution. On Directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) to Release for Public View the Final Report of the Independent Investigation into the Incorporation and Funding of a California 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation.* Declined based upon following rationale: (1) civil proceedings have commenced in the matters referred to, and the church suspends its judicial process until civil proceedings have been resolved; (2) the UPCUSA, a predecessor denomination, voted that the General Assembly would not be an ecclesial court. Up to that time the General Assembly had to approve the decisions of the GAPJC before it was made final. That change has been the practice of the reunited church. Accepting this commissioners' resolution requires the General Assembly to serve as an ecclesial court of the church. Vote: 32-0.

B. For Information—Final Referral

Item 11-A. Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. Referred to Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11). Vote 31-0.

Item 02-02

[The assembly received Item 02-02. See pp. 7, 11, 70.]

Minutes of the Assembly, Saturday, June 18, 2016, through Sunday afternoon, June 19, 2016.

Item 02-03

[The assembly approved Item 02-03. See pp. 7, 8, 16, 25, 31, 37, 47, 60.]

The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the following proposed docket:

Wednesday, June 22:

8:30 a.m.

- Ecumenical Worship Service
- Report Reading Time: Pay particular attention to Item WCA
- Lunch Break

2:00 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation by Committee on Local Arrangements
- Business Meeting 4
 - Speak-out
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Stated Clerk's Orientation II
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Report of General Assembly Nominating Committee
 - Consent agenda, Item WCA: Items receiving a super majority vote in assembly committee meetings
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency: Educate A Child Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions (14)
 - Announcements

5:30 p.m.

- Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Dinner

7:00 p.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Prayer
- Business Meeting 5
 - Speak-out
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee Reports
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions (14)—continued
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Issues (07)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03)
 - Announcements
 - Closing Prayer

Recess

Thursday, June 19:

8:30 a.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 6
 - Committee on the Office of the General Assembly: When We Gather At The Table
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency: Refugee Ministry Response Update
 - Assembly Committee Reports
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC and Foundation (13)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (03)—continued
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils (05)

11:15 a.m.

- Worship

Recess

Lunch Break

02 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

1:30 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 7
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency—Mission Personnel Commissioning
 - Syngman Rhee Memorial Minute
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency—Intercultural Ministries Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Mid Councils (05)—continued
 - Big Tent 2017 Announcement
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Spirit of GA Video Presentation
 - Announcements

5:30 p.m.

- Closing Prayer

Recess

Dinner Break

7:30 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 8
 - Speak-out
 - Committee on the Office of the General Assembly—Presentation to the Stated Clerk
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward (04)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination (10)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11)
 - Announcements
 - Closing Prayer

Recess

Friday, June 20:

8:30 a.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 9
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Stated Clerk Election and Installation
 - Report of General Assembly Committee on Nominations
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06)

11:15 a.m.

- Worship

Recess

Group Lunch

1:30 p.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 10
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency—Grace and Gratitude Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Reports
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06)—continued
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues (11)—continued
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (08)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues (09)
 - Spirit of GA Video
 - Announcements

5:30 p.m.

- Closing Prayer

Recess

Group Dinner

7:00 p.m.

- Ecumenical Greetings and Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 11
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Presbyterian Mission Agency—1001 Video Presentation
 - Assembly Committee Report
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues (8)—continued
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues (9)
 - Report of the Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues (12)
 - Announcements
 - Closing Prayer

Recess

Saturday, June 21:

9:00 a.m.

- Opening Prayer
- Business Meeting 12
 - Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures
 - Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures (Financial Implications)
 - Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets (Financial Implications)
 - Office of the General Assembly—Thanks to Committee on Local Arrangements
 - Presentation of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Committee on Local Arrangements
 - Announcements
 - Closing Worship

12:00 Noon

- Adjourn

Item 02-04

[The assembly received Item 02-04. See p. 70.]

Minutes of the Assembly, Sunday evening, June 19, 2016, through Friday morning, June 24, 2016.

Item 02-05

[The assembly received Item 02-04. See pp. 7, 11, 70.]

A. In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for Saturday, June 18, 2016, through Sunday, June 19, 2016, have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (02), Item 02-02.

B. In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for Sunday evening, June 19, 2016, through Friday morning, June 24, 2016 (excluding Thursday evening), have been reviewed and found to be in order. These minutes are posted on PC-Biz under the business for the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (02), Item 02-04.

C. In accordance with the Standing Rules, the minutes for the rest of the assembly will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Item 02-06

[The assembly received Item 02-06. See p. 70.]

Minutes of the assembly, Thursday evening, June 23, 2016, through Saturday morning, June 25, 2016. Approved by the subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Item 03-01

On Amending Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) Concerning Resources and E.2.f.(3) Concerning Oral Presentation to Assembly Committees—From the Presbytery of Central Florida.

[The assembly approved Item 03-01, Recommendation 1., with amendment. See pp. 12, 28.]

The Presbytery of Central Florida overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to amend Standing Rule E.2. as follows:

1. Amend Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“(2) Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners’ resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred and shall be as succinct as possible. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures], with a commitment to equitable presentation of different perspectives, shall consider any request that is made to distribute this resource material to the full assembly.~~

“Resource material provided for the committee by the appropriate General Assembly entity shall include well-written presentations from the variety of different perspectives on any issue under consideration. These presentations on other perspectives should come from the most articulate and informed proponents of that particular point of view. A report including a summary of the actions taken on this issue by our ecumenical partners and previous General Assemblies shall also be prepared by an appropriate General Assembly entity.”

[The assembly referred Item 03-01, Recommendation 2. to the Office of the General Assembly with comment. See pp. 12, 28]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) acknowledges and affirms the intent of fairness behind this overture and would like to refer it for further discussion to be sure implementation ensures multiple perspectives are shared in deliberations while still retaining the discernment process of commissioners.]

2. Amend Standing Rule E.2.f.(3) as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“(3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities. *Experts advocating differing points of view shall be given equal time if oral presentations promoting one point of view are given by General Assembly staff, persons with special expertise, and elected members of General Assembly entities;*”~~

Rationale

The Foundations section of the *Book of Order* states: “Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (F-3.0204). This overture will help us find and represent the will of Christ in three ways.

- First, it will help us seek the will of Christ in a way that is less contentious. When a decision is required on a topic of much debate, it is often hard for presbyters to find and represent the will of Christ amid all the voices bidding for our attention. If one voice in a particular debate is given an advantage, this makes the discernment process even more difficult. This overture seeks to give all voices an equal opportunity to be heard.

The Peace, Unity, and Purity Task Force noted that when there are matters of disagreement it important that we listen deeply to what others have to say. This committee found well-written presentations on all sides of an issue to be of help. They stated, “The pursuit of truth takes place in a community where differing voices are not only respectfully engaged but also honored as full partners in our common pursuit of God’s will for the church.”

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to be a community in which all voices have a place at the table. However, when General Assembly entities and General Assembly staff come to a firm conclusion on a matter and then promote that conclusion as a part of the process, those who differ from that conclusion find it hard to have their voices heard.

- Second, this overture will help commissioners to the General Assembly focus on the relevant arguments. At every General Assembly there are many first-time commissioners who are assigned to a committee with business that is unfamiliar

to them. In order to make an informed decision and listen for the voice of the Spirit, these commissioners need to hear all sides on any particular issue presented in an erudite and winsome way.

- Third, this overture will encourage divergent thinking. Good leadership requires that we think of as many solutions to a problem as possible before we decide which solution (or combination of solutions) might be best. Having a number of well-thought-out solutions to a problem on the table could help the General Assembly committees lead the church in a new and exciting direction. This new direction will require the General Assembly committees and the full assembly to do more reading in some cases. However, making an informed decision should be more important than just making a decision.

Concurrence to Item 03-01 from the Presbyteries of Carlisle, Florida, Great Rivers, Huntingdon, and New Covenant.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-01

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 03-01 be disapproved.

Item 03-01 purports to give balance and enrich input to committee decision-making, but in practice it would be time-consuming, inevitably arbitrary, and possibly quite expensive. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) appreciates the proponents' desire for fairness. While ACSWP is not the only body that would be covered, we have tried to think through this proposal in relation to the often complex requests for study we are given. This overture would mandate:

Experts advocating differing points of view shall be given equal time if oral presentations promoting one point of view are given by General Assembly staff, persons with special expertise, and elected members of General Assembly entities.

Consider that if a committee was considering a resolution on human trafficking or pornography and received an oral presentation from any of the groups listed above, this mandate would require that someone who advocates human trafficking or pornography be given equal time. This would be a waste of time. More than that, however, this overture does not recognize the role of the Bible, our confessions, and our mission experience in forming social witness policies in particular. Just as many concerns (like poverty) have been around a long time, so have approaches by the church. The study material normally attached to any set of recommendations is designed to show how given conclusions were reached and alternatives considered, guided by the range of voices mandated by the assembly in 1993 (<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/why-and-how-church-makes-social-policy-witness/>).

Further, the overture's rather rigid approach negates the reason the General Assembly elects persons to advisory and advocacy committees in the first place: Presbyterians with experience and expertise are elected to give their time to consider an issue at length, engage diverse points of view, talk over the implications with mission co-workers and General Assembly staff, and develop a position based on the merits of the issue. These volunteers act on behalf of the rest of us. Sometimes, as with the Risking Peace Affirmations, the report on the "two-state solution" for Israel-Palestine, and the drug policy reform study coming before this General Assembly, ACSWP has digested reports from presbyteries that studied the issue, held hearings, invited input from the larger church, and tested findings. Under that 1993 statement, *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness*, which undergirds the assembly manual, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy seeks not just a theoretical exercise but practical recommendations for action based on its knowledge of the church.

Reports coming before this General Assembly, for example, engage diverse points of view and name areas of disagreement among Christians. The report on human trafficking looks at the contested terminology from "modern slavery" to "forced labor" and identifies different approaches to prostitution. The study of the Israel-Palestine situation identifies multiple views in the church regarding the viability of the "two-state solution," while inviting the church to unify around the need for any diplomatic or political solution to honor human rights and democratic values.

Pick an overture coming from a presbytery proposing a new or different policy on a given topic. The current assembly rules recommend reference to theological and confessional grounding, citation of prior General Assembly actions, and consultation with programs that would be affected in mission or budget. Each presbytery is authorized to designate an overture advocate prepared to resource the assembly committee. For cost reasons, it is on the presbytery to determine who that advocate is and how they get to the assembly. General Assembly rules also suggest hearings on all business, open to non-Presbyterians, and on some matters (notably South Africa, Central American human rights, corporate boycotts and divestment, environmental issues, sexuality) organizations in the church and outside often bring in experts. Some issues have multiple sides; the role of advisory and advocacy committees is partly to take into account how "social location" affects how individuals and groups see an issue.

Thus mandating equal time does not reflect how committees structure their work. Committees are assigned papers and there are hearings where one can give additional information, offer opinions, and even present substitute reports. Who would determine which other experts would be brought in and who would pay for them? What if the commissioners wanted to arrest a report or voted to call the question before some expert had finished a presentation? The committee process already in place

gives significant opportunities to consider diverse points of view represented in the church. As former commissioners know, hearings can go for days and some matters may be revisited for years.

We hope that this response itself is fair, but must acknowledge that ACSWP's own resources and those of other bodies are limited and practices can always be improved. There are judgment calls for moderators to make, and forgiveness to be shared when decisions do not go a given way. Within our committee itself, there are often intense discussions. Yet we believe Christ does not ask the church to be a neutral place, but a truthful place, as truth always has justice on its side. Yet it is grace, then, when we see God's justice pointing to the reconciliation of all sides.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-01

Comment on Item 03-01—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 03-01, the overture to amend Standing Rule E.2. concerning resources and oral presentation to assembly committees.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created "to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk ..." (*Organization for Mission*, Section, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

COGA advises the General Assembly to disapprove Item 03-01 due to two inconsistencies within the proposed amendment to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly. We find that it is hard, if not impossible, to measure fairness in resources provided to commissioners and advisory delegates to the General Assembly. Additionally, committee leadership and assembly staff are not in the position to determine who is an "expert" for there is already provision in the Standing Rules for a committee to dialogue with the general public through the open hearing availability given to General Assembly committees. COGA urges the assembly to instead rely on F-3.0105 in the *Book of Order* and practice mutual forbearance, for every commissioner has been ordained by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the ministry of ruling elder or teaching elder and also elected and commissioned by the presbytery in which they reside. They are therefore called by God to represent themselves at this particular time in service to God and the church. To further delineate what is fair and is worthy of perusal by commissioners and advisory delegates could hamper the movement of the Holy Spirit and promote tribes to form. Additionally, this overture could potentially add layers of required listening that can break down a committee's work and cause further division in their discernment. We must trust one another as Christ trusts the church to carry on his work in the world.

Item 03-02

[The assembly referred Item 03-02 to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly with comment. See p. 28.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) supports the intended outcome of this item and refers Item 03-02 to the Committee of the Office of the General Assembly to work with the General Assembly Committee on Representation to determine the most effective and efficient way to achieve this outcome by the 223rd General Assembly (2018).]

On Revising the Racial Ethnic Composition Component of the Session Annual Report of Church Statistics—From the Presbytery of Elizabeth.

The Presbytery of Elizabeth overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Office of the General Assembly to commission an appropriately racially and culturally diverse task force, working group, or committee, to revise the survey instrument used in the Racial Ethnic Composition Component of the Sessions' Annual Report of Church Statistics to more clearly reflect the racial, ethnic AND cultural diversity in our churches.

Rationale

The annual report that is typically filed by the clerk of each church's session asks the clerk to assign each church member to one of the following categories of racial or ethnic identification: Asian, African, African American, Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Native American, White, Other. These data are used to measure how well the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is doing in fulfilling its goal of being a welcoming, inclusive church for all people, regardless of cultural or genetic heritage. This goal, while laudable and surely shared by all, is nevertheless obscured in a number of significant ways by the very labels, or categories of identification, into which the report filing form asks the clerk to divide church members.

First, categories overlap. What is the reasoning behind including both "Black" and "African American" among the choices? This seems more a matter of personal choice, semantics, and preference of one terminology over another than a distinction based on race or ethnic background.

Second, individual people overlap the categories. In which category does, for example, a person of African descent whose parents grew up in Panama belong? Or a white-skinned person of Syrian descent, or whose parents emigrated from Cuba? What of a person with Native American blood whose name is Dominguez? Or any of the endless permutations of mestizo, mulatto, Amer-Asian, and other ethnic blending that reason, simple observation, and the latest science of genetics all tell us plainly that we all partake of?

Third, the categories are too broad to give a clear picture of cultural diversity. Why, for instance, don't Japanese or Japanese American church members have a different ethnic category heading than church members from Lahore, Mumbai, or Chennai? Why do church members from the Dominican Republic get lumped into the same category as those from Mexico or Peru? And what (besides the Body of Christ) significantly unites someone of Hispanic descent whose family has been in this country for generations with someone who is a recent immigrant from Central America?

We know what divides them, and it is culture. It is nurture and history and collective experience, not nature or biology. It is the same as the reason for having a category of "African" alongside a separate and distinct category of "Black." (Where, by the way, does a white South African fit in this racial ethnic breakdown?)

Let us admit that whatever language we use for mapping the dimensions of human diversity, or Presbyterian diversity, is, like all language, ultimately inadequate and imprecise; also that cultural, ethnic, and racial identity is, for most people, a very personal and precious treasure, one that is alternately defended and trumpeted with pride and a sense of guardianship.

Moreover, while ethnicity is immutable, a product of one's genetic inheritance from one's parents, culture—which implies not only language and dialect, but cuisine, music, and dance styles, the stories you've grown up with, and the values you've learned, the jokes you laugh at, the sources of your joy and suffering—is malleable, morphing, dynamic, and a subject of some degree of personal choice. To be sure, cultural identification is predestined to a certain extent by ethnicity; geography and historical era each plays a role, as well. Still, an individual person can actively choose to identify, more or less, with the predominant culture of his or her group, or even reject the culture altogether.

All of this explains why we feel that culture is at least as powerful a marker of identity and a measure of diversity as race and ethnicity, perhaps even more so, and it should therefore be accounted for in our annual Presbyterian census-taking. We therefore urge the Office of the General Assembly to assign some appropriate group or committee or task force, as a matter of foremost priority, to research this question and come up with a survey instrument that celebrates our church's diversity in more than just the eight broad categories of racial ethnic diversity that are currently offered, an instrument in which the smallest possible number of people in any given population, church, or community, is relegated to the category of "other," and one that manages to also incorporate the dynamic and vibrant cultural diversity that is captured within each of these categories.

Concurrence to Item 03-02 from the Presbyteries of New York City and Northumberland.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that this Item be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and to the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy affirms the importance of encouraging diversity in our church as part of "exhibiting the kingdom of heaven to the world." It is also part of our witness and evangelism to build churchwide strategies based on accurate data. Working in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation (and other bodies of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as warranted), the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly can incorporate consideration of these matters into its regular work with staff on the questionnaire. Commissioners may also consider whether their clerks of session share their response forms to the Stated Clerk's questionnaire with their sessions or congregations.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 03-02.

Over the years, the population demographic in the United States has become increasingly diverse and more complex, as has the demographic within the PC(USA). According to the 2010 Census, the population reporting multiple races (9.0 mil-

lion) grew by 32.0 percent from 2000 to 2010, compared with those who reported a single race, which grew by 9.2 percent (<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/race/cb12-182.html>).

ACREC concurs that many of these existing racial ethnic categories that are currently being used for statistical purpose by the PC(USA) do overlap with one another and often lead to confusion, misrepresentation, or underrepresentation, especially among those who consider themselves to be “multiracial” or “interracial.” Currently they would have to choose one of their closest racial ethnic affiliations or the category of “other.”

As we seek to become a more inclusive community of faith, we identify ourselves first and foremost as children of God. God embraces our diversities and identifies who we are regardless of how we may humanly identify or categorize ourselves.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-02

Comment on Item 03-02—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises that the assembly refer Item 03-02, on revising the racial ethnic composition of the Session Annual Report of Church Statistics, to COGA for action as part of its response to the referral from the 219th General Assembly (2010), which will be reported to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). The 219th General Assembly (2010) referred a similar overture concerning the categories for statistical reporting. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has been engaged in that work and anticipates reporting recommended changes to the Sessions’ Annual Report of Church Statistics, consistent with the goal of this overture, to the next assembly.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-02

Comment on Item 03-02—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture seeks to revise the racial ethnic composition component of the session annual report of church statistics.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully requests that when reports measuring statistics and participation demographics of the church are revised, that the assembly direct GACOR be included in the body making recommendations for revision. The GACOR is the assembly entity tasked with the responsibility to collect, review, analyze, and make recommendations based on the annual reports of church and agency statistics. Data collected by these instruments inform baselines for comparison of participation and representation on decision-making bodies. The GACOR uses this data in almost every analysis of institutional capacity and inclusiveness.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 03-03

On Directing COGA to Bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) Proposals Regarding Changes in the Moderator’s Election and Assembly Committee Meetings Process—From the Presbytery of St. Andrew.

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-03, Recommendation 1. See p. 28.]

The Presbytery of Saint Andrew overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) to bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a proposal for constitutional changes, revisions to the *Manual of the General Assembly*, and necessary implementation provisos that would:

1. Move the election of a General Assembly Moderator and Vice-Moderator to the end of the meeting of each General Assembly, with the result that the newly elected Moderator and Vice-Moderator, having demonstrated leadership through the week of the assembly meeting, would be elected to serve as its ambassadors for the next two years, working to build the next assembly’s agenda and business, over which they would then preside.

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-03, Recommendation 2 with comment. See p. 28.]

[Comment: We recommend that COGA continue to identify, investigate, and implement strategies and processes to empower all commissioners to have maximum opportunities to prepare for committee work prior to the start of the General Assembly for which they are elected as commissioners.]

2. Create a system by means of which General Assembly committees can convene at least six months prior to the assembly at which they will serve as commissioners to organize and begin their work, culminating in reports and action recommendations at their meetings once the General Assembly itself has convened. It is assumed that evolving electronic meeting technology will be employed to make this process possible.

Rationale

In the current General Assembly process, Moderators are elected on the basis of a very brief time of “campaigning” at the beginning of each assembly, and a ninety-minute period of questions and answers mostly on theoretical questions of what they would do if elected. Furthermore, once the assembly adjourns, its Moderator and Vice-Moderator have essentially completed their work, save the tasks of interpreting the assembly’s actions to the church and serving as its ambassadors to both the PC(USA) membership, and the world.

This proposal would first give each assembly the opportunity to experience its potential leaders in action, and then determine at the end of the assembly week who should be elected to serve in these critically important roles at the next assembly, and in the months leading up to it.

Second, the proposal would change the current process of coming together for a total of one week with the expectation that commissioners will reach good and well-reasoned decisions on a myriad of matters enumerated in thousands of pages of overtures, responses, reports, and recommendations. In an age in which not only can reports can be distributed electronically, but entire meetings can be conducted electronically in full compliance with *Robert’s Rules of Order*, there is no reason that a system cannot be created to allow General Assembly committees to organize, meet, assign work groups, and accomplish much of their work before the assembly week occurs.

In developing a process for implementing this proposal, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) should have the freedom to contemplate creative options—including shortening the length of assembly meetings themselves—to create the possibility of individual in-person committee meetings well before the assembly week for the purposes of group formation and organization, which could be held relatively inexpensively by utilizing the Presbyterian Center, camp and conference facilities and/or churches.

This process would also give the Moderator and Vice-Moderator particular roles in facilitating and coordinating these meetings and work.

Concurrence to Item 03-03 from the Presbyteries of Foothills and New Harmony.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-03

Comment on Item 03-03—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly offers the following comments for consideration by the assembly in deliberation of Item 03-03, on directing COGA to bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) proposals regarding changes in the Moderator’s election and assembly committee meetings process.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

COGA urges the assembly to consider the potential impact of Item 03-03 with care. As the rationale for this item suggests, by allowing for individuals to demonstrate exceptional leadership during their service as commissioner, the assembly may be better informed in making a decision as to who could best fulfill the duties of Moderator during the succeeding biennium, including moderating the following General Assembly, while still compliant with *Robert’s Rules of Order*. This item may bring a spirit of creativity and nimbleness to the Moderatorial positions that would enliven the body for carrying the decisions made at General Assembly to the presbyteries and communicating the story of the assembly to members of our churches. COGA continues to believe that creative approaches to ensuring that the General Assembly is accessible to all members who make up our denomination are necessary.

However, the proposal also raises some concerns based upon COGA’s view of the role of the Moderator. First, the assembly should consider with care whether a Moderator elected by one assembly will be as effective in moderating the business of the subsequent assembly as would be an individual whom the subsequent assembly has elected would be. Further, as COGA understands G-3.0104, a Moderator’s presbytery would have to reelect him/her as a commissioner at the subsequent assembly, or he/she would not have the ability to serve as Moderator. COGA does not believe G-3.0104 allows the General Assembly to compel that the individual be reelected a commissioner. Finally, COGA is concerned that the proposal has the potential to create confusion between the role of the Moderator and the role of the Stated Clerk in planning the General As-

sembly. Any action should make completely clear that the change in the term of Moderator is not a warrant for such an individual to supplant the Stated Clerk’s responsibilities for planning the General Assembly.

Item 03-04

[The assembly answered Item 03-04 by the action taken on Item 03-02. See pp. 28, 29.]

On Adding the Category “Multiracial” to the Listing of Racial Classifications in the Annual Report from Congregations—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Add the category “multiracial” to its listing of racial classifications in its annual report that congregations use to report their annual statistics to the General Assembly each year.
2. Proclaim that
 - We recognize that each person has the right to define their racial classification in the way that best fits their sense of self.
 - The United States is becoming an increasingly diverse community, with many individuals having heritages from diverse races and cultures.
 - Asking people to choose a racial category that they believe does not encompass their full, rich, and unique background dishonors their unique heritage.
 - Asking people with a diverse racial background to choose “other” as a racial category can convey a sense of diminished worth and value for their personhood/humanity.
3. Call on our churches to use language in their membership forms, annual reports, services, meetings, and community work that expresses its appreciation for the rich and complex diversity of all humanity.
4. Uphold that all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, class, or any other category that the world may place on them, are first and foremost children of God, all members of God’s family, and all to be treated with equal respect, care, and love.

Concurrence to Item 03-04 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore, Chicago, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that this item be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, with consultation with the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries and the Committee on Representation.

As in Item 03-02, there is a very important mission goal involved in the choice of language, in this case the word, “multiracial.” It is certainly better than, “other,” as is currently used. At the same time, the category multiracial or multiethnic, without some qualification, could possibly inhibit the usefulness of the new category, which might itself be used as a catch-all. This is a matter on which Research Services may well also have wisdom, as they design questionnaires regularly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly would report its determination to the 223rd General Assembly (2018), but might be able to implement any changes before that time.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 03-04. See ACREC’s Advice and Counsel on Item 03-02.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-04

Comment on Item 03-04—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully advises that the assembly refer Item 03-04, on adding the category “multiracial” to the listing of racial classifications in the annual report from congregations, to COGA

for action as part of its response to the referral from the 219th General Assembly (2010), which will be reported to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). The 219th General Assembly (2010) referred a similar overture concerning the categories for statistical reporting. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has been engaged in that work and anticipates reporting recommended changes to the Sessions’ Annual Report of Church Statistics, consistent with the goal of this overture, to the next assembly.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 03-04

Comment on Item 03-04—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture adds the category “multiracial” to the listing of racial classifications to the annual report from congregations.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation uses both “multiracial” and “other” in its reports. We support General Assembly using “multiracial” as a means to identify persons who associate themselves with more than one given racial category.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 03-05

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-05. See pp. 12, 28, 29.]

On Amending the Annual Statistical Report to Include a New Category “Partners in Ministry”—From the Presbytery of Arkansas.

The Presbytery of Arkansas respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to instruct the Office of the General Assembly to amend the Annual Statistical Report to include a new category, “Partners in Ministry.” This number shall be reported by the OGA in the statistical data for each congregation, which is accessible through the OGA or its website, in order that the vitality of a congregation is accurately reflected in those statistics.

“Partners in Ministry” are defined as individuals fully participating in the ministry of the church. Full participation is defined as their willing inclusion on a register of Partners in Ministry and their willingness to make a financial pledge to the ministry of the church, their inclusion in a congregational care list kept by the session or board of deacons, or their inclusion in a phone list designed for notification of members and regular participants in the event of temporary cancellation of church programs or events (e.g. cancellation due to weather, etc.).

Rationale

It has been observed that in ever greater numbers, many of the congregants, worshippers, and participants in congregations choose to delay or never formally become members of any congregation or denomination. This trend is evident not only in congregations of the PC(USA), but of most Christian denominations in the United States, and was one of the considerations behind the “1001 Worshipping Communities” movement. This reluctance may be for many personal and cultural reasons, including (but not limited to) loyalty to the denomination or congregation of the participants birth or family, a sense of one’s residence being temporary, a distrust of institutional stability, a discomfort with some of the exact words of the affirmation of faith, a desire to be certain that the affirmation of faith is one that they can state with absolute sincerity, or a cultural/generational trend to try many things out before making a commitment to one.

In some cases, the participant’s desire is not to become part of the structure of the church or denomination, but simply to participate in the worship and/or mission of the congregation, whether for a short, long, or extended period of time. Nonetheless, the congregation’s ability to serve Christ in its community and the world is affected by the non-members’ participation. The congregation’s ability to do ministry and mission is expanded even as pastoral and congregational care are owed to this larger number of congregants also expands.

These are considerations that may affect a future pastoral call, and the upward or downward trend of this aspect of the congregation’s ministry should be as verifiable as the congregational growth or decline in membership, attendance in worship or Christian education, and financial stability, all of which are currently included in the statistical information available.

Concurrence to Item 03-05 from the Presbyteries of Foothills, Huntingdon, Northumberland, and Santa Fe.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-05

Comment on Item 03-05—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 03-05, on amending the annual statistical report to include a new category “partners in ministry.”

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly, including its responsibilities for the Sessions’ Annual Report of Church Statistics. COGA is concerned that this item will create confusion for clerks of session in identifying those that fall into the definition of “Partners in Ministry,” and thereby add to their administrative burden. The committee recognizes that some individuals may be unwilling to enter into active membership in a congregation, but fulfill some or all of the criteria listed. It is grateful for those individuals, but unclear that adding reporting regarding these individuals (and not individuals who meet some but not all of these criteria, or meet different criteria) fulfills the purposes of statistical reporting by sessions. Tasking clerks of session with the duty to determine whether these criteria are met has the potential to add to the burden of these faithful volunteers.

Item 03-06

[The assembly approved Item 03-06. See pp. 12, 28, 29.]

On Adding New Standing Rule B.5.b., Assembly Committee Moderators—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) amend the Standing Rules by adding a new Standing Rule B.5.b. and re-lettering the current b–f as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Assembly Committee Moderators

“b. When the moderator of an assembly committee is not a commissioner to the current assembly (Standing Rules C.1.c), they shall have voice in committee and voice in plenary on business from their committee.”

“Ecumenical Representative

~~“b. c.~~ *Ecumenical representatives ... [Text remains unchanged.]*

“Resource Persons

~~“e. d.~~ *The assembly may welcome ... [Text remains unchanged.]*

“Presbytery Staff

~~“d. e.~~ *The presbytery’s executive staff ... [Text remains unchanged.]*

“Ecumenical Visitors

~~“e. f.~~ *Ecumenical visitors are individuals ... [Text remains unchanged.]*

“Interfaith Representatives

~~“f. g.~~ *Interfaith representatives ... [Text remains unchanged.]”*

Rationale

This clarifies the role of committee moderators who are not currently commissioners, but have been appointed by the General Assembly Moderator from previous assemblies as allowed in Standing Rule C.1.c.

Item 03-07

[The assembly approved Item 03-07. See pp. 12, 28, 29.]

Amendment to Standing Rule B.3.a., Presbyterian Women—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) amend Standing Rule B.3.a. to add the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.), Inc., to the list of corresponding members to the General Assembly, beginning at the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The amended Standing Rule B.3.a. would read as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as *italic*.]

“a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the PMA Executive Committee and staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and of the divisions and related entities designated by the council; all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); *the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., or her designee*; and the presidents (or their designee) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.”

Rationale

Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW), is a critical part of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission and ministry. The purpose of the organization commits PW members to “build an inclusive, caring community of women that *strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.” PW is in partnership with the six agencies of the PC(USA); however, corresponding member status with the General Assembly will solidify and strengthen the relationship between the larger PC(USA) and PW.

- Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., (PW) is the women’s organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)). There have been women’s organizations in the Presbyterian church for more than 200 years.
- PW’s resources—human, financial, and programmatic—support the mission of the PC(USA) and the worldwide church.
- PW is a tax-exempt national women’s organization related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as an integrated auxiliary.
- PW’s bylaws and articles of incorporation link the organization directly to the PC(USA) Constitution.
- Since 1996, the national Moderator is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with voice and vote. A member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is appointed by the board to serve on PW, Inc.’s board, with voice and vote.
- In 2001, Presbyterian Women entered into a covenant relationship with the General Assembly Council, now known as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. This covenant, now an institutional relationship agreement, was renewed most recently in 2014.
- PW corresponds to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries.
- PW is in programmatic partnership with PMA ministry areas and committees, including the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; World Mission; Compassion, Peace and Justice; and Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries.
- PW, Inc., has an extensive service agreement and works in partnership with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its ministry areas and programs; is a member of the Board of Pensions; works in partnership with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and holds funds there; and works in partnership with the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

History

With reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1983, the corresponding women’s organizations, Women of the Church (WOC) and United Presbyterian Women (UPW), began work on a united organization. Presbyterian Women came into being in 1988. The 198th General Assembly (1986) received the Presbyterian Women Purpose and Principles of Organization. General Assembly action affirmed the design and bylaws of the organization.

Presbyterian Women has worked in partnership with the PC(USA) since 1988. Presbyterian women serve throughout the church. They pray, study, teach, preach, build relationships, and mentor. Presbyterian Women continues to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through its ministry and mission. Through human and financial resources; Bible study, publications, and media; PC(USA) networks and gatherings at all levels of the church and ecumenical partnerships; mission support and grant programs (Thank and Birthday offerings); leadership training and advocacy for women and children in church and society; and denominational policy support and interpretation, Presbyterian Women remains a strong, faithful, and dependable partner, integral to the PC(USA).

Item 03-08

[The assembly approved Item 03-08. See pp. 28, 29.]

Election of Associate Stated Clerk—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, with the concurrence of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) elect Teaching Elder Beth Hessel to a first, four-year term as Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Rationale

The Standing Rules of the General Assembly at H.2.d. states the following:

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.

This person gives exemplary service as executive director of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is in good standing as a teaching elder, and is a faithful Christian leader who serves the church with “energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.” The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly enthusiastically nominates this person for election as Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Item 03-09

[The assembly approved Item 03-09. See pp. 12, 28, 29.]

Site Selection for the 225th General Assembly (2022)—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) accept the invitation of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley to hold the 225th General Assembly (2022) in Columbus, Ohio, June 25–July 2, 2022.

Rationale

Standing Rule I.1.d specifies that the place of meeting for the General Assembly rotate among four areas. The rotation pattern calls for the 225th General Assembly (2022) to be in Area C, which includes the Synods of Living Waters, Lincoln Trails, and Covenant.

Some of the cities in this area that have the facilities to potentially host the assembly were eliminated quickly because of cost (Nashville), how recently they had hosted an assembly (Detroit), unavailability of suitable dates (Louisville), or challenging logistics. Alabama is one of the two states with “Arizona-like” legislation on immigration, so the action of the 219th General Assembly (2010) prevented consideration of Birmingham (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, pp. 39, 40, 43, 879ff).

Office of the General Assembly staff considered proposals from Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Indianapolis, and conducted site visits in most of those cities. To determine the relative cost to per diem for meeting in each city, staff calculated anticipated expenses including:

- Estimated travel costs for commissioners, advisory delegates, Office of the General Assembly (OGA) staff and volunteers, as researched by the PC(USA) travel agency.
- Hotel costs for commissioners, advisory delegates, OGA staff and volunteers, based on the proposed 2022 rates for the hotels likely to be in the assembly block.
- Convention center rent, equipment, and utility costs
- Estimated group meal costs for commissioners and advisory delegates, and other food and beverage service.

We calculated the total cost of these items for each city, allowing us to compare the approximate relative cost of meeting in each. It is important to note that this is not a total budget for the assembly, but a tool to determine which cities are more or less expensive in the areas that are paid by General Assembly per capita.

Comparisons of Cities

Chicago (June 2–9) was ruled out before a site visit due to costs. Though airfares were the lowest, high hotel rates (\$214 average) and convention center expenses made it the most expensive option. Another consideration is that the proposed pack-

age included meeting space at the McCormick Center and rooms in nearby hotels, which are some distance from the real heart of the city.

Cleveland (June 11–18) last hosted the assembly in 1960. Its new convention center made it possible to consider Cleveland, but the facilities would not be ideal for either plenary sessions or committees. The weighted average hotel rate is \$192 (second only to Chicago), and the hotel package would be somewhat spread out. Though we thoroughly enjoyed our visit and feel that the city has much to offer, it would present some challenges as a General Assembly (GA) location.

Cincinnati (June 25–July 2) last hosted the assembly in 1995. The convention center would accommodate the plenary sessions and up to eleven assembly committees; others would be at a nearby hotel. There are an adequate number of hotel rooms in five hotels near the convention center, with a weighted average hotel rate of \$176. Along with the proposed convention center rent and equipment costs, and higher anticipated airport transportation costs, it would be the most expensive of the three finalists. Total costs: \$1,221,495.

Indianapolis last hosted the assembly in 1985. Its expanded convention center is well-suited for events; plenary/worship, the exhibit hall, all the committees, and other key operations could be accommodated in one half of the building. The convention bureau would cover the convention center rental costs. Two sets of dates were offered: June 25–July 2, or July 2–9, with significantly lower costs for the later dates. For the week that includes the July 4 holiday, the cluster of Marriott-related hotels offered rates averaging \$154. Indianapolis offers very suitable facilities for the assembly and very good rates, but concerns include that we would be likely to share the building with another group, and potential risk in committing to just one hotel chain for ALL rooms. Total costs: \$1,140,999 for July 2–9 dates

Columbus (June 25–July 2) last hosted the assembly in 2002 and it was a very good location for the meeting then. Since then the convention center has expanded and it is currently undergoing a major renovation. The size and layout of the convention center facilities are very well-suited to the assembly operation, and the convention bureau is covering the convention center rent. Another hotel has been built across the street from the convention center, so there are an adequate number of rooms within walking distance of the convention center. The convention center and hotels are across the street from the North Market and at the edge of the popular Short North area, so there are numerous restaurants and other outlets nearby. The available dates are June 25–July 2, with a weighted average hotel rate of \$156; however, we are exempt from more of the state taxes in Ohio, which makes the final hotel costs paid by per capita lower than that of Indianapolis. Vendors with experience working in Columbus and Indianapolis advise us that labor costs would be lower in Columbus. In addition to being the most cost-effective city among those considered (especially for dates that do not mean meeting over July 4), it offers excellent facilities and amenities. Total costs: \$1,108,750.

Item 03-10

The General Assembly Committee on Representation recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the following:

[The assembly approved Item 03-10, Recommendation 1. See pp. 28, 29.]

- 1. Approve the following benchmarks for the Office of the General Assembly:**
 - a. a general benchmark of 50 percent women and 40 percent persons from minoritized racial groups (50/40) for the employment of personnel;**
 - b. a targeted benchmark for exempt employees of 50 percent women and 33 percent persons from minoritized racial groups (50/33); and**
 - c. retain the benchmark of 10 percent for diverse suppliers (10).**

Rationale for Recommendation 1.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) received the employment (Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, AA/EEO) and supplier diversity (SD, formerly minority vendor) reports from the Office of General Assembly, on time and as required by General Assembly action.

The analysis showed the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to exceed the current employment benchmarks for women (69 percent achieved, compared to the 40 percent benchmark) and minoritized racial group members (22 percent achieved, compared to the 20 percent benchmark). From a review of past practices and performance, the committee, in consultation with staff, determined that an upward adjustment of the benchmark should be considered. In examining the data, we noticed a slight difference in exempt and nonexempt levels of employment.

In reviewing three years of OGA employment data, it was noted a greater percentage of achievement of the benchmark is accomplished through employment of lower levels of the organization. The majority of employees are exempt (32 to the 22 who are nonexempt). Of sixteen women employed in nonexempt positions, eight are from minoritized racial groups. Of the six men in that same category, three are from minoritized racial groups. While exempt employees show a different pattern: of eleven men (one part-time), only one man is from a minoritized racial group; and of the twenty-one women, five persons (one part-time) are from minoritized racial groups.

GACOR suggests setting a goal for general employment of 50 percent women and 40 percent persons from minoritized racial groups. To address the level of employment and the resulting shift toward less diverse workforce, the GACOR recommends an additional goal for exempt employment of 50 percent women and 33 percent persons from minoritized racial groups.

The OGA provided materials describing the grading of employment levels. The distinction between nonexempt and exempt provides a useful division of the workforce for responsibilities and management functions. While it does include some lower-level employees, it includes all senior levels of leadership and helps focus efforts of recruitment and retention on those senior leadership positions.

The recommended benchmark for exempt staffing is set to guard against a dependency on nonexempt positions to make the goals. Setting the specialized benchmark challenges the agency to continue seeking diversity at the exempt level.

In practical terms, the higher benchmark challenges the agency to increase the diversity of staff at the exempt level. With the new 33 percent benchmark and holding at the current employment level, the agency is asked to gain four to 5 exempt positions held by persons from minoritized racial groups in the six years between reviews. Current staff of OGA was hired near equally from the local area, outside the state, and from other agencies and PC(USA) entities. An analysis of the workforce was done by examining Bureau of Labor Statistics for Louisville and Philadelphia, ministers in the PC(USA), candidates and inquirers in the PC(USA), national staff profile of a denomination in full communion with PC(USA), and other agency workforces. Conclusions were that the pools demonstrate adequate levels of personnel to equip OGA to reach the new benchmarks.

In contrast, the 2014 report for supplier diversity only reported a 2.02 percent achievement against a 10 percent goal. As the benchmark was achieved once in the last three years (2013), the GACOR suggests this benchmark remain in place at 10 percent for now. They expect with the standard definition of supplier diversity presented, and newer means to collect supplier data, that this benchmark will show improvement for the next round of review.

[The assembly approved Item 03-10, Recommendation 2 with comment. See pp. 28, 29.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) encourages the General Assembly Committee on Representation to continue to work closely with the Presbyterian Mission Agency to meet the benchmarks as stated throughout the six-year review period.]

2. Approve the following benchmarks for the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

- a. a general benchmark of 50 percent women and 40 percent persons from minoritized racial groups (50/40) for the employment of personnel;**
- b. a targeted benchmark for exempt employees of 50 percent women and 33 percent persons from minoritized racial groups (50/33); and**
- c. retain the benchmark of 10 percent for diverse suppliers (10).**

Rationale for Recommendation 2.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) received the employment (Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, AA/EEO) and supplier diversity (SD, formerly minority vendor) reports from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). The reports were received on time and as required by General Assembly action.

The analysis showed PMA to exceed the employment benchmarks for women (67 percent achieved, compared to the 40 percent benchmark) and minoritized racial group members (27 percent achieved, compared to the 20 percent benchmark). From a review of past practices and performance, the committee determined that an adjustment up of the benchmark should be considered. Due to PMA staff transitions and GACOR not being included in agency review committee schedule coordination, there was less consultation than was desired.

In reviewing three years of PMA employment data, it was noted that most of the achievement of the benchmark is accomplished through employment of lower levels of the organization. Upon follow-up requests, PMA did submit a report showing distinctions between exempt and nonexempt employees.

PMA has significantly less men employed in nonexempt positions than females (18, or 17 percent men to 76, or 34 percent women) and proportionally there are significantly less women employed in exempt positions than males (146, or 66 percent women to 89, or 83 percent men). Additionally:

- The most common pay range is \$35,001–45,000, which includes 75 percent of the nonexempt male employees and 89 percent of the nonexempt female employees.
- Seven percent of the exempt male employees earn \$95,001 or above while 5 percent of the exempt female employees are in the same pay range.

White employees make up 73 percent of the workforce, 47 percent are white women and white men are 26 percent, while men and women from all minoritized racial groups combined make up only 27 percent of the total workforce. Of this 27 percent, there is little diversity as employees reporting an African American/Black identity make up more than half. Racial ethnic women are 18 percent of the total workforce while men of color are 9 percent. The benchmark of 40 percent of women in the workforce is exceeded by PMA and the workforce exceeds the 20 percent employees from minoritized racial groups benchmark established so long ago.

GACOR recommends setting a new benchmark that will challenge the agency to retain an inclusive workforce even as it may reduce its workforce. GACOR suggests a goal for general employment of 50 percent women, and 40 percent persons from minoritized racial groups. To address the exempt level of employment and the resulting shift toward less diverse workforce, the GACOR recommends an additional targeted goal for exempt employment of 50 percent women and 33 percent persons from minoritized racial groups.

The PMA and OGA workforces share many characteristics that would recommend a similar approach to setting new benchmarks.

The PMA is asked to gain 13 percent employees from minoritized racial groups in the general workforce and 33 percent in its exempt workforce, to be reviewed again in six years.

The benchmark for exempt staffing is set to guard against a dependency on nonexempt positions to make the goals. Setting the specialized benchmark challenges the agency to continue seeking diversity at the exempt level and to reflect inclusivity at all levels.

GACOR recognizes there are ways the reports can be improved. In the employment data report, it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell if there are persons classified in multiple categories. The disability employment data are not available because of privacy laws and PMA has not added practices to allow for self-identification that they are reporting. While the GACOR understands this limitation, the disability information would be useful to evaluate compliance with AAEEEO requirements and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In contrast to the employment data, the 2014 report for supplier diversity reported a 6.11 percent achievement against a 10 percent goal. In 2013, the agency reported reaching 5.13 percent of its suppliers being diverse. As the benchmark has not been achieved in the last three years, the GACOR suggests this benchmark remain in place at 10 percent for now. It is expected with the standard definition of supplier diversity presented to this assembly, and newer means to collect supplier data, that this benchmark will show improvement for the next round of review of PMA.

The assembly's action regarding the definition of supplier diversity for the agencies of the PC(USA) (another item of business before the 222nd General Assembly (2016)) will be essential in determining what a diverse supplier is for reporting and records keeping.

Overall Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2012 Referral: Item 11-17. Privilege, Power and Polity: The Church as an Employer. Recommendation 2.a.–b. Recommend New Churchwide Goals—From the 220th General Assembly (2012) (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp. 45, 1103-05 of the CD; pp. 33, 250–251, 1091–93 of the print copy).*

The 220th General Assembly (2012) approved the report, *Privilege, Power and Polity: The Church as an Employer* and in it directed the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) to review all six agencies as to their employment and supplier diversity, measure achievements against the benchmarks established by General Assembly action, and recommend adjusted benchmarks when deemed appropriate. In a response to referral, the 221st General Assembly (2014) set a schedule for those reviews and established a pattern of continuing review on a six-year cycle. The report expressed the hope that each agency would be reviewed independently and the benchmarks tailored to their specific realities. This action reflects the GACOR's efforts to do that work.

The current benchmark of 40/20/10 (40 percent women, 20 percent racial ethnic persons, 10 percent minority vendors) was established before reunion and was reflected in the 195th General Assembly (1983) by its action on the report, *Focus Us*

and Make Us Whole: A Ten-Year Comprehensive Review of Equal Employment Opportunity within the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Minutes, 1983, Part I, pp 259–97).

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 03-10.

The ACWC advocates the support of the recommended benchmarks for the Office of General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) as it is noted that the current benchmark of 40 percent women/20 percent racial ethnic persons/10 percent minority vendors was established before reunion and reflected in the 195th General Assembly (1983). The current recommended benchmarks are being made by the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) following their review of three years of OGA’s employment data that revealed a need to guard against a dependency on nonexempt positions to achieve the benchmark goals, and further, that setting the specialized benchmarks challenges the OGA to continue seeking diversity at the level of exempt employees.

For the PMA, GACOR reviewed three years of their employment data, as well, and discovered that the PMA employs significantly fewer men than women in nonexempt positions, and further that significantly less women are employed in exempt positions. The GACOR’s recommended benchmarks will challenge the PMA to retain an inclusive workforce even as it may reduce its workforce, which the ACWC fully supports as we guardedly attend to equality in the workforce and justice for every person. Such equality and justice stems from our Reformed interpretation of scripture whereby each human being is made in the image of God (Imago Dei; Gen. 1:27); Jesus mandated our sensitivity to the least of these first and foremost (Mt. 25:36; Jn. 21:17); and such equity and justice should be modeled by our own denominational headquarter office for others to observe and follow suit.

For both the OGA and the PMA, the recommendation for diverse suppliers remains at 10 percent with the rationale being that this benchmark was achieved once in the last three years (2013), and with newer means to collect supplier data the expectation is for this benchmark to show further improvement in the next review cycle.

Thus, the ACWC strongly encourages the approval of Item 03-10.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-10

Comment on Item 03-10—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) gave the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) the responsibility for reviewing affirmative action goals (with respect to employment and purchasing) for its agencies. The General Assembly was clear that this review and ultimate recommendation to the General Assembly for approval would be done in consultation with the agencies, and based on data from the labor market for the agencies:

The 220th General Assembly (2012) directs GACOR to review and recommend revision to the affirmative action goals for employment and purchasing (Supplier Diversity Program) to the General Assembly on a regular and recurring basis, in accordance with their responsibilities in the Churchwide Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) and the *Book of Order*, G-3.0103.

a. The GACOR shall take into consideration federal Department of Labor statistics on race, ethnicity, and gender in the labor market; race, ethnicity, and gender representation in church membership; and other factors, as appropriate.

b. The GACOR, in consultation with the six General Assembly-related agencies (Board of Pensions, General Assembly Mission Council, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) and the General Assembly advocacy committees, ACREC and ACWC, shall recommend new churchwide goals to the General Assembly in a six-year cycle, beginning in 2014.

c. The agencies of the General Assembly, including the Board of Pensions (BOP), General Assembly Mission Council (GAMC), Office of General Assembly (OGA), Presbyterian Foundation (Foundation), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) shall be held accountable for implementing both affirmative action employment and supplier diversity purchasing goals... (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p 34.)

Since the agencies are to be held accountable for implementing both goals, it is very important that the goals be developed in consultation with the agencies involved and that the revised goals be attainable.

There has been no consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency regarding either the labor market data or these specific goal recommendations. The Presbyterian Mission Agency only became aware of the recommended goals once they were posted to PC-Biz, despite multiple efforts by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to be in dialogue with GACOR regarding this work.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency requests that the assembly refer this recommendation to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) so that the General Assembly Committee on Representation can be in dialogue with the Presbyterian Mission Agency regarding the feasibility for success in implementing a new goal that raises the expectation beyond the composition of the local job market, prior to General Assembly consideration.

Item 03-11

[The assembly disapproved Item 03-11. See pp. 12, 28, 29.]

On Amending Standing Rules B.4. and F.5.d. Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Amend Standing Rule B.4.as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“4. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

“During the General Assembly, ~~three~~ *five (5)* or more members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution [this committee] shall be present at the session of the General Assembly to advise the General Assembly and its Moderator on constitutional matters.”

2. Amend Standing Rule F.5.d. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session, questions that touch upon constitutional matters, including rulings on questions of order involving constitutional matters requested by the Moderator, shall be handled by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. These questions shall be referred in writing by the Moderator to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, ~~which shall consider each matter referred and make recommendations directly to the General Assembly through the Moderator (ACC). Action on an issue in question is to be suspended (tabled) to ensure that sufficient time is given the ACC for deliberation on each issue in question as to its timeliness; to ascertain what effect it would have on the whole church; and, to ascertain its adherence to the scriptural tenets of the denomination. Once a recommendation is rendered to the Moderator, it can then be placed before the plenary body for action. The Moderator may continue the plenary session for the conduct of other business of the assembly during this period of deliberation by the ACC.~~”

Rationale

It seems obvious that some changes need to be made in the General Assembly’s Standing Rules so that they more clearly and explicitly define the governing procedures and express the scriptural basis upon which our denomination was ordained.

Understanding that recommendations of the Advisory Committee of the Constitution (ACC), which become authoritative interpretations (AI) when passed by the General Assembly, commissioners not only carry with them the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) but also become effective immediately. Nevertheless, they should *not* be enacted in haste. The importance of such action and its effect upon the numerous individual church bodies requires much thought and prayerful deliberation in order to prevent the abuse of power by a few.

The commissioners to General Assembly must have the ability to clearly understand the implications resulting from their support of an authoritative interpretation (AI), the rationale of the issues placed before them, and the process by which an AI is both rendered and implemented. The existing procedure has a tendency to be self-serving and does not provide for transparency. The ability of the permanent judiciary committee to issue a stay of enforcement of an enacted AI is essential to protecting the integrity and the credibility of the Presbyterian denomination.

The current rules for amending the *Book of Order* by a simple majority vote of one General Assembly and a simple majority of the presbyteries has fostered the instability of the church’s Constitution. The result of this condition has led to both the loss of support for the work we are commissioned to achieve and a decline in the denomination’s membership.

Concurrence to Item 03-11 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 03-11

Advice on Item 03-11—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

While the ACC has no mandate to consider changes to the Standing Rules, because the proposed changes directly affect the ACC, it is deemed appropriate to provide limited communication on these matters (Standing Rule A.7a(1)).

1. Standing Rule B.4. would be amended to provide for the presence of five, instead of three, members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) during plenary sessions of the General Assembly. Although the ACC discerns no compelling reason for this amendment, should commissioners decide this number is appropriate, the ACC finds no constitutional bar to this action.

2. Standing Rule F.5. would be amended to require “suspension” of General Assembly action on any issue referred to the ACC while the ACC considers the matter and presents its advice to the General Assembly Moderator. The term suspension is inaccurate. If the assembly desires to enact this change, the appropriate term is to “postpone” the issue under consideration. Should commissioners decide this postponement is appropriate, the ACC finds no constitutional bar to this action.

Standing Rule F.5. would be further amended to require the ACC to consider the item’s “[a] *timeliness*, [b] *to ascertain what effect an issue would have on the whole church*; and [c] *its adherence to the scriptural tenets*. The ACC examines amendments for consistency with other provisions of the Constitution. Providing interpretation of scripture or identifying scriptural tenets is beyond the ACC’s scope of authority (G-6.04).

If the assembly decides it is necessary to provide instructions to the ACC during its consideration of an issue, it is the advice of the ACC to omit the proposed instructions and use the constitutional language “examine the issue for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution” (G-6.04b). Anything beyond this is properly determined through the collective discernment of the assembly.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 03-11

Comment on Item 03-11—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully advises the assembly to disapprove Item 03-11, on amending Standing Rules B.4. and F.5. concerning the role of the ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It also regularly reviews the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

COGA finds that each of the recommendations could potentially hinder the work of the General Assembly.

With respect to the first recommendation contained in this item, currently three members of the ACC are required to be present when the assembly is in session. In practice, most, if not all, the members of the ACC are present when the assembly in plenary is considering business of a constitutional nature. To increase the number of ACC members who are required to be present when the assembly is in session limits the flexibility of the ACC and the assembly, and could prove poor financial stewardship by requiring that a larger number of ACC member be present when no business of a constitutional nature is being considered by the assembly.

COGA is concerned that the second recommendation in this item would unnecessarily interfere with the completion of business during an assembly. The ACC has generally been very effective in answering constitutional questions while debate continues during meetings of the assembly. Many such questions are routine or simply seek amplification of previous written comments of the ACC. If time for deliberation is required, the ACC is capable of requesting a recess of the meeting or delay in consideration of that item of business. Therefore, COGA does not believe Recommendation 2 would serve the assembly well. (COGA notes, however, that to bring the Standing Rule in accord with normal practice at the assembly, a change to the Standing Rules removing the requirement that request for advice from the ACC be made in writing, as opposed to verbally, by the Moderator would be appropriate.)

Item 03-12

[The assembly approved Item 03-12. See pp. 12, 28, 29.]

The General Assembly Committee on Representation recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the document, “A Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity,” as found in Appendix A below.

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referral: 2014 Referral: 09-19, Recommendation 1.a.–b. Direct the GACOR to Convene a Table with Leaders, Designated by the Six Agencies for the Purpose of Developing a Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity for the PC(USA), and Any Related Terms or Criteria Necessary; Revise Any Appropriate Manuals and Guidelines; Report Back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 735–37)

The 221st General Assembly (2014) referred Item 09-19 to the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) and directed them to involve all six agencies in the development of a standard definition of supplier diversity. The definition is intended to be helpful to agencies in determining what spends are to be tracked and how to determine if a supplier qualifies as a diverse supplier.

The table included two representatives each from the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), one representative each from Board of Pensions (BOP), the Foundation (FDN), and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., (PILP), and three members of GACOR. The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation declined a seat at the table citing a small staff and limited application to their agency, confirming they will abide by the definition approved by the assembly.

Each agency reports to GACOR annually regarding their use of diverse suppliers and the relative spend to total spend. The reporting was imprecise and, in consultations, there were confusions among agencies and the committee as to what was being asked. Item 09-19 resulted from that process and is intended to provide clarity.

The attached document was a result of more than a year of consultations among the designated representatives of the agencies and members of the GACOR. The definition had wide consultation and participation. Adjustments to the descriptions of supplier categories were made with consultation. Consulting partners were Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), and racial ethnic caucuses and councils of the PC(USA). Significant attention was paid to providing guidance for diverse supplier group identification while also reflecting the particular context of the PC(USA) and its practices. All racial group designations are imperfect and contested. The ones that appear in this definition were considered carefully.

Appendix A

Standard Definition for Supplier Diversity

Diverse Supplier

A diverse supplier is a for-profit enterprise located in the United States or its trust territories, which is owned, operated, and controlled by women, persons with disabilities, or minoritized racial group members guided by definitions in this document and in materials from the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), Women's Business Enterprise Council (WBEC), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Ownership by diverse supplier group members means the business is at least 50 percent owned by such members or, in the case of a publicly owned business, at least 50 percent of the stock is owned by one or more such members. The management and daily operations are controlled by those members of underrepresented groups.

Diverse Supplier Groups

For the purposes of identification of diverse supplier groups, the following categories of difference are included¹ in this definition:

Black/African American/African: Persons originating from or descended from Africa.

Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian: Persons originating or descended from Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific or the Northern Marianas; Tibet, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India.

Hispanic/Latino-a: Persons originating or descended from any races, cultures, and nationalities from Latin American countries (Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean) that were once under either Spanish or Roman rule, and who speak Spanish (the dominant language), Portuguese, or other indigenous languages. The term Hispanic also includes Iberians and other Spanish-language speakers.

Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous: Persons descended from American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, and regarded as such by the community of which the person claims to be a part.

Middle Eastern/North African: Persons originating from or having ancestry from these countries: Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Armenia, Kurdistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Multiracial: Persons descended from two or more minoritized racial groups listed.²

Women-Owned Business: A business that is owned, operated, and controlled by a woman or women.

Persons with Disabilities: Persons who qualify are described in the Americans with Disabilities Act, section 12102.

Supplier Categories

In accounting systems, a supplier or vendor is any individual, business, or organization that receives payment. All suppliers/vendors in the accounting system will not be included in the supplier diversity report based on the definition of a supplier. This definition will guide the agencies in determining what counts in the total amounts reported.

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

There are suppliers in the PC(USA) accounting system that meet the diverse supplier group criteria but the type of payment made is not a purchase but a reimbursement, grant, transfer of funds, etc. It would be too labor intensive to review each transaction to determine the type of payment for all records. As these suppliers are repeated, their records will be reviewed and updated. Building better practices going forward, these contracts will capture supplier diversity information.

The following supplier categories³ are included:

- Travel
- Meetings/Conferences
- Printing
- Office Supplies
- Technology
- Building Services
- Relocation Moving and Storage
- Accounting Services
- Insurance
- Legal Services
- Independent Contractors

Payments to independent contractors could be for services rendered or reimbursement for expenses. As the database is updated to reflect those contractors who fit within the definition of diverse supplier, these contracts will be included in the reporting process.

The following supplier categories are excluded:

- Financial Institutions
A significant number of transactions with financial institutions are wire transfers or other movement of funds, not actual payments to the bank for services. To determine which transactions are for service provided requires reviewing individual transactions to determine type of payments.
- Schools/Universities
- Government Agencies
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Professional Associations
- Utilities

Payment Threshold⁴

The minimum payment threshold will be \$500 per year, per supplier.

All criteria in this definition must be met to consider a record as included in the reporting of an agency's supplier diversity.

Rationale/Background

When the 220th General Assembly approved the report, "Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer," in 2012, it shifted language and asked for modernized approaches to AAEEEO and supplier diversity (formerly called minority vendors). In living into the referrals from that action and following assembly actions, it became clear that there were differing operative definitions informing the agencies' reporting of diverse suppliers. Those differences made receiving useful data all but impossible. The 221st General Assembly (2014) directed that the agencies work with the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) to establish a standard definition for the PC(USA). This was one step in the process of simplifying procedures and practices of accountability.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an employer and contracting entity. Employers in the United States commonly rely on the NMSDC and its standards for identifying certified diverse suppliers. They provide the standard and maintain databases, both national and regional for suppliers. The NMSDC-MBE uses four federal categories for persons from minoritized racial groups. This definition follows that practice and uses the NMSDC as the frame. Likewise the WBEC also provides a certification process for women-owned businesses, and manages a member database to refer to suppliers who have completed it. The agency representatives advocated for these sources to provide the framing for the standard definition as it provides resources in member databases for finding certified suppliers.

Adjustments to the racial descriptions of diverse supplier groups were made to reflect the use of these designations in the church and its practices. The PC(USA) determined that Middle Eastern is a category of difference in our life together that has meaning and protection. PC(USA) recognizes the Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus, designates program staff for congregational support, and tracks the social identity in its internal statistics. With regard to employment, there are added complications. Middle Eastern is not recognized as a separate identity under Title 7 of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (and its subsequent revisions), nor in the EEOC1, a form used by employers to report equal employment opportunity. There is no known external certifying body at this time that tracks Middle Eastern ownership for suppliers.

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

This adds difficulty in externally authenticating diverse suppliers in this regard. For now, reliance will be on voluntary self-identifications shared. Because this definition serves the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies, it is added here.

It has been almost three decades since a Minority Vendor Policy was adopted (1987) by the PC(USA). The PMA is bringing a revision to that document to this assembly that limits its scope to PMA. The GACOR is disappointed that they were not adequately included in that revision and consider its revision before the approval of the definition to be premature. Mindful of assembly action, all agencies will need to develop their own supplier diversity policies going forward.

Recognizing that massive social changes have taken place in the U.S.A. in those four decades, the proposed Supplier Diversity definition seeks to update past practices and be relevant with the lives and practices of all those with whom the denomination is engaged in supplier business. The church and its agencies will review and revise policies to reflect updated practices. The GACOR is a mandated and eager partner in this work.

Endnotes

1. Sources used to determine the definition of the following groups are varied. The bulk was taken from NMSDC-MBE (National Minority Supplier Development Council uses an ownership threshold of 51 percent for Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification) policy and suggested guidelines for preparing their activity report. Regional NMSDC affiliates maintain databases on suppliers and help companies locate local suppliers. As their brochure states,

The NMSDC affiliate council nearest a company's headquarters conducts the annual certification process to assure that the business is at least 51 percent owned, operated and controlled by minorities: Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American. Our standardized procedures assure consistent, identical review for the certification of each MBE. Wherever your business interests, NMSDC certification guarantees national recognition. Certified MBEs are listed in the NMSDC national database, which is accessible to corporate members 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The PC(USA) maintains corporate membership for access to this database. The PC(USA) has identified a wider range of particular racialized identities as protected in our practice (categories tracked in participation, organized in caucuses, supported in programs for congregational support) and that is reflected in this accounting. The definition of women-owned business is sourced from the Women's Business Enterprise Council (WBEC uses an ownership threshold of 51 percent) and the definition of persons with disabilities is sourced from the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2. The PC(USA) uses this category to recognize multiple racial identities of persons. This category is not included in the NMSDC policy, therefore authentication may rely on voluntary self-identification. Agencies should provide a way that suppliers can self-identify these categories for their claimed majority ownership. Coordinating those means and consulting with GACOR is desired.
3. Regarding independent contractors: Agencies do not anticipate that recording this category will have substantial impact on overall percentages reported.
4. Significant preparation time is required in capturing and analyzing the data needed to provide supplier diversity reports. To maintain a manageable process, the minimum payment per supplier is used in determining which suppliers are counted and contribute to calculating the percentages of diverse supplier expenditures.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 03-12 with comments.

When ACREC was asked to weigh in on/consulted regarding the Supplier Diversity Definition, issue was taken with the proposed language “Minoritized Racial Group” as opposed to “Minority Vendor” or “Racial Ethnic Vendor”—language unquestionably more familiar to the people to whom this odd nomenclature is applied. Additionally, questions were raised with GACOR representatives regarding the percentage of racial ethnic employees (as opposed to simply the owners) of businesses seeking to profit from doing business with the agencies and entities of the PC(USA). Finally, inquiries as to whether or not there exists an accurate accounting (data) of dollars spent (“spends”) with racial ethnic vendors/minority vendors in relationship to the total dollars spent by the PC(USA) agencies and other entities for which data could or should be readily available. The ACREC believes these are fair and extremely important issues to raise that have not been satisfactorily addressed.

There was no specific information given explaining the origin of the language decided upon to describe those suppliers formerly known as Minority Vendors. Though the racial ethnic caucuses were consulted regarding language around their particular constituents' racial categorization, ACREC has five members who represent their particular racial ethnic caucuses with no knowledge of any consultation with GACOR regarding the renaming of “Minority Vendor.” Further, no reason has been given for not having disaggregated data for dollars spent with minority vendors or the racial ethnic percentage of employees in any given for-profit vendor doing business with the PC(USA) agencies and other entities, except offering that those are daunting tasks requiring additional human resources. ACREC recognizes the challenges GACOR has faced in acquiring and organizing such data and would advise that the agencies be required to offer this particular disaggregated data to GACOR, even if it takes some time to implement a system that will make this process less cumbersome for the agencies.

The ACREC recommends approval of this item, but with the above reservations and the hope that some work can be done to incorporate language that will address our particular concerns.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 03-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 03-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 03-12.

We appreciate the level of collaboration and consultation that went into this definition. By being intentional with this process, our church has reaffirmed the importance of such policies and their impact on our communities.

Item 03-13

[The assembly approved Item 03-13 with amendment. See p. 72.]

Joint COGA/PMA Budget Proposals for General Assembly Per Capita Budgets 2016–2018

1. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMA) recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) incorporate into the *Minutes* the Comparative Balance Sheet for 2015 and 2014, along with the 2015 Actual Performance in the Per Capita Statement of Activities.

[See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment A—Comparative Balance Sheet and Attachment B—Per Capita Statement of Activities.]

2. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMA) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

a. Approve the Revised 2016 General Assembly Per Capita Expense Budget totaling [~~\$12,434,777~~] [\$12,430,897 including \$13,120 in new Financial Implications approved by this General Assembly];

b. Approve the total Expenditure Budget for 2017 totaling [~~\$12,747,185~~] [\$12,892,388, including \$262,203 in new financial implications] and for 2018 totaling [~~\$12,735,784~~] [\$12,992,367, including \$270,583 in new financial implications].

c. Approve a per capita apportionment rate of [~~\$7.33~~] [\$7.50] per active member for 2017 [including 17 cents for new financial implications], and a rate of [~~\$7.55~~] [\$7.73] to be effective for 2018 [including 18 cents for new financial implications].

3. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMA) recommend that the 22nd General Assembly (2016) approve that an amount of \$1,365,540 be designated from the 2017 per capita budget (about half the cost of the General Assembly meeting), and be reserved for use in the year of the General Assembly meeting (2018).

[See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment B—Per Capita Statement of Activities, Budget Proposals 2014–2015 and see also Attachment B1—Per Capita Statement of Cash Flow 2012–2016.]

4. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMA) recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the attached allocation of designated funds for OGA, and PMA task forces, totaling \$1,830,588 for 2017[5] [and] \$2,071,838 for 2018.

[See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment C.]

Rationale

BUDGET PERFORMANCE 2015

Revenue

The OGA had an approved funding source budget of \$12,583,937. The actual funding was \$12,072,159. This \$511,778 negative variance is due to (1) per capita under budget by \$176,000 (1.4 percent), (2) investment income under budget by \$144,000, and (3) unrealized losses, not budgeted, on an investment of \$189,000. Overall funding has declined 4.1 percent from the expected budget.

Expenses

The OGA’s expense budget was \$12,851,570 and actual was \$11,897,168. This provides a positive variance of \$954,402 or 7.4 percent less than allowed by the approved budget. The OGA continues to exercise fiscal restraint in use of funds to

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

provide its mandated services. It is a responsibility taken very seriously at all levels of the OGA. This is a trend of positive performance that stretched over many years. Expenses were under budget in all ministry areas as well as in the PMA allocation. (NOTE: The PMA expenses were verified with PMA fiscal leadership as accurate. It is possible that yearend adjustment could impact this estimate). The one cost that will exceed budget is the estimate for uncollectable per capita apportionment. The 2015 budget was \$1,000,000. The actual needed to properly set the yearend receivable reserve is \$1,200,000.

Net to Reserve

The OGA had a budget loss of \$267,633 before any use of reserves. The year 2015 is expected to provide a net surplus of \$181,294 or a positive budget variance of \$448,927. The slight surplus accrues to reserves.

OGA BUDGET REQUEST REVISED 2016 AND PROPOSED 2017 AND 2018

Assumptions

2016 Revised Budget

The 2016 revised budget was approved by the General Assembly. The OGA is requesting the following budget modifications:

- Reduce OGA 2016 budgeted non-salary expenses as agreed to by OGA Leadership by \$382,550. The expense is detailed in the attached budget presentation in the account detail section.
- Reinstate the records manager position at a grade 18 that was eliminated in 2013 as a result of the OGA staffing restructure. The OGA recommends that the salary is a component of the Shared Services account as this position serves all the agencies in a unique manner.

Rationale: The lack of this position located at the OGA home office has reduced the identification and collection of records from the PC(USA) agencies located in the Louisville area. PHS and Gradye Parsons made several attempts to solicit cooperation from the agencies as part of a voluntary program. This has proved unsuccessful. The Stated Clerk and PHS believe the lack of records including important electronic records are not properly saved for future use. Further, OGA is concerned about the legal jeopardy of not having these records given the issues facing the national church and its agencies.

- All other previously approved assumptions remain the same for the 2016 Per Capita Budget

2017 Budget Assumptions

- Increase the 2016 per capita rate of \$7.12 by 3 percent to \$7.33.
- Membership would decline by 75,000 members.
- Increase staff salaries by \$1,000 each.
- Benefit increase of 1.5 percent. (NOTE: This could change downward when we understand the impact of the new Board of Pensions (BOP) benefit options proposal.)
- Continue the projected non-salary cost reductions started in 2016. This would yield approx. 3 percent in projected saving (\$312,000) in 2017.

The projected costs for OGA operations for 2017 are \$12,647,188. Projected funding is \$11,770,982. This would require the use of \$876,203 in reserves. Without the per capita increase and the expense reductions, the needed reserves would be \$1.5 million dollars.

2018 Budget Assumptions

- Increase the per capita 2017 rate from \$7.33 to \$7.55 (3 percent).
- Membership would decline by 75,000.
- Increase staff salaries by \$1,000 each.
- Benefit increase of 1.5 percent. (NOTE: This could change downward when we understand the impact of the new Board of Pensions (BOP) benefit options proposal.)
- Continue the projected non-salary cost reductions started in 2016. This would yield approximately 3 percent in projected saving (\$320,000) in 2018. The projected 2018 OGA expenses for operations are \$12,738,784. Projected funding is budgeted at \$11,551,195. This will require the use of \$1,187, 589 in reserves to break even. The reserve need without the per capita rate increase and cost savings is \$1.86 million dollars.

DISCUSSION

The OGA, like as other agencies, is faced with declining funding. In 2013, OGA reduced staffing and costs. The approved 2014 budget was \$14,328,000 in expenses. The OGA is proposing 2018 costs at \$12,738,000. The 2014 budget adjusted for inflation at 2 percent would be \$15,540,000. This compared to our proposal calculates the real dollar costs reductions that started in 2013 and will continue thru 2018 as \$2,802,000.

The OGA leaders and staff worked hard to identify areas for efficiencies. We reviewed no fewer than seven different scenarios of possible budget outcomes. We have responded to declining funding aggressively without proposing to reduce services. We also believe that more staff reductions at this time would compromise our ability to effectively serve the church as we are mandated. Therefore, we have not included any staff reduction in this proposed budget. We are requesting that the per capita rate increase modestly by 3 percent for 2017 and 2018. No single issue was debated more thoroughly. Our proposal of cost reductions, per capita rate increase, and the use of reserves, provides OGA with time to participate in the potential reorganization discussions and further discern its own delivery of services. We understand that further reductions might become necessary in the future. We strongly believe that now is not that time. Our proposed budgets ensure that OGA will meet the reserve requirement of 30 percent of annual expenses thru 2012 as you can see in the statement of cash flow. [See oga-pma-budget-charts.pdf, Attachment B1—Statement of Cash Flow.] Without the per capita rate increase and cost reductions we would fail to meet this requirement by the end of 2017.

Item 03-14

[The assembly approved Item 03-14 with comment. See pp. 25, 29–30.]

[Comment: We must be accountable as the body of Christ, for that which is done in our name. The creation and maintenance of a safe, supportive, non-abusive environment for all of our participants in all that we do must be and will be priority for all Presbyterians as we work to be God's people and do God's work. We do this out of compassion for Kris Schondelmeyer and all other victims who have suffered abuse in the Presbyterian church. We further applaud Kris and his family for their courage, which has moved us to address this imperative subject.]

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve and implement the “Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures” as the General Assembly’s child protection policy mandated in G-3.0106.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND ITS PROCEDURES

POLICY APPLICATION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and all entities of the General Assembly that all church members, church officers, nonmember employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to all General Assembly entity sponsored activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

POLICY RATIONALE

The implementation and documentation of a Child/Youth/Vulnerable Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.
- Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ’s healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.
- The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is crippled by the hurt, pain, and distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm perpetrated that woefully cripples God’s call on the Church.

- The *Book of Order* states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church’s care, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults (*Book of Order* W-2.3013).

- Children and youth are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ’s love, in the same way taking up all children and youth into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environments in which to grow in every way.

DEFINITIONS

Each state has its own statutes regarding what is defined as child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse. This policy advises all sponsoring councils and entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to consider and be familiar with state statutes pertaining to the location of each event/activity.

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this particular policy. For the purpose of this policy:

Child: A child will be defined as a person between the ages of 0–11.

Youth: A youth will be defined as a person between the ages of 12–17.

Minor: A minor is any child or youth 0–17 years-old.

Child/Youth Worker: Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at General Assembly entity sponsored events or activities involving children and/or youth.

Vulnerable Adult: Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

Vulnerable Adult Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

Child/Youth Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child or youth.

Sexual Abuse: In the *Book of Order*, sexual abuse is defined as, “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position” (*Book of Order*, D-10.0401c).

Misuse of technology: The use of technology that results in the harassing or abusing of a child/youth. This includes using technology to send suggestive message and images to a child or youth. Adults should not have any technological contact with a child or youth that is not either preapproved by the child/youth’s legal guardian with a signed waiver, or the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church website or other social media program.

PMA: Presbyterian Mission Agency.

OGA: Office of General Assembly.

Safe Child Response Team: The Safe Child Response Team is a team comprised of a minimum of three members of or appointed by the sponsoring council or entity of the General Assembly who are specifically trained to respond to allegations and reports of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse at General Assembly entity sponsored activities. These teams must be readily available to be contacted and used at all General Assembly entity sponsored events.

Sponsoring Council or Entity: Any council or entity of the General Assembly within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that is tasked with the responsibility of planning events and activities for children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

A child/youth worker, whether on a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer basis, shall be subject to:

1. The organizing council’s receipt of a completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the event policy has been read. The application should include a minimum of two references.

2. All child/youth workers must be at least eighteen-years-old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.

3. The applicant's consent to a criminal background check. The sponsoring council or entity must consult with the insurance company through which they have coverage to determine what background checks are appropriate for their particular event. The sponsoring council or entity should cover the costs of the background checks for all child/youth workers. These checks shall be run no more than six months prior to the event. (This time restraint is also at the discretion of the organizing council's insurance company's requests. Child/Youth workers who participate annually in events may only be required to have one background check per calendar year, depending on insurance company standards.)

4. All child/youth workers, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must participate in training sometime within the year prior to the event. The training is to be provided by the sponsoring council or entity and shall cover the event child/youth protection policy thoroughly as well as methods of abuse prevention and a detailed plan of reporting. The sponsoring council or entity may contract with others to provide these trainings. These trainings shall further cover:

- What constitutes child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
- How to recognize signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.
- State laws concerning definitions of abuse and reporting.
- Mandatory criminal background checks and the security of those files.
- Explanation of the importance of the application and screening processes.
- Appropriate boundaries with children and youth, especially regarding adult/child/youth ratios, transportation, and use of technology.
- If an overnight event is planned, discussions of boundaries involving appropriate sleeping arrangements and restroom/shower facilities use shall be discussed.
- The presence of a Safe Child Response Team at each event and how to contact them.
- All paid employees working directly with children or youth at any General Assembly entity sponsored events must be certified in first aid and CPR.
- Other related topics.

5. No person may serve as a child/youth worker who has a conviction on his/her record of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, *but not limited to*, any of the following:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;
- Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault;
- Injury to a youth;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a youth;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a youth;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to youth;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a youth;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a youth;
- Any crime that involves sexual misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

- Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
- Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
- Any crime that involves abduction and kidnapping;
- Any crime that involves drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated.

In addition, if a council or General Assembly entity is aware that a child/youth worker has a prior conviction for one of the aforementioned crimes or a related crime, the child/youth worker shall automatically be ineligible to attend a child/youth event in any capacity.

6. Whenever a General Assembly entity organizes an event for minors for which the agency will invite minors from other church councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the councils who selects the youth workers shall:

- a. Not send a person to act as a child/youth worker whom the council knows has violated the provisions of the *Book of Order* or policy of a local congregation or presbytery pertaining to sexual misconduct or child/youth protection.
- b. Not send a person to act as a child/youth worker for minors when that person is also scheduled to work at the event.
- c. Require councils at all levels of church life who are assisting in organizing General Assembly entity events for minors, or sending child/youth workers to these events to abide by the same screening, training, and background check standards mandated in this policy for the General Assembly and its entities.

7. Whenever a General Assembly entity organizes an event for minors that invites minors from councils who will be supervised by child/youth workers, the General Assembly entity shall:

- a. Provide guidance to the councils that are sending child/youth workers about best practices for securing child/youth workers and eligibility requirements.
- b. Provide guidance to the councils that are sending child/youth workers concerning the requirement that the council perform and pay for background checks for potential child/youth workers and how to evaluate the background check for offenses that would disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker with minors.
- c. Provide guidance to the councils on when to perform the background checks and with what background check provider.
- d. Identify someone on the organizing council of the General Assembly entity/event to be the designated recipient of background checks from councils and train that person:
 - i. To review every background check received;
 - ii. To identify criminal convictions on background checks that should disqualify a person from being a child/youth worker;
 - iii. To notify a council if the staffer believes the council has erred in selecting a child/youth worker whose background check indicates that the person should not act as a child/youth worker;
 - iv. Report to the General Assembly entity sponsor of the event of each potentially disqualifying background check and related concerns so that a formal decision can be made to inform the council that the person whose background check is in question is not eligible to attend the event as a child/youth worker.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

The sponsoring council or entity shall maintain all child/youth worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

REPORTING

Each sponsoring General Assembly entity will publicize a procedure for reporting any prohibited actions and have copies available at all times in a public place at the event. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of child abuse may report such violation to any leader of the General Assembly entity sponsored event. Any child or youth who suspects or has knowledge of any type of minor abuse is invited to share the knowledge with any adult leader of the General Assembly entity sponsored event. Anyone who has knowledge or suspicion of child/youth abuse should be made aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities. Any adult leader should re-

port such violation to any Stated Clerk or Associate or Assistant Stated Clerk of the General Assembly or any other leader designated by the sponsoring General Assembly entity of the event. Any person receiving information under this paragraph shall share that information immediately with the designated response team.

SAFE CHILD RESPONSE TEAM

At every event or activity for minors planned by a council or entity of the General Assembly, a Safe Child Response Team must be trained by the sponsoring council or entity and be present and available throughout the entire duration of the event. This team should be comprised of at least three members, staff or appointed by the sponsoring council or entity staff. An attorney chosen and secured by the General Assembly entity shall be on-call for all events. The response team will familiarize itself with the terms of this policy as well as established procedures under the Rules of Discipline, *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* for responding to complaint(s) of alleged child/youth abuse against any teaching elder, ruling elder, employee, or volunteer in a leadership position(s) with the sponsoring entity and any events they may sponsor.

The Safe Child Response Team shall have the following responsibilities in response to allegations of child/youth or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect incurred against any child/youth worker or event participant:

1. Immediately provide for the safety of the alleged victim(s) involved.
2. If the report alleges abuse or harassment of a minor, the response team will:
 - a. immediately ensure the allegation is reported to the civil authorities under state law;
 - b. immediately notify the parents or guardian of the minor;
 - c. notify the insurance company of the allegation and that no investigation has yet occurred.
3. Make immediate decisions concerning the temporary removal of the individual accused from any contact with children or youth pending an investigation and/or removal of the accused from the event until a resolution of the allegations has occurred.
4. Notify designated people at the General Assembly entity immediately of the report of alleged abuse/neglect including an attorney who is on-call throughout the duration of each event, who must be previously secured by the General Assembly entity in case of such allegations during each sponsored event. Any possible media requests will be handled by a designated person or office with advice from the on-call attorney, taking care to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.
5. Consult the OGA and PMA about resources available for victims of the alleged abuse prior to each event and have those resources readily available at every event. This will provide victims and their families immediate resources that may aid in the particular spiritual, psychological, or emotional needs and trauma that arise from the devastation of abuse.
6. If the report is against a teaching elder, the response team shall send a written statement of allegation to the stated clerk of the presbytery that holds the teaching elder's membership. This written statement of allegation shall trigger the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II*.
7. If the report is against a ruling elder, the response team will notify the session of membership that an allegation of offense has been received against an elder that triggers the formation of an investigating committee under the Rules of Discipline of the *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II*.
8. If the report is against an employee of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp., the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee, Human Resources, and Legal Services. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.
9. If the report is against an employee of sponsoring council or entity other than Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corp., the response team will notify the person(s) or committee responsible for supervision of the employee. The response team will request a follow-up report from the supervisory body of the outcome of any subsequent investigation or discipline.
10. If the report is against a volunteer, or nonmember of the PC(USA), the response team will request that the General Assembly entity appoint an investigating committee of three persons to initiate an investigation of the allegations in order to:
 - a. gather any statements of abuse from those making the report, including any information from the Safety Response Team, and any party to the abuse;

- b. gather any information from the person who was accused of abuse;
- c. make written determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter including, but not limited to, making recommendations for prevention as well as response.

11. Provide pastoral counseling for the principal parties involved (accuser(s), possible victim(s), accused, family members).

12. A written summary of any proceedings in such cases will be maintained by the General Assembly entities.

13. Any person bringing a report of abuse or assisting in investigating will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

MANDATORY EVENT RULES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The sponsoring council or entity of the General Assembly shall ensure that the following measures be in place and actions taken for each event or activity involving children and youth:

1. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of children and youth. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible. All child and youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.

2. Ratios: The adult to child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10. The adult to youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there is one or more minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios and gender diversity be compromised.

3. View Windows and Open Doors: When minors and adult workers or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.

4. Adult workers/caregivers should respect the privacy of the children to whom they provide care. Responsible use of digital devices and cell phones is required in all situations (ex. Taking age-appropriate photographs and movies, not taking photographs of minors who are not fully clothed. Adults and minors are required at all times to wear appropriate attire.

5. Age appropriate training to children and youth should be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to caregiver or leader of the event.

6. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth events must have proper licensure and insurance on file with the organizing council. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting minors and vulnerable adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 2 in this section. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).

7. Forms: The legal guardians of each minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off campus events. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing council must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the minor. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access.

8. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are gone over with participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include but are not limited to a code of conduct specific to the event/activity, as well as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity. The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be given in written form to each participant and legal guardians, as well as discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity.

9. Children/youth and adults must maintain different showering and grooming hours at events in which bathrooms and shower rooms are shared in housing. These hours must be posted on site.

10. Adults should never share sleeping quarters with children or youth. The exception to this rule is for the occasional legal caregiver/child situation or parent/child situation. If a child/youth requires a caregiver/parent, written permission must be given and kept on record from the child/youth's parent/legal guardian.

11. All volunteers and employees at any General Assembly entity sponsored events must also abide by a code of conduct that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. Some of these prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:

- a. Display of sexual affection toward a child.
- b. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
- c. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involving children in personal problems or issues.
- d. Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with children (under the age of eighteen).
- e. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
- f. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
- g. Having secrets with youth/children.
- h. Staring at or commenting on children’s bodies.
- i. Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children.
- j. Working one-on-one with children in a private setting.
- k. Abusing youth/children in anyway, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restraint.
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
 - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
 - Permit children or youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

Social Media—Electronic Communications

General Social Media Policy—No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) without the explicit written permission of the sponsoring council, General Assembly entity, or event leadership. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the General Assembly or its entities, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official General Assembly entity sites/channels when they have been made available by the entity of the General Assembly. These may include Web pages, Facebook, e-mail, and similar means.

Social Media Communications

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of General Assembly entity programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with children and youth.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the General Assembly entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from children or youth under age as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by under-age children is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a child or youth reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using Facebook to communicate with children or youth, the authorized minister shall inform parents/guardians of each child or youth that the latter is communicating with the person via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children or youth.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children, youth, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's and youth interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children and youth how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children or youth and parents/guardians.

SIGNING OF POLICY AND APPLICATION TO SERVE

Each adult engaged in the leadership of a General Assembly entity event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing an application to be employed, volunteer, or supervise. In addition, each person engaged in the leadership of a General Assembly entity event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this policy.

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014) sent to the presbyteries a proposed revision to G-3.0106 of the *Book of Order* requiring that "All councils shall adopt and implement ... a child protection policy." Following the approval of presbyteries, this change went into effect on June 21, 2015.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly appointed a Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space, with OGA and PMA staff from Constitutional Interpretation, Legal Services, Ministries with Youth, and staff and a committee member from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns to deal with issues surrounding child protection at General Assembly events and asked the task force to draft a child protection policy for the General Assembly.

The Task Force for Safe and Sacred Space brought this policy to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly realizing the necessity of having a policy and procedures in place for the General Assembly. The task force also understands that as the General Assembly lives into the policy, there will always be opportunities for future amendment to the policy as needed.

Item 03-NB

[The assembly approved Item 03-NB. See pp. 28, 30.]

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Office of the General Assembly to form a task force made up of representatives from mid councils and local governing bodies to work with congregations on implementing child/youth/vulnerable adults protection policies and appropriate responses.

[Financial Implication: Per Capita—\$9,234 (2017); \$9,234 (2018)]

Item 03-A

[The Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures approved Item 03-A with comment. See pp. 28, 30.]

[Comment: Exceptions: 2015 minutes out of numerical order and unsigned.]

Minutes, Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 03-B

[The Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures approved Item 03-B with comment. See pp. 28, 30.]

[Comment: No exceptions.]

Minutes, Presbyterian Historical Society.

Item 03-C

[The Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures approved Item 03-C with comment. See pp. 28, 30.]

[Comment: With exceptions.]

Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Item 03-Info

A. GACOR Agency Summary

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29) (*Book of Order*, F-1.0403, Unity in Diversity).

Introduction

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is a permanent standing committee of the General Assembly, mandated by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Book of Order* (G-3.0103, Participation and Representation), *The Manual of the General Assembly* (including the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Organization for Mission*) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the *Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action*. Since it was constituted at reunion in 1983, GACOR has a long history of leadership, training, and service to the denomination.

The GACOR helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) become what God calls it to be, a church that includes diverse persons from the abundance God provides, an inclusiveness that represents the fullness God has created. We serve the denomination, keeping our attention on the quality of its community and always pointing toward a greater openness to voices not always heard, to leaders routinely overlooked, and to seek decision-making processes that enable full participation.

Assigned Responsibilities

The GACOR, in its constitutional mandate, promotes, reviews, advises, advocates, and consults with the General Assembly and its entities, committees, councils, and divisions in order to ensure that the principles of inclusiveness and diversity are implemented. How we function as the body of Christ is important both internally (structures, procedures, ways of interacting) and externally (social witness, mission, ministry). The church seeks to live into the abundance of the gifts given to it for its mission by helping it express that diversity and more fully accomplish our common ministries. To do this most faithfully, the church needs to have the widest possible participation. This rich diversity of membership and participation particularly includes “race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, [and] theological convictions (*Book of Order*, F-1.0403). At the national level, the church (as the body of Christ) is equipped with the widest possible diversity, by election and employment, for its life and it is called to select broadly from those leaders for its bodies.

Accomplishments

Since the close of the 221st General Assembly (2014) on June 21, 2014, in Detroit, Michigan, the GACOR worked diligently to complete the functions assigned by the *Book of Order* and *Organization for Mission* and in accordance with its *Manual of Operations*. The committee met face-to-face four times. The committee restructured itself in the fall of 2014 after the action of the 221st General Assembly (2014) changed its membership from 16 to 14 persons, to have two subcommittees. The GACOR Executive Committee (GACORX) consists of the moderator, vice-moderator, secretary, and chairpersons of the two subcommittees. The subcommittees are referred internally as GATE and ARRR. GATE is assigned to gather, analyze, translate and export data. ARRR is assigned to advise, review, report, and recommend actions. The subcommittees meet monthly by conference call or face-to-face in conjunction with the meetings of the full committee. GATE subcommittee examined data from synod COR reports and interpreted it to the committee. Fourteen of the sixteen synods submitted yearly synod committee on representation reports (SCOR) in 2015 and the remaining two synods began submission but did not

complete the report. In the fourth year of implementation of the online submission of the report (2015) all synods started them. The percentage of completed reports went from 62 percent to 88 percent. This increase in participation reporting is to be applauded. Special recognition to the Synods of Covenant, Lakes & Prairies, Rocky Mountains, South Atlantic, Southern California and Hawaii, Southwest, The Sun, and Trinity for completing their reports for all years.

The ARRR guided the task of convening the Supplier Diversity Definition Table and received the Supplier Diversity Definition and Reporting Criteria, then requested feedback from the committee and consulting partners. Work remains on finishing a revised, electronic “Tool Kit” for mid councils to support their COR functions. The committee provided feedback on the new Directory for Worship. The GACOR conducted an informational and inspirational synod COR training in Portland, Oregon, on October 9–11, 2015. Meeting in conjunction with the Moderator’s and Polity Conferences, GACOR shared in leadership of the concluding worship service with the Polity Conference.

Other accomplishments were as follows:

- Advised the Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) on the slates for special committees and commissions.
- Consulted with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) on the six-year cultural proficiency plans of the six General Assembly agencies.
- Adapted to staffing transitions resulting from a restructure in the Office of General Assembly.
- Convened the Supplier Diversity Definition Table with representatives of the six PC(USA) agencies and developed a definition that is being sent to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).
- Engaged the six agencies in conversation regarding their employment practices.
- Advocated for diversity in leadership by participating in caucus discussions with the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) leadership, and by continuing communications with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC).
 - Designated members as liaisons with underrepresented constituency partners (including Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (PDC)) and caucuses to improve mutual communication with underserved communities.
 - Offered advice and counsel at Committee on the General Assembly (COGA) and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) meetings.
 - A member attended 2015 Big Tent, interpreting the work of the committee and meeting with constituencies.
 - The GACOR moderator met with the Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) a number of times during his term.
 - Participated in the PC(USA) Identity conversations led by COGA.
 - The GACOR moderator attended meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and provided advice on issues before that body.
 - Advocated for adequate staff support in January 2015, through correspondence with the director for Mid Council Relations in OGA, and subsequent meetings regarding GACOR’s administrative support.
 - Corresponded with the manager of General Assembly Nominations regarding the distinct diversity needed by GACOR and requested reports on candidate pools and scheduling for consultation on slates.
 - Initiated mutual liaisons between ACREC (Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns) and GACOR, requested financial implication from COGA, and designated a GACOR member to be a liaison to ACREC.
 - In preparation for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in Portland, Oregon, the committee reviewed General Assembly overtures and other business, preparing comments and marking items of interest to the committee for follow-up.
 - In accordance with Standing Rules, GACOR participated in the Leader Selection process for the 221st General Assembly (2014) and the 222nd General Assembly (2016) committees.

Membership

Class of 2016: the Reverend Dr. Tom Kirkpatrick (Synod of Alaska-Northwest), Dr. Tressie Muldrow (Synod of Mid-Atlantic), the Reverend Rubén Ortiz-Rodríguez (Sínodo de Boriquén—Puerto Rico), the Reverend Héctor M. Rivera-Vélez (Synod of the Sun), Issa Sayar (Synod of the South Atlantic), Wanda Tanner-McNeill (Synod of the Trinity), and Josephine (Jo) C. Mueller (Synod of Southern California and Hawaii).

Class of 2018: Marvella Lambricht (Synod of the Covenant), Chris Hopp (Synod of Lakes & Prairies), the Reverend Martha Ross-Mockaitis (Synod of Lincoln Trails), Michael (Mike) Hauser (Synod of Mid-America), the Reverend Larissa Kwong Abazia (Synod of Northeast), the Reverend Clover T. Bailey (Synod of the Pacific), and Maribeth Culpepper (Synod of the Southwest).

Words of Thanks

On behalf of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the General Assembly Committee on Representation expresses its thanks and appreciation to Teaching Elders Héctor M. Rivera-Vélez and Thomas G. Kirkpatrick, and Ruling Elders Tressie Muldrow, Issa Sayar, Wanda Tanner McNeill, and Josephine C. Mueller for their dedicated service to the church through membership on the GACOR. The GACOR wishes to thank Teaching Elder Myung (Martin) Han (Synod of the Living Waters) who found it necessary to resign his position in 2015.

The GACOR is grateful for the staff assistance of the Reverend Molly Casteel, Assistant Stated Clerk and manager for Representation, Inclusiveness and Ruling Elder Training, and Cheri Harper, senior administrative assistant for Mid Council Ministries. The committee is also grateful to Diane Minter who supported them in this period.

B. GACOR Report on the AAEEO and Supplier Diversity (SD) Achievements of the Six Agencies, 2014–2016

The GACOR reports to the General Assembly on agencies regarding their employment and supplier diversity in response to the report and recommendations from “Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer,” as approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) as Item 11-17 (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 45, 1103-05 of the CD; pp. 33, 250–251, 1091–93 of the print copy). The 221st General Assembly (2014) revised the action by requiring the six agencies to report annually to GACOR. This report contains an overview of achievements by each of the six agencies in the 2013 and 2014 fiscal years.

1. Introduction

The GACOR does an annual review of data received from all six agencies regarding the employment of personnel and supplier diversity. The six agencies are the (1) the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), (2) the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), (3) the Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), (4) the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), (5) the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), and (6) the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (BOP). In this term, the two agencies under particular examination for benchmark revision were the OGA and PMA. That 2012 action can be found in Item 11-17, Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer, Recommendation 2 (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 1091).

The following report makes a distinction between exempt and nonexempt employment. These distinctions result from federal employment law, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The definition follows:¹

There are two types of exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act, FLSA. These are “nonexempt” and “exempt.” A nonexempt employee is paid for all overtime hours worked. Overtime is typically defined as any time worked over forty hours in a workweek (depending upon the bargaining unit contract). Nonexempt employees generally perform operational functions such as routine clerical duties, maintenance work, and checking and inspecting equipment.

An exempt employee is not paid for overtime hours worked. There are three categories under which an employee may be considered exempt. They are administrative, executive, and professional. These categories generally define an exempt employee as one who customarily and regularly exercises discretion and independent judgment in the performance of his/her duties. Exempt employees must pass a Salary Basis Test, i.e., they must be compensated at a minimum salary that is at least \$250/week.

- The Administrative exemption is for non-manual or office work directly related to management policies or general business administration. Positions customarily and regularly exercise independent judgment and discretion more than 50 percent of the time. Work is performed under general supervision and may require special training, experience, or knowledge.

- The Executive exemption is for positions whose primary duty is management of a department or subdivision in addition to exercising independent judgment and discretion more than 50 percent of the time. Under the executive exemption, positions must directly supervise 2 or more full-time employees and have the ability to make employment and disciplinary decisions.

- The Professional exemption is for work that requires an advanced degree and that is original or creative in nature. Independent judgment and discretion must be exercised in these positions more than 50 percent of the time. In addition, certain computer professions may be considered exempt under the Professional exemption when they meet certain criteria and are paid on a salary basis or an hourly basis that is at least \$27.63/hour. (The University of California, Irvine, Human Resources. “The FLSA Exemption Status Definition”, <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/hrg.htm> (1 February 2016).)

2. OGA: Office of the General Assembly

The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) provided their reports in a timely manner and responded to requests for clarification and follow-up. The Presbyterian Historical Society is a part of the OGA and their employees are included in this report. Looking at the total workforce, GACOR made the following observations:

¹ The University of California, Irvine, Human Resources. “The FLSA Exemption Status Definition,” <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/hrg.htm> (1 February 2016).

a. *Employment*

Out of the total fifty-five employees of the OGA, 71 percent identify as white. The bulk of the remaining 29 percent identify as African American/black (20 percent of total workforce). The committee rejoices to see a sizable percentage of employees be persons of color. Representation in the workforce beyond the black/white binary is minimal (9 percent of total workforce or roughly 1/3 of employees of color). We draw attention to this gap (see Figure 1).

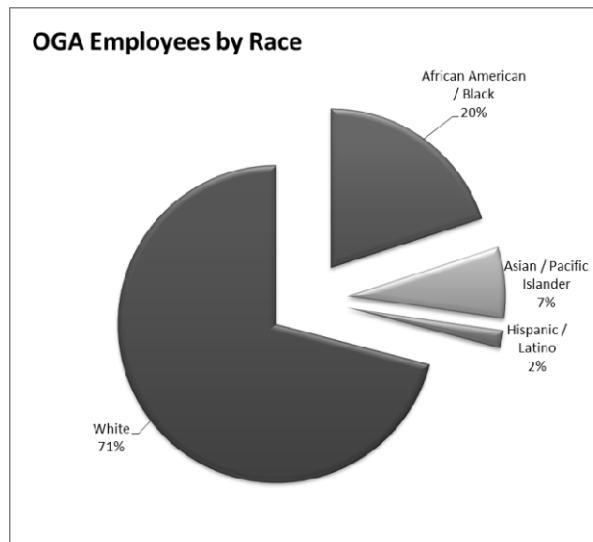


Figure 1: Racial Ethnic Distribution of all 55 OGA Employees

Employees who are people of color but not African American or Black (20 percent), reported as Asian/Pacific Islander (7 percent) and Hispanic/Latino/a (2 percent). As a consideration of the total workforce, this examination shows all levels of employment.

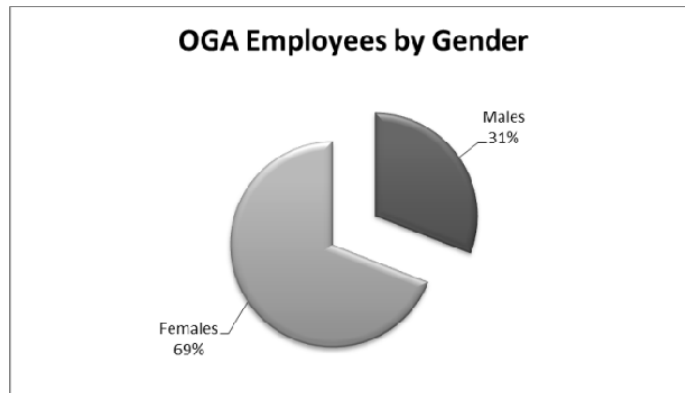


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of all 55 OGA Employees

Figure 2 demonstrated the OGA workforce is majority female (69 percent) exceeding the established benchmark of 40 percent. That shifts when looking at different levels of employment. In Figure 3, the preponderance of female employees in exempt positions is made clear. There are 26 exempt female employees and 12 nonexempt female employees; compared to the 12 exempt male employees and 5 non-exempt male employees.

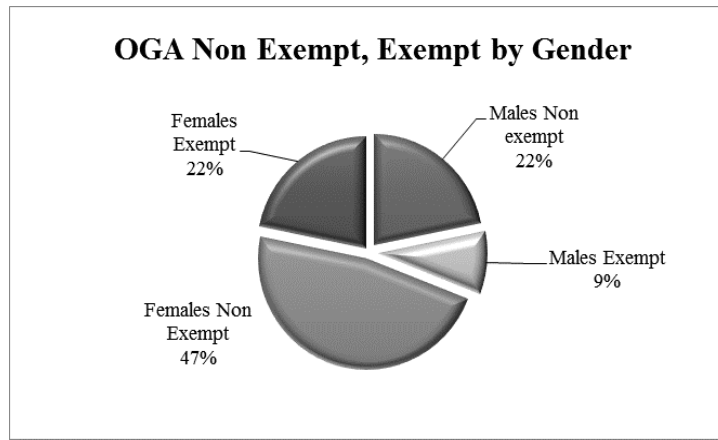


Figure 3: Gender Distribution of 55 OGA employees, Exempt and Non Exempt

Reported data also includes age information. Figure 4 shows the age breakdowns of the workforce for OGA and figures 5 and 6, the intersecting variables of gender and age.

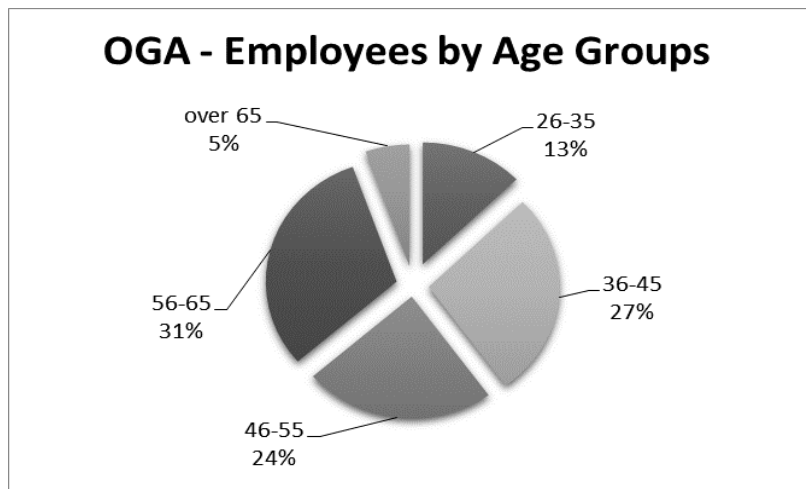


Figure 4: Age Distribution of the 55 OGA Employees

Disaggregating the 17 men and 38 women into separate graphs shows the nearly identical distributions despite the significantly higher number of women employed in OGA.

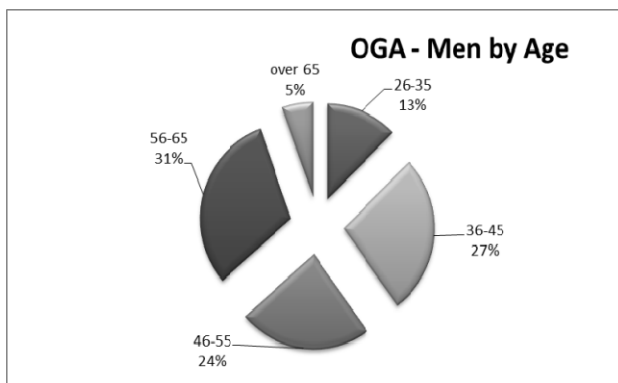


Figure 5: Distribution of 17 male OGA employees by age ranges

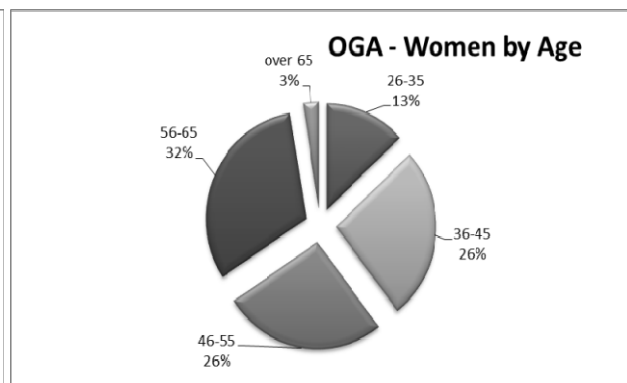


Figure 6: Distribution of 38 female OGA employees by age ranges

When looking at the employment data through race and gender the numbers show another interesting aspect. Women employees outnumber men in both groupings of white and persons of color, yet the proportion shows men are less diverse: women are 70 percent white to 30 percent members of minoritized racial groups, whereas men are 77 percent white and 23 percent members of minoritized racial groups.

The salary distribution of OGA employees by gender, Figure 7, shows where the majority of persons' compensation falls in the graph, distinguished by gender. Most employees are women in the \$35,001 to \$45,000 range of compensation, fol-

lowed by those women in the \$65,001 to \$75,000 range. Most men employed by OGA are either in the \$35,001 to \$45,000 range or the \$55,001 to \$65,000 range.

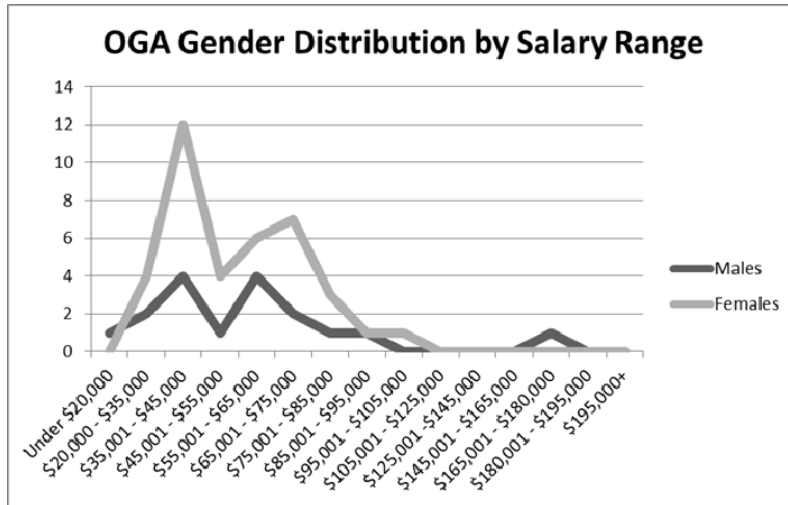


Figure 7: OGA Gender Distribution by Salary Range

To date, the OGA has not included information about employees with disabilities in their reporting to GACOR, thus this report doesn't reflect the inclusion of disabilities and differing abilities that may be present in their employees. Federal laws have requirements to protect employees with disabilities from discrimination. While the GACOR understands this limitation, self-disclosed information on disability would be useful to evaluate compliance with AAEO requirements and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The committee is eager to assist agencies in exploring methods for self-disclosure.

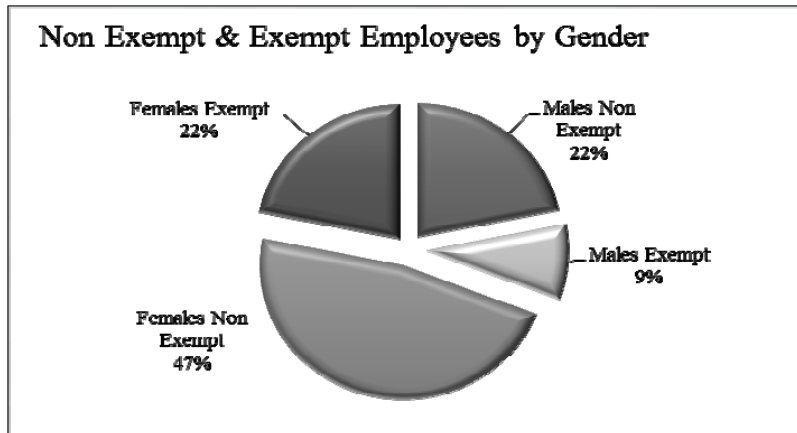


Figure 8: Nonexempt and Exempt OGA Employees by Gender

As Figure 8 demonstrates, while men represent 31 percent of OGA workforce, they represent 22 percent of the exempt and 9 percent of the nonexempt salary information. Although women represent 69 percent of the OGA labor pool, only 47 percent represent the exempt category and 22 percent represent the nonexempt. Although OGA hires more women, it does not result in a corresponding higher percentage of women in the exempt category.

The following observations were made in an examination of the OGA data:

- While 56 percent of OGA employees are nonexempt, 85 percent of the nonexempt employees are women.
- Within the \$20,000–45,000 nonexempt pay range, 33 percent are male employees and 67 percent are female employees.

GACOR highlights the following in the reports from OGA:

- Among employees who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander:
 - There are equal numbers of male and female employees.
 - One female employee is nonexempt. The exempt employees earn \$45,000–75,000 annually.

- Among employees who identify as black or African American:
 - Nine female and two male employees are reported. Of these persons the majority are in nonexempt positions: five of the female employees and both male employees.
 - Both male employees are between 46–55 years of age
 - Forty-four percent of the female employees are between 46–55 years of age.
 - Two of the female employees earn \$55,001–65,000 annually and two female employees earn \$75,001 or above
- The employee who identifies as Hispanic/Latina is a female and has an exempt position.
- Among employees who identify as white:
 - There are 13 males (3 nonexempt); and 28 females (7 nonexempt).
 - Slightly more women earn less than \$55,000 than men: 57 percent of female employees compared with 54 percent of male employees.
 - Twenty-one percent of female employees earn between \$55,001–75,000, while 15 percent of male employees are in this salary range.
 - Proportionally more men than women earn more than \$75,001 annually: 22 percent of female employees compared to 31 percent of male employees are above this pay threshold.

b. *Supplier Diversity*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency reported the OGA supplier diversity (SD) data in 2013 and 2014. GACOR has insufficient information regarding the diverse supplier information at this reporting. In 2014, they reported that 2.2 percent of OGA suppliers were diverse leaving many categories in the report blank. The benchmark is 10 percent.

GACOR finds it troubling that the amount of money spent with diverse suppliers is not available for some categories. The data are incomplete. As there is a definition coming to the 220th General Assembly (2016) to assist agencies in identifying diverse suppliers, GACOR anticipates reporting to improve. Much work has been completed by the GACOR and the agencies in regards to updating the definition of supplier diversity.

The OGA & PMA Supplier Diversity Reports were submitted on time, though substantial data was missing that would have allowed for accurate calculations and revealed a clear picture of supplier diversity.

- The category of women in essence only records suppliers who are owned or controlled by white women. In practice, suppliers who are women of color are distributed in the racialized categories, if there are any reported. As a result the reporting option of women of color was left blank.
- Men of color are identified in minoritized racial ethnic categories that may also include women of color. There is not enough data in the report to disaggregate it. The gender of women of color is erased in the reporting.
- Additional practices are needed for self-disclosure to record persons with disabilities and Middle Eastern employees. Without data reported in these categories, no conclusions can be drawn about those categories or about agency practices.

OGA reported the following SD data:

- In 2014, the OGA reported a total of seven diverse suppliers, reflecting 2.02 percent of the spend (\$101,081). The spend of the agency in a General Assembly year is different and may account for the swing in percentage between 2013 and 2014 data sets.
- In 2013 they reported a total of five diverse suppliers, reflecting 10.25 percent of their spending (\$209,630).

3. *PMA: Presbyterian Mission Agency*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) reported in a timely manner and responded to requests for clarification and follow-up. PMA employment figures include offices in New York and Washington D.C., as well as deployed staff. GACOR made the following observations:

a. *Employment*

PMA reported 336 employees; 73 percent of whom identified as white. Like OGA employment numbers, the majority of employees of color identify as African American and/or black (56 percent of people of color, this group is claimed by 15 percent of all employees). Figure 9 shows the full breakdown of the racial group membership of PMA employees.

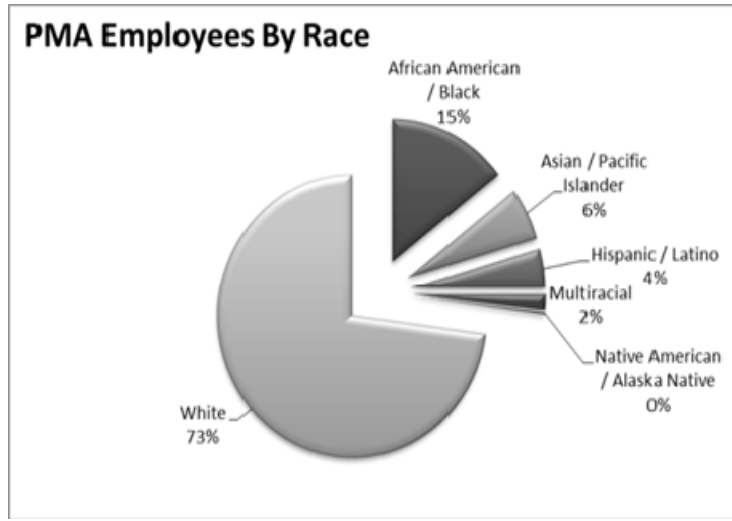


Figure 9: PMA Employees Distributed by Race

The committee rejoices to see a sizable percentage of employees be persons of color (27 percent). Representation in the workforce beyond the black/white binary is present (12 percent of total workforce or roughly 45 percent of employees of color). When examining the workforce by gender (see Figure 10), PMA reports women making up 65 percent of employees and men 35 percent. Figure 11 shows how the distribution changes with race and gender included.

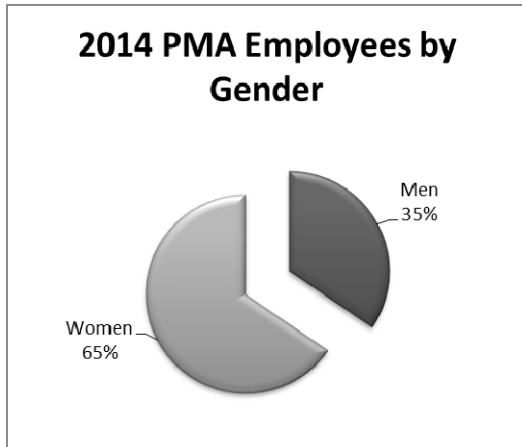


Figure 10: PMA Employees by Gender

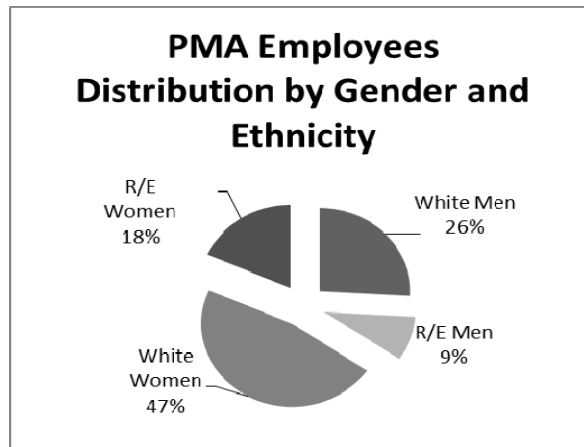


Figure 11: PMA Employees Distribution by Gender and Race

In 2014, the PMA reported that men made up 35 percent and women 65 percent of its workforce and so it has met its first benchmark of 40 percent in the AAEEEO recommendations. PMA also met its second benchmark for hiring minorities, with the total racial ethnic workforce reporting at 27 percent. Racial ethnic women were represented at 18 percent while men came in at 9 percent.

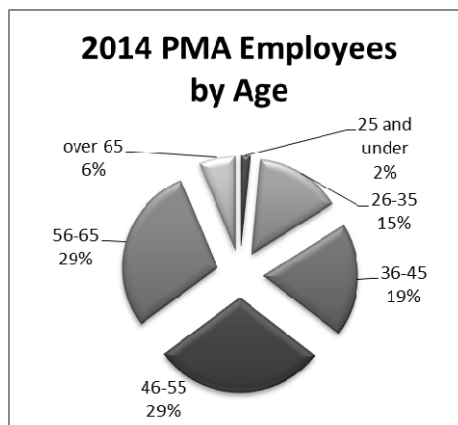


Figure 12: PMA Employees by Age

Looking at this variable by gender, shows slight differences in the PMA workforce.

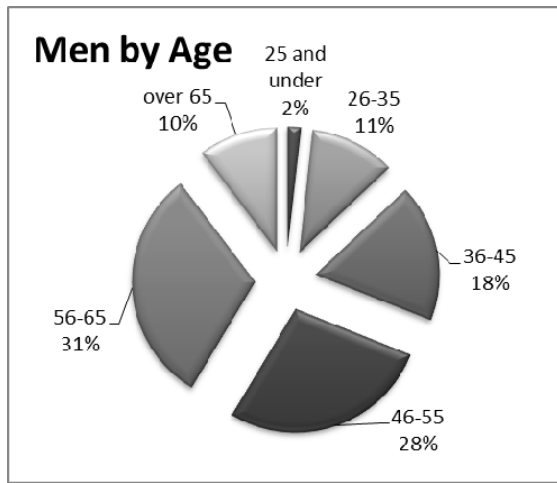


Figure 13: Male Employees by Age

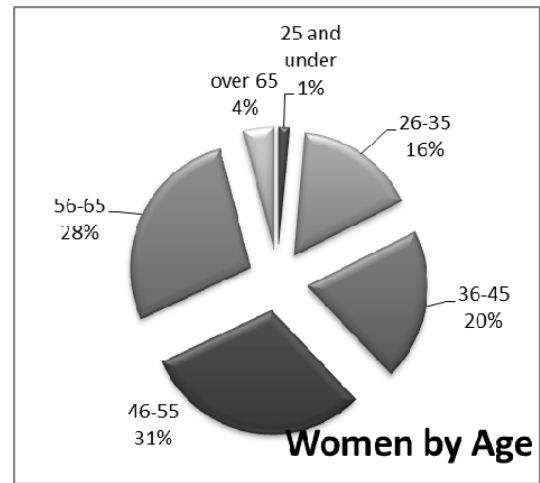


Figure 14: Women by Age Employed in PMA

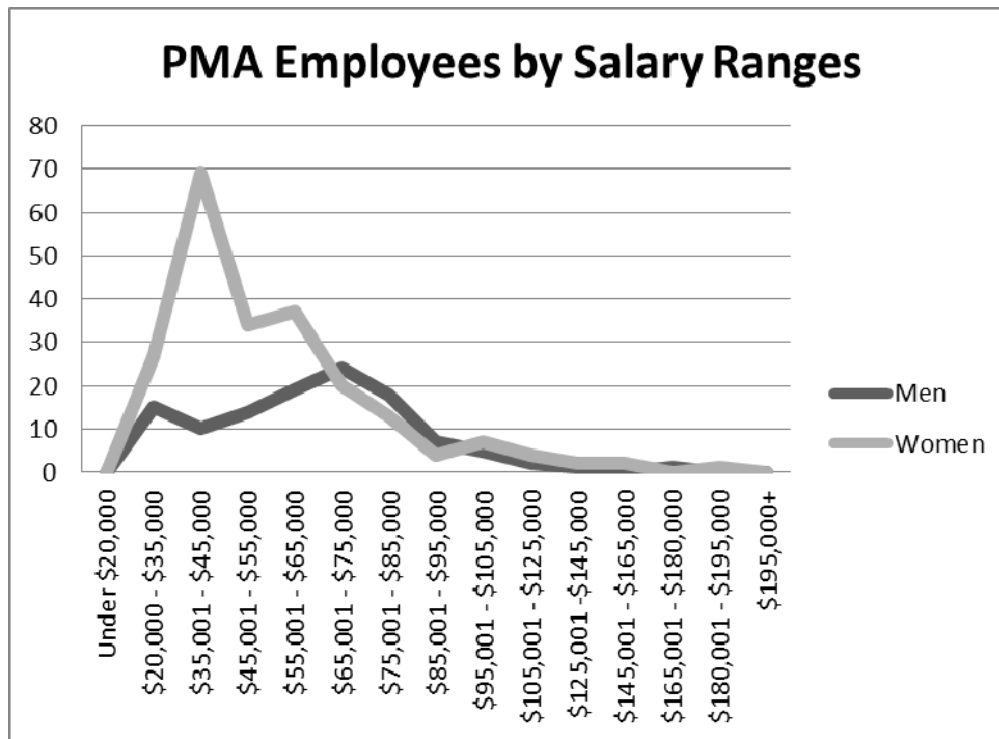


Figure 15: PMA Employees by Salary Range and Gender

Most of women employed in the PMA are compensated at levels below \$65,000. Males in PMA employment outnumber women in the pay range between \$65,001 and \$85,001.

Reported data also indicates proportionally there are significantly less men employed in nonexempt positions than females and proportionally there are significantly less women employed in exempt positions than males. Additionally:

- Seventy-five percent of the nonexempt male employees fall into the \$35,001–45,000 pay range, while 89 percent of the nonexempt female employees are in this same pay range.
- Seven percent of the exempt male employees earn \$95,001 or above, while 5 percent of the exempt female employees are in the same pay range.

GACOR highlights the following in the reports from PMA:

- Two employees identified as Native American/Alaska Native. The sample is too low to show statistical data.
- Among employees who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander:

- Thirty-three percent of female employees earn less than \$35,000 annually, while there are no male employees in the pay range.
- There are equal numbers of male/female employees in the \$35,001–65,000 pay ranges.
- Sixty-seven percent of the female employees earn \$65,001–75,000, while 13 percent of the male employees are in the same pay range.
- Half of the male employees earn \$85,001–95,000 and there are no female employees in the pay range.
- Among employees who identify as black or African American:
 - Twenty-seven percent of female employees earn \$35,001–45,000 and 8 percent of male employees are in this pay range.
 - Twenty-four percent of female employees earn \$45,001–75,000 and 50 percent of male employees are in this pay range.
 - Sixteen percent of female employees earn \$75,001–95,000 and 17 percent of male employees are in this pay range.
 - All female employees between the ages of 26–35 are nonexempt employees.
- Among employees who identify as Hispanic/Latino:
 - Fifty-three percent of female employees earn less than \$45,000 and there are no male employees earning less than \$45,000. All male employees earn between \$45,001 and 65,000.
- Among employees who identify as white:
 - Sixty-three percent of female employees earn less than \$55,000 and 28 percent of male employees are in this pay range.
 - Twenty-six percent of female employees earn between \$55,001–75,000 and 42 percent of male employees are in this pay range.
 - Six percent of female employees earn between \$75,001–105,000 and 24 percent of male employees are in this pay range.
 - Five percent of female employees earn more than \$105,001 and 3 percent of male employees are in this pay range.

While analyzing the data on supplier diversity, it is troubling that the amount of money spent with diverse suppliers is not available for some categories as noted on the 2014 Supplier Diversity Report. This data are incomplete, and of questionable value. In the reasoning given for this lack of information, it is indicated the data may be available in the future. GACOR looks forward to the availability of this data.

Much work has been completed by the GACOR and various other agencies in regards to updating the definition of supplier diversity. Throughout the PMA report, supplier diversity is referenced.

In the employment data report, it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell if there are persons classified in multiple categories. The disability employment data is not available because of privacy laws. While the GACOR understands this limitation, the disability information would be useful to evaluate compliance with AAEEEO requirements and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

b. *Supplier Diversity*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency reported supplier diversity data in 2013 and 2014. GACOR has insufficient information regarding the diverse supplier information at this reporting. The data are incomplete. Missing data would have allowed for accurate calculations and revealed a clear picture of supplier diversity. As there is a definition coming to the 220th General Assembly (2016) to assist agencies in identifying diverse suppliers, GACOR anticipates reporting to improve. Much work has been completed by the GACOR and the agencies in regards to updating the definition of supplier diversity.

The OGA & PMA Supplier Diversity Reports were submitted on time, though substantial data was missing that would have allowed for accurate calculations and revealed a clear picture of supplier diversity.

- The category of women in essence only records suppliers who are owned or controlled by white women. In practice, suppliers who are women of color are distributed in the racialized categories, if there are any reported. As a result, the reporting option of women of color was left blank.

03 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

- Men of color are identified in minoritized racial ethnic categories that may also include women of color. There is not enough data in the report to disaggregate it. The gender of women of color is erased in the reporting.
- Additional practices are needed for self-disclosure to record persons with disabilities and Middle Eastern employees. Without data reported in these categories, no conclusions can be drawn about those categories or about agency practices.

Actual data reported:

- In 2014, PMA reported a total of twenty-five suppliers, reflecting 6.11 percent of their spend (or \$837,760).
- In 2013 they reported a total of twenty diverse suppliers, representing 5.13 percent of their spend (or \$567,799).
- The benchmark of 10 percent is not met.

4. *BOP: The Board of Pensions*

The Board of Pensions (BOP) reported in a timely manner. GACOR made the following observations:

a. *Employment*

Women represent 66 percent of the all (125 of 188) BOP employees. In reviewing salaries, the largest group earns between \$45,000 & \$55,000 (35 out of 125). While there are fewer men, they peak in the same range (10 out of 63). However men also see a spike again with ten employees in the \$105,000 range (See Figure 16).

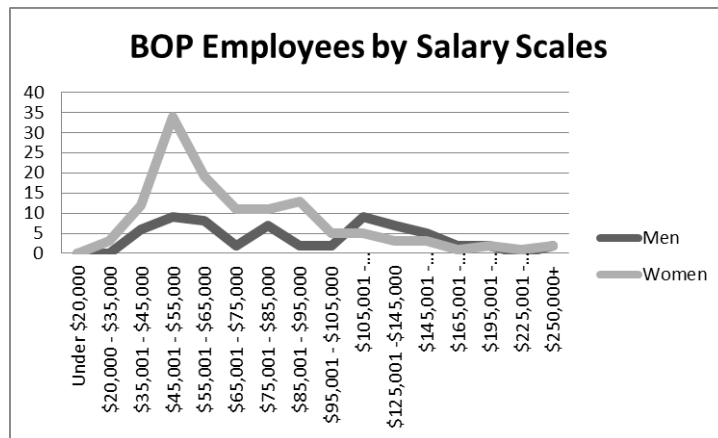


Figure 16: BOP Employees by Gender and Salary Ranges

Eleven percent of BOP employees are age 35 or under, and 4 percent are over 65. The majority of employees are aged 36–65 (84 percent). This is on par with the age distribution for the entire employee population of BOP.

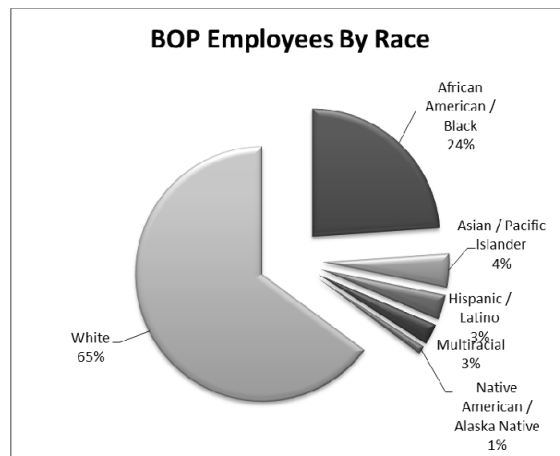


Figure 17: BOP Employees by Race

White employees represent 65 percent of the workforce, and employees identifying as African American or black are 24 percent. All other ethnicities represent 11 percent. BOP reported 3 percent of employees who identified as multiracial.

In reviewing the gender and race of BOP employees, the lowest representation is by men of color (7 percent). White men represent 27 percent of the total workforce. The gap is smaller when comparing women (by half). White women are 38 percent of employees, whereas women of color make up 28 percent of employees (see Figure 18).

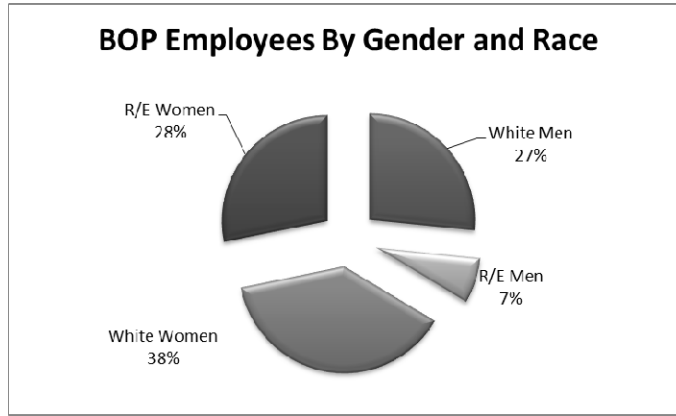


Figure 18: BOP Employees by Gender and Race

Women are 66 percent of BOP employees; men are 34 percent.

b. *Supplier Diversity*

The Board of Pensions did not provide the total amounts that they expensed for all vendors. GACOR cannot make an accurate evaluation. Their report stated that they expensed 100 percent in all categories of the form. GACOR failed to include a form category for white vendors, which would include the amount expended in that category. This will be corrected in the forms beginning later in 2016.

5. *PILP: The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc.*

The Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP) reported in a timely manner. GACOR made the following observations:

Male employees' lowest salary was \$65,000 and peaked at \$145,000 while women's lowest wage was much lower at \$20,000 and capped at \$75,000.

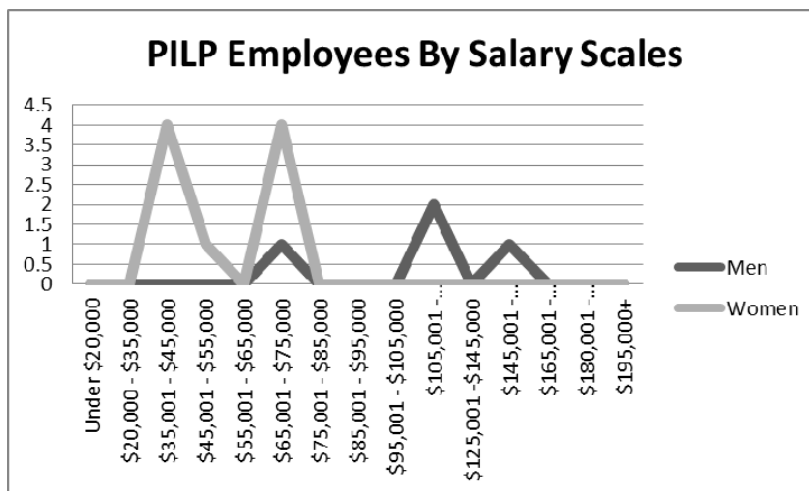


Figure 19: PILP Employees by Salary and Gender

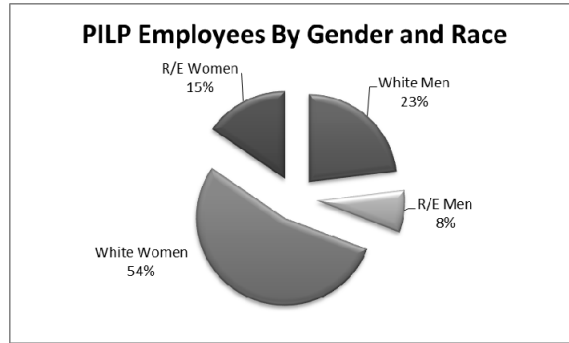


Figure 20: PILP Employees by Gender and Age

Supplier Diversity

PILP reported that 2.4 percent was invested in the women category, and PC(USA) and two related entities made up three of their vendors. A total of \$215,663 or 48.6 percent of the total and \$79,365 or 17.9 percent of the total was paid to publicly traded companies making it difficult to determine ownership. GACOR will review the request for information form used for this first review, and make changes for the next General Assembly reporting process.

6. *FDN: The Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (FDN) reported in a timely manner. GACOR made the following observations:

Male employees are 36 percent of FDN workforce. Exempt male employees are 31 percent and 5 percent are nonexempt. While women are 64 percent of the FDN labor pool, 47 percent are exempt and 17 percent nonexempt.

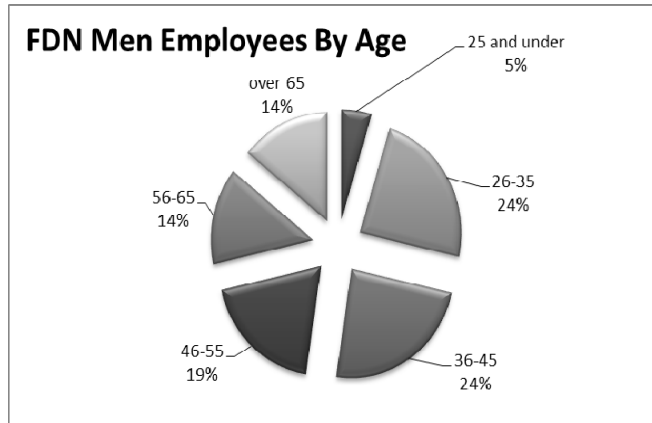


Figure 21: FDN Male Employees by Age

In reviewing the gender and race of FDN employees, there is a low representation of racial ethnic men (9 percent). White men represent 27 percent of the total employed. This disparity is similar when comparing white women to racial ethnic women, 49 percent to 15 percent respectively.

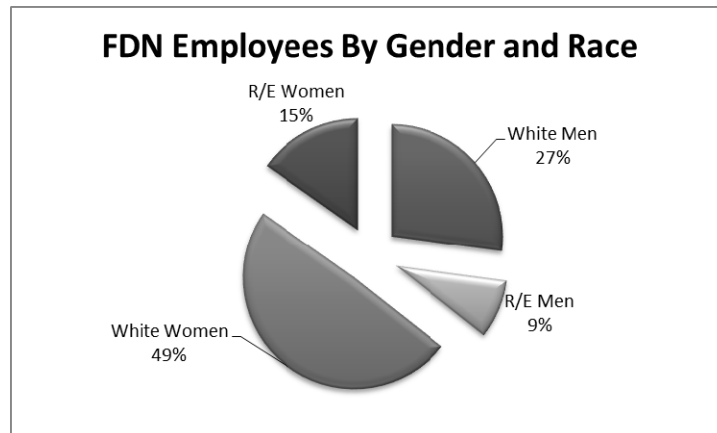


Figure 22: FDN Employees by Gender and Race

Five percent of FDN employees are women aged 35 or under, and 58 percent are between 36- and 55-years-old. Thirty-three percent are aged 46–65. There are no women employees over age 65.

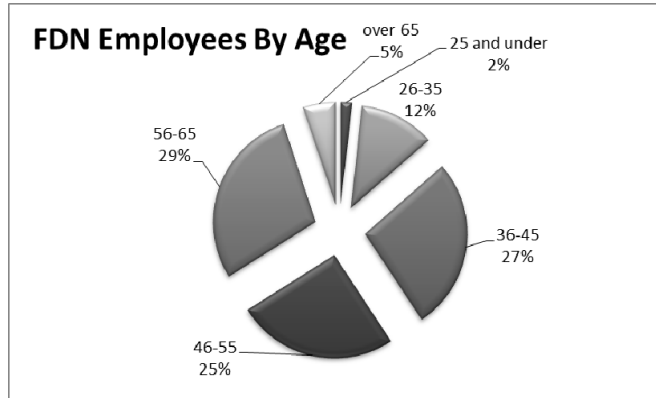


Figure 23: FDN Employees by Age

Five percent of FDN male employees are age 35 or under, and 48 percent are between 26–45 years-old. Thirty-three percent are aged 46 to 65.

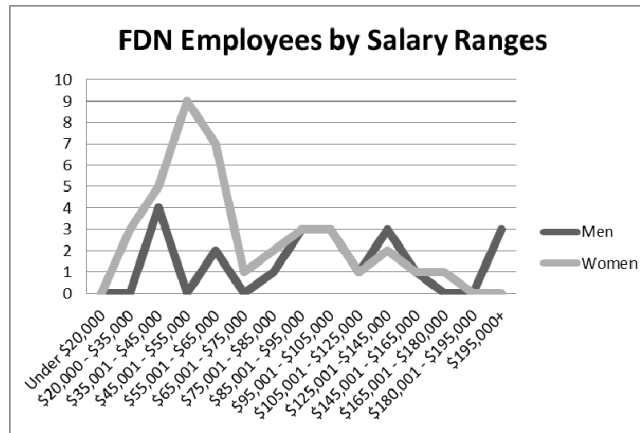


Figure 24: FDN Employees by Salary and Gender

As Figure 23 shows, the majority of women employed by the Foundation are bunched between \$35,000 and \$75,000. Male employees are more evenly distributed through the pay ranges.

Supplier Diversity

FDN provided information about their Supplier Diversity information, and they expensed 24.5 percent in vendors for all categories. A total amount spent was not provided and GACOR will revise the request forms immediately.

7. *PPC: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Inc.*

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) reported in a timely manner. GACOR made the following observations:

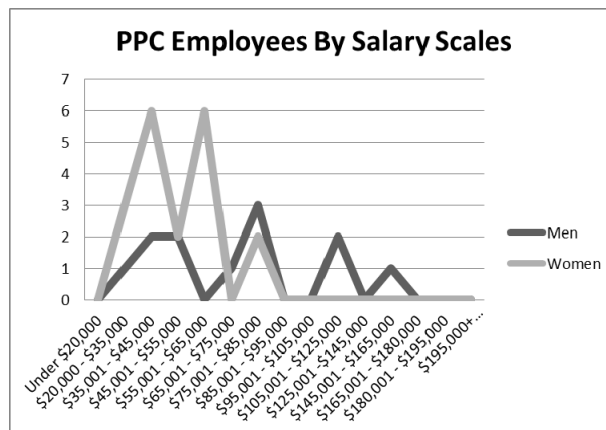


Figure 25: PPC Employees by Salary and Gender

Women represent 72 percent of the total (19 of 31) PPC workforce. In reviewing salaries, the largest groups earn between \$45,000 and \$55,000 or \$55,000 and \$65,000 (six in each level for a total of 12 out of 31). While twelve men are employed by the agency, their salaries peak at \$75,000 and \$85,000 (3 out of 12, or 25 percent of male employees). The uppermost leadership (with the highest salaries) are men.

In reviewing the gender and race of PPC employees, there is a low representation of racial ethnic men (7 percent). White men represent 32 percent of the total population. This disparity looks different when comparing women employees who identify as white to women of color, 42 percent to 19 percent respectively.

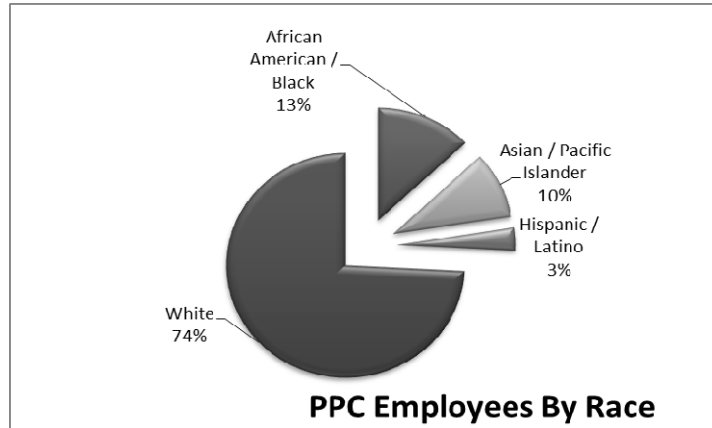


Figure 26: PPC Employees by Race

Forty-eight percent of PPC employees are aged 35 or younger, and 3 percent are older than 65.

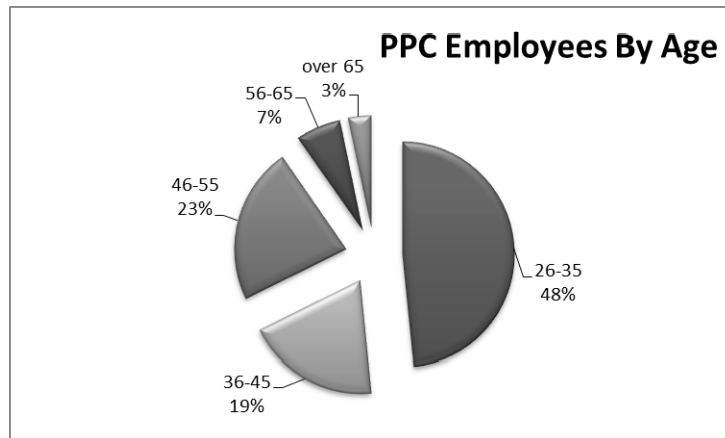


Figure 27: PPC Employees by Age

Sixty-eight percent of PPC employees are women aged 35 or younger, and 21 percent are between 36 and 55 years. Eleven percent of female employees are aged 46 to 65 years. There are no women employees over 65-years-old.

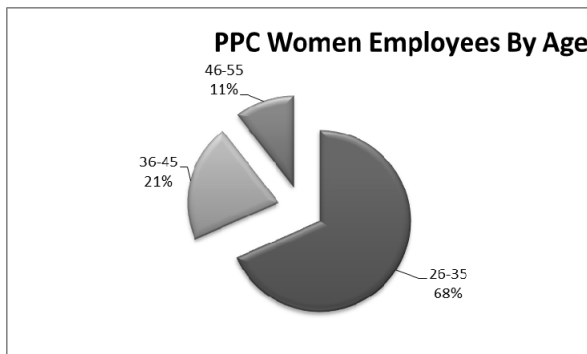


Figure 28: Women PPC Employees by Age

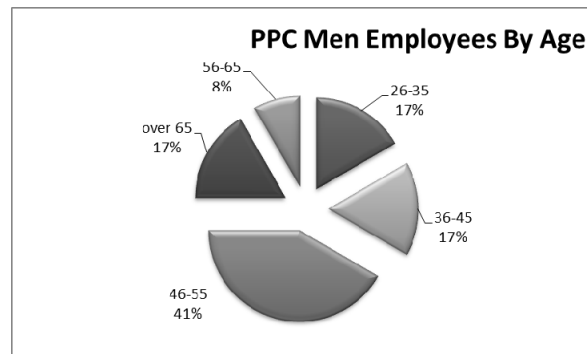


Figure 29: Male PPC Employees by Age

Seventeen percent of male PPC employees are age 35 or under, and 34 percent are between 26 and 45 years. Forty-one percent are aged 46–65 and 17 percent of male PPC employees are over age 65.

Supplier Diversity

PPC did not provide the total amounts that they expensed for all vendors. GACOR cannot make an accurate evaluation. Their report stated that they expensed 100 percent in all categories of the form. GACOR failed to include a form category for white vendors, which would include the amount expended in that category. This will be corrected in the forms beginning later in 2016.

C. General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary

The gifts of God for the people of God; come and serve!

Introduction

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is committed to full participation and representation of the rich diversity of the church in its governance. Through the General Assembly Nominating Committee's comprehensive nominations process, all Presbyterians have the ability and access to be considered for elected service on more than thirty General Assembly boards, commissions, committees, and councils. The nominations process ensures that the General Assembly is afforded the opportunity to select, from the varied gifts and services of Presbyterians, the most qualified persons to serve on General Assembly entities with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Assigned Responsibilities

The General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) is charged with providing careful nominations of persons to serve in elected membership on more than thirty ongoing boards, committees, councils, and commissions designated by the General Assembly. The GANC does its work in conformity with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitment to full participation and representation of the rich diversity of the church in its governance.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee itself is broadly representative of the constituency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The committee consists of sixteen members, women and men from each of the synods of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). They represent various racial ethnic identities, age groups, different theological perspectives, and include persons with disabilities. The Moderator of the previous General Assembly nominates GANC members for election by the ensuing General Assembly.

The General Assembly nomination process is application based and is open and accessible to the broad membership of the church. Persons who wish to be considered for nomination must complete and submit an application form and solicit personal references. In addition to providing a way to gather consistent demographic data, the application form allows for personal and creative narrative responses to a variety of questions about the applicant's sense of call to service, qualifications, and experience. Applicants can be confident every application is reviewed during the nomination process.

Accomplishments

The GANC continues to connect with Presbyterians corporately and individually—through meetings of presbytery and synod nominating committees, participation and attendance at national and regional conferences, engagement and correspondence with leaders at all councils of the church, and other official Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) groups—in order to inform Presbyterians of the many and diverse opportunities for service.

In addition to face-to-face engagements, individuals, congregations, presbyteries, and synods can find a listing of positions open for election on the General Assembly Nomination website: www.pcusa.org/nominations.

In the Fall of 2015, the GANC mailed to each presbytery and synod the list of vacancies to be filled. Additionally, the GANC website provides instructions, information about the nominations process, and committee descriptions. These descriptions contain information on the skills and expertise needed and time requirements for service. The descriptions are a useful tool for candidates as they determine whether or not their particular gifts and abilities are a match with the identified needs of a specific entity.

Persons interested in being considered for service on a General Assembly level committee must do so by submitting an application for nomination form via the GA Nominating Committee new online application system. As of February 20, 2015, approximately 230 applications were received for about eighty at-large vacancies. Currently, applications remain active for two General Assembly cycles. With the newly designed application form and database, applicants will be required to update their application form and resubmit it if they wish to be considered for nomination beginning with the General Assembly 2018 cycle.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee continues to further its efforts to deepen cultural competence and proficiency by providing educational opportunities for its members. Its February 2015 meeting included a workshop on "Reflect-

ing the Church's Rich Diversity Through a Culturally Proficient Nominations and Discernment Process," led by Jessica Vazquez of Crossroads Antiracism and Organizing and Training.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee works in concert with the General Assembly Committee on Representation to ensure that membership on all General Assembly entities is broadly representative of the membership of the whole church.

Through participation at conferences, conversations and engagement with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, racial ethnic caucuses, affinity groups, individual contact at all mid council levels as well as with pastors and ruling elders across the denomination, the General Assembly Nominating Committee strives to increase the number of racial ethnic persons and persons with differing theological perspectives in its pool of applicants.

In its efforts to provide the General Assembly Committee on Representation quantifiable information about the theological diversity of the pool of nominees, the GANC added the following question to its nomination form: "Which of the following terms best describes your theological perspective?" Applicants are provided with the following categories (listed in alphabetical order on the form): Conservative, Evangelical, Liberal, Moderate, Orthodox, Progressive, and prefer not to answer. Applicants are encouraged to check all that apply and a space is provided for comments. In addition, the GANC has removed a question on its form, "To assist the General Assembly Nominating Committee in addressing the Presbyterian Church's commitment to theological diversity, please briefly describe your theological perspective," replacing it with, "Please name one key theological issue facing the church today and explain your perspective on this issue."

The General Assembly Nominating Committee notes that many applicants do not identify themselves as persons with disabilities even when a disability does exist. Thus, we believe that the number of persons with disabilities serving the church on committees at the General Assembly level is actually higher than reported. In an effort to encourage persons to self-identify, the GANC sought the advice of Presbyterians for Disability Concerns in 2013. As a result, the GANC revised a question on its form from, "Are you a person living with a disability?" to "Are you living with a disability? If yes, please describe the accommodations needed for your participation on this entity." The General Assembly Nominating Committee will continue to seek ways to encourage persons living with disabilities to make this information available.

Members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee relate actively to mid councils and General Assembly entities throughout the year. Each General Assembly Nominating Committee member serves as a liaison to the nominating committee of the synod in which the member resides. Each member attends at least one synod or synod nominating committee meeting every other year to explain the nominations process.

The General Assembly Nominating Committee invites all General Assembly entities to send a written report biennially concerning the specific needs of the entity regarding nominees presented to the General Assembly. In addition, the General Assembly Nominating Committee's liaison member is available to meet with the entity or be in contact by telephone or mail at the entity's invitation, so that the nominating process may be explained and that the skills and expertise needed by the entity are identified. This information, along with advice and counsel received from the General Assembly Committee on Representation, assists the General Assembly Nominating Committee in its work.

Since the 221st General Assembly (2014) there have been three meetings of the General Assembly Nominating Committee: February 26–March 1, 2014, in Seattle, Washington; November 19 and 20, 2015 via video-conference call; and March 9–12, 2016, in Salt Lake City, Utah. An orientation for new members was held on September 3–5, 2014, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

There are sixteen members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee—one member residing in each of the sixteen synods. The General Assembly, upon the nomination of the General Assembly Moderator, elects the members of the General Assembly Nominating Committee; members serve a six-year term. The following officers were elected and served from July 2012 to June 2014: Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks (church member), Synod of the Rocky Mountains, moderator; Danny C. Murphy Sr. (teaching elder), Synod of the South Atlantic, vice moderator; and Tully M. Fletcher IV (teaching elder), Synod of the Southwest, secretary. Other members of the committee are: Lindsey Anderson (teaching elder), Synod of the Covenant; Eva O. Carter (ruling elder), Synod of Living Waters; Ana Victoria Eleutice Figueroa [until February 2016] (ruling elder), Presbiteriano Borinquén en Puerto Rico; Douglas Howard (ruling elder), Synod of the Northeast; Yena K. Hwang (teaching elder), Synod of Mid-Atlantic; Bertram G. Johnson (teaching elder), Synod of Alaska-Northwest; Judy Lussie (ruling elder), Synod of the Pacific; Judith North (ruling elder), Synod of Lakes and Prairies; Mary Paik (teaching elder), Synod of Southern California and Hawaii; Bob Riggs (ruling elder), Synod of Mid-America; Judith Trabue (ruling elder), Synod of Lincoln Trails; John M. Willingham (teaching elder), Synod of the Trinity; and Gene Wilson (teaching elder) Synod of the Sun.

The office of the General Assembly Nominating Committee is located in the Office of the General Assembly, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. Assistant Stated Clerk Valerie Kiriishi Small, ruling elder, serves as the coordinator for General Assembly Nominations (part-time).

Attachment A**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)****Per Capita****COMBINED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION****December 31, 2015 and 2014**

Assets	Total 12/31/2015	Total 12/31/2014
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 319,925	\$ 180,769
Short term investments	2,643,303	1,629,135
OGA Foundation	843,641	878,405
Per Capita Investments	3,985,399	4,043,871
Long term investments	3,592,942	3,745,427
Endowment investments	720,650	738,581
Investments PILP	379,931	376,977
Apportionment receivable--current year	2,517,686	2,454,905
Apportionment receivable--prior year	-	-
Allowance for Uncollectible Apportionments	(1,120,645)	(1,072,535)
Receivable - Big Tent	2,642	36,673
Other receivables	165,000	165,000
Receivable - PMA	-	-
Prepaid-Other	16,435	16,925
Land, Building and Fixed Assets	3,720,968	3,454,985
Accumulated depreciation	(2,533,539)	(2,313,335)
Total Assets	\$ 15,254,339	\$ 14,335,783
Liabilities and Net Assets		
<u>Liabilities:</u>		
Accounts Payable-PMA	\$ 754,395	\$ 241,737
Accounts Payable	218,883	9,788
Receipts in Process/ Other	10,633	133,196
Total liabilities	\$ 983,910	\$ 384,721
Net assets:		
Unrestricted:		
Undesignated	\$ 8,910,862	5,814,400
Designated	1,994,252	4,743,382
Plant Fund	1,269,683	1,269,683
Temporarily Restricted	1,311,002	1,338,967
Permanently Restricted	784,630	784,630
Total net assets	\$ 14,270,429	\$ 13,951,062
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 15,254,339	\$ 14,335,783

Attachment B

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) PER CAPITA STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES 12/31/2014 and 12/31/2015						
	2014 Actual	2015 Budget Rev'd App	2015 Actual	2015 BGT Var Variance	% Variance	
SOURCES OF FUNDING						
1 Apportionments	\$ 12,741,384	\$ 12,368,937	\$ 12,192,773	\$ 176,164	1.4%	
2 Investment Income	161,684	213,000	121,311	91,689	43.0%	
4 Miscellaneous	-	2,000	-	2,000	100.0%	
5 Unrealized/Realized Gain (Loss)	92,330	-	(190,188)	190,188	-	
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	\$ 12,995,398	\$ 12,583,937	\$ 12,123,895	\$ 460,042	3.7%	
EXPENDITURES						
1 Church Wide Ministries	\$ 5,124,764	\$ 2,780,601	\$ 2,649,918	\$ 130,683	4.7%	
2 Ecclesial & Ecumenical Ministries	2,681,558	2,772,549	2,544,354	228,195	8.2%	
3 Mid Council Ministries	1,260,112	1,595,849	1,423,308	172,541	10.8%	
4 Presbyterian Mission Agency/Board	1,620,560	1,493,601	1,506,321	(12,720)	-0.9%	
5 Other PMA Supervised Work	1,399,631	1,754,664	1,720,748	33,916	1.9%	
6 Other Expenses	75,390	100,000	-	100,000	100.0%	
7 Uncollectible Apportionments	896,237	1,000,000	1,199,231	(199,231)	-19.9%	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 13,058,252	\$ 11,497,264	\$ 11,043,880	\$ 453,384	3.9%	
Committed for Subsequent Assemblies	\$ 1,354,306	\$ 1,354,306	\$ 1,354,306	\$ -	-	
Estimated Under-Expenditure		-	-	-	-	
TOTAL EXPENSES & COMMITMENTS	\$ 11,703,946	\$ 12,851,570	\$ 12,398,186	\$ 453,384	3.5%	
Net to or (from) Reserve	\$ 1,291,452	\$ (267,633)	\$ (274,291)	\$ 6,658	-2.5%	

Attachment B1

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW - PER CAPITA BUDGET
Actual and Projected Sources of Funding and Expenditures 2012-2016

USING THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS:

- Projected Rev and Exp for 2017 & 2018
- number of members for 2012-2014 is as follows: (please note that apportionment revenue is based on the membership reported two years prior to the current year; that is 2016 apportionment revenue is based on membership reported at end of 2014):

(2012):2,004,192; (2013): 1,921,240 (2014): 1,666,767;

For 2015 & 2016 projected membership reduction of 100,000 each year.

For 2017 and 2018 projected membership reduction of 75,000 each year

For 2019 and 2020 projected membership reduction of 75,000

Increase Per Capita 3% in 2017 and 2018, 2019 and 2020

Expense reduction 3% from 2017-2020 each year

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Manage expenditures to be less than budgeted
- Planned use of reserves after holding 30% of Budget

RISKS

- Actual membership declines more than projected
- Actual expenditures exceed budgeted expenses
- Church and economic related issues impacting Revenue & Investment values
- General Assembly financial implications increases expenditure
- The level of available funds from reserves (after the 30% provision) declining

		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
		Prop Bgt	Prop Bgt	Prop Bgt	Prop Bgt	Estimate	Estimate
Unrestricted net assets, January 1		\$7,224,953	\$6,957,320	\$6,481,954	\$5,605,752	\$4,418,162	\$3,087,632
Less: Reserve (30% annual budget)		\$3,855,471	\$3,730,433	\$3,794,156	\$3,821,635	\$3,792,933	\$3,822,878
Income from prior years available	#	\$3,369,482	\$3,226,887	\$2,687,799	\$1,784,116	\$625,229	(\$735,247)
Sources of funding							
	<u>Apportionments</u>						
	\$6.63 for 2012						
	\$6.87 for 2013						
	\$7.02 for 2014						
	\$7.07 for 2015	\$12,368,937					
	\$7.12 for 2016		\$11,744,412				
Per Capita inc 3%	\$7.33 for 2017			\$11,540,982			
Per Capita inc 3%	\$7.55 for 2018				\$11,321,195		
	\$7.78 for 2019					\$11,082,579	
	\$8.01 for 2020						\$10,809,463
Income formula and other income		\$215,000	\$200,000	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$215,000	\$215,000
Miscellaneous			\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Realized and unrealized gain on investments							
From Prior years accumulation/Reserves							
Total	#	\$12,583,937	\$11,959,412	\$11,770,982	\$11,551,195	\$11,312,579	\$11,039,463
Total OGA Expenses							
Uncollectible Per capita		\$11,497,264	\$9,526,867	\$7,038,064	\$9,909,171	\$7,108,445	\$10,008,263
PMA Allocation			\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000
Designated for Subsequent General Assembly			\$3,161,916	\$3,134,121	\$3,104,613	\$3,034,665	\$3,034,665
Estimated Under Expenditure	#	\$1,354,306	(\$1,354,306)	\$1,375,000	(\$1,375,000)	\$1,400,000	(\$1,400,000)
Total Expenditures & Commitments		\$12,851,570	\$12,434,777	\$12,647,185	\$12,738,784	\$12,643,110	\$12,742,928
Net To/(From) Reserves		(\$267,633)	(\$475,365)	(\$876,203)	(\$1,187,589)	(\$1,330,531)	(\$1,703,465)
Unrestricted net assets, December 31	#	\$6,957,320	\$6,481,954	\$5,605,752	\$4,418,162	\$3,087,632	\$1,384,167
Estimated PCUSA Membership		1,749,496	1,649,496	1,574,496	1,499,496	1,424,496	1,349,496

Attachment C

	2016	2017	2018
SOURCES OF FUNDING			
1 Apportionments	\$11,744,412	\$11,808,645	\$11,591,104
2 Other Revenues	\$215,000	\$230,000	\$230,000
2 Income Formula	\$200,000	\$215,000	\$215,000
3 Manley Fund	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,000
4 Miscellaneous	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
5 Unrealized/Realized Gain (Loss)			
Subtotal	\$11,959,412	\$12,038,645	\$11,821,104
TOTAL REVENUE	\$11,959,412	\$12,038,645	\$11,821,104
EXPENDITURES			
1 CHURCH WIDE MINISTRIES			
1 A Assembly Operations	\$2,708,612	\$20,000	\$2,750,900
1 B Assembly Support	\$565,287	\$574,607	\$600,838
1 C Permanent & Sp. Committees	\$541,715	\$435,360	\$475,225
1 D Records & Historical Services (Phila)	\$1,505,535	\$1,574,578	\$1,607,970
1 E Innovation & Engagement			
1 F Records & History Support (Louisville)	\$188,960	\$188,734	\$187,069
2 ECCLESIAL & ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES			
2 A Ecumenical Allocations	\$877,134	\$926,000	\$926,000
2 B Ecumenical Support	\$385,625	\$462,064	\$448,994
2 C Ecclesial Support	\$744,675	\$761,850	\$776,902
2 D Communications	\$338,880	\$346,359	\$353,929
2 E Common Office Expenses	\$171,500	\$171,500	\$171,500
3 MID COUNCIL MINISTRIES			
3 A Constitutional Interpretation	\$653,564	\$680,909	\$696,296
3 B Vocation Ministries	\$641,802	\$658,654	\$676,915
3 C Mid Council Relations	\$237,419	\$298,365	\$280,121
TOTAL SCHEDULES 1, 2, & 3	\$9,560,708	\$7,098,980	\$9,952,659
4 PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY/BOARD	\$1,310,587	\$1,264,796	\$1,233,796
5 OTHER PMA SUPERVISED WORK	\$1,800,788	\$1,800,869	\$1,800,869
TOTAL SCHEDULES 4 & 5	\$3,111,375	\$3,065,665	\$3,034,665
6 OTHER EXPENSES	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
7 UNCOLLECTIBLE APPORTIONMENTS	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
8 STAFF SEVERANCE COSTS			
TOTAL EXPENSES 1 - 8	\$13,772,083	\$11,264,645	\$14,087,324
Committed for Subsequent Assemblies	(\$1,354,306)	\$1,365,540	(\$1,365,540)
Estimated Under-Expenditure			
Planned Use of Reserves			
222ND GA FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	\$13,120	\$262,203	\$270,583
TOTAL EXPENSES & COMMITMENTS	\$12,430,897	\$12,892,388	\$12,992,367
Net to or (from) Reserve	(\$471,485)	(\$853,743)	(\$1,171,263)

Attachment C1

OGA/PMA DESIGNATED BUDGET 2016-2018

Budget Code	Revenue Bgt	Expense Bgt	Proj End Bal	Revenue Bgt	Expense Bgt	Proj End Bal	Revenue Bgt	Expense Bgt	Proj End Bal
	2016	2016	12/31/2016	2017	2017	12/31/2017	2018	2018	12/31/2018
OGA Sales of Publications	440,000	421,700	49,632	420,000	400,000	69,632	420,000	400,000	89,632
Replacement Reserve-OGA	10,000	10,000	31,422	10,000	10,000	31,422	10,000	10,000	31,422
Ecumenical Reserve	75,000	125,000	168,651	75,000	50,000	193,651	75,000	50,000	218,651
Replacement Reserve-DOH	75,000	60,000	121,433	75,000	75,000	121,433	75,000	75,000	121,433
Presbyterian Historical Society	782,145	936,929	3,530,472	580,500	860,588	3,250,384	637,200	896,838	2,990,746
General Assembly Mtg - Registration	250,000	250,000	8,278	-	30,000	(21,722)	250,000	225,000	3,278
Stated Clerk Training/Fall Polity	115,000	110,000	27,202	150,000	215,000	(37,798)	150,000	220,000	(107,798)
Cooperative Reading Grp-Ord Exams	110,000	115,000	98,095	95,000	50,000	143,095	95,000	50,000	188,095
Moderator's Travel	5,000	2,000	44,254	5,000	5,000	44,254	5,000	5,000	44,254
Moderator's Annual Gathering	35,000	35,000	26,187	30,000	30,000	26,187	30,000	30,000	26,187
GACOR Diversity Project			-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fred Jenkins Memorial Library Fund		464	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Presbyterian Leader Formation	25,000	25,000	23,552	60,000	70,000	13,552	60,000	70,000	3,552
Ecumenical Consultation			(1,276)	-	-	(1,276)	-	-	(1,276)
Church Property and Legal		40,000	23,686	-	10,000	13,686	-	10,000	3,686
Contributions	5,000	15,000	12,749	-	5,000	7,749	-	10,000	(2,251)
Mid Council Financial Network Conf	20,000	20,000	21,363	-	-	21,363	-	-	21,363
Unity & Heritage Seminar	16,000	16,000	2,117	15,000	15,000	2,117	15,000	15,000	2,117
OGA/PMA Task Forces		10,000	21,876	-	5,000	16,876	-	5,000	11,876
Total	1,963,145	2,192,093	4,209,693	1,515,500	1,830,588	3,894,605	1,822,200	2,071,838	3,644,967

Item 04-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 04-01 with comment. See p. 37.]

[Comment: We recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) disapprove Items 04-01, 04-02, 04-03, 04-04, 04-05, 04-06, 04-09, 04-10, and 04-13 with comment:

[1. The committee thanks the presbyteries who submitted and concurred with these overtures for opening the conversation and calls on future General Assemblies to continue to explore ways of better engaging the whole church in important decisions.

[2. The General Assembly calls upon the whole church to do the following:

[a. Recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to advocate with all of our voice for, in the words of Moderator Edmiston to the Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, “that which breaks God’s heart in our neighborhoods” and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor, the marginalized, and the excluded in our communities.

[b. Call on our congregations to recommit to a biblical witness focused on values upon which the Presbytery of Foothills based their series of overtures of unity, community, diversity, and transformation, and reaffirm our foundational commitment to social justice from the historical documents of the church, including the *Book of Confessions* and existing social witness policy.

[c. Call on our presbyteries and synods to place these values at the center of their concerns and work together within their unique ministry contexts.

[d. Ask the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to consider focusing time during future General Assemblies for creating opportunities for dreaming an ongoing way forward and to work in consultation with the committees on local arrangements to engage all of the commissioners, delegates, and observers in acts of service to and with communities at risk.

[e. Commend the OGA for its commitment to ensure that the voices of peoples long silenced, from within our church and outside of it (including interfaith voices), are invited to share with and challenge it and encourages congregations, mid councils, and future assemblies to do the same.

[By disapproving these overtures with comment we can help move toward a more faithful, more just, and more hopeful vision of who we are as Christ’s church. We have an opportunity to bring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) into these important conversations through invitations, through education, through prayerful consideration, and not through constitutional changes.]

On Amending G-3.0503 and G-6.04 Regarding Meetings of the General Assembly and Amending the Constitution—From the Presbytery of Foothills.

The Presbytery of Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

1. Shall the first paragraph of G-3.0503 be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“The General Assembly shall hold a stated meeting at least biennially. *Each General Assembly shall be organized around one of the Six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304), taken up in succession in the order listed in F-1.0304. The main business of each General Assembly shall be to discuss and to explore ways to enable Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) congregations and councils to fulfill more faithfully and effectively the Great End which is the theme for that General Assembly. Every third General Assembly shall depart from the rotation of the Six Great Ends and instead be called together to consider all amendments to the Constitution that have been properly submitted. All overtures to amend the Constitution, in order to be considered by the General Assembly for constitutional change, must have the endorsement of no fewer than 15 percent of the presbyteries in the PC(USA). Overtures that receive two-thirds endorsement of the presbyteries may be considered at any General Assembly following the achievement of the two-thirds endorsement. The moderator, or in the event ... [the rest of G-3.0503 continues unaltered from this point];”*

2. Shall G-6.04 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be inserted is shown as italics.]

“Amendments to the Book of Order shall be made only *at a General Assembly for constitutional change (every third assembly, as required by G-3.0503) and only* if all the following steps are completed:

“*a. All overtures to amend the Constitution must have the endorsement of 15 percent of the presbyteries to be considered by the General Assembly. Overtures that achieve endorsement of two-thirds of the presbyteries may be considered at the next session of the General Assembly, regardless of the assembly rotation (G-3.0503).*

“~~a.~~ *b. All proposals requesting amendment of the Book of Order are communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly at which they will be considered.*

~~“b- c.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“e- d.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“d- e.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“e- f.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]”

Rationale

The General Assembly exists to serve the individual churches that make up the PC(USA), and not the churches to serve the General Assembly.

“The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness ...” (G-3. 0501).

The six Great Ends of the Church are “the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world” (F-1.0304).

In actual result, recent General Assemblies have produced the opposite of a “bond of union, community, and mission” among its member congregations—but instead have produced strife, division, and dysfunction; and thereby greatly distracted PC(USA) congregations from their central work of pursuing the six Great Ends in their mission and ministry.

The central focus of recent General Assemblies has not been on “provid[ing] that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard ... that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received ... [and the nurture of] the covenant community of disciples ...” (G-3.0501a–c), but rather has been centered upon the consideration of constitutional amendments—effectively turning the meetings of the General Assembly into biennial constitutional conventions.

A constitution is not a manual of operations, but is a deeper document expressing shared and unifying principles and values that establish the general framework for governance, and therefore should not be easily amended without thoughtful consideration and widespread consensus regarding these fundamental principles and values.

General Assembly meetings of the PC(USA) must return to their rightful purpose of supporting and building up the congregations of our denomination as defined by the *Book of Order*—enabling them, individually and together in church councils, to more faithfully and effectively fulfill the six Great Ends of the Church.

Concurrence to Item 04-01 from the Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, and New Harmony.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-01

Advice on Item 04-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 04-01.

Rationale

Item 04-01 would limit a General Assembly’s ability to respond to current situations or to implement insight derived from discussion and exploration of ways to enable Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) congregations and councils to fulfill more faithfully and effectively the Great Ends of the Church for at least two years and up to six years. Sometimes amendment of the Constitution is required in order to empower councils, congregations, and organizations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work toward realization of the Great Ends of the Church or to respond to current situations within the Church or society.

Item 04-01 emphasizes only the Great Ends of the Church but does not consider the current requirement that the General Assembly keep before it the marks of the Church and the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history as well (*Book of Order*, G-3.0501).

Item 04-01 seeks to eliminate strife, division, or dysfunction that may arise from actions of the General Assembly but addresses only constitutional change. Overtures that do not require constitutional amendments or other actions of the General Assembly may also create discord.

Item 04-01 intends to emphasize that the Constitution is a document expressing shared and unifying principles and values that establish the general framework for governance, and therefore should not be easily amended without thoughtful consideration and widespread consensus regarding these fundamental principles and values. The current requirements for constitutional amendment, however, do include discussion and majority vote by the General Assembly followed by deliberation by

all presbyteries over the course of a year with a majority agreement of the presbyteries required for any change (*Book of Order*, G-6.04c and d). It is the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, therefore, that the stated intent of the overture is already achieved in the *Book of Order*.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 04-01 proposes substantial rule changes using the Six Great Ends of the Church as a schedule for General Assemblies to take up the six themes separately, and would require high percentages of presbyteries to concur on any overtures, also restricting what business might come before the assembly.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 04-01 be disapproved.

Theologically, this overture not only replaces the *Book of Confessions* with the Six Great Ends, giving them an arbitrary authority unimagined by any prior General Assembly, but also ignores the functions of the General Assembly in the recently revised *Book of Order*, Chapter 3. In fact, this overture and its companions may remind experienced General Assembly observers of the entire alternative *Book of Order* that the Presbytery of Foothills proposed in 2010. At a time when much of the church seeks to simplify structure and focus on mission outside itself, these complex proposed rules (and exceptions) would further focus the church on its internal processes, and restrict the assembly's view of its mission to one area at a time. Further, while seeking to elevate the power of presbyteries vis-à-vis the assembly, the proposed rules would silence all but the most robust presbyteries when we need far more church-wide creativity and conversation.

In order not to duplicate the Advisory Committee on Social Witness' advice and counsel memoranda on Items 11-01 and 11-02, we only summarize our theological and confessional concerns here. Yet because our assignment is to assess matters of social witness and the church's capacity for such witness, we venture this response. Item 04-01 should be disapproved because it (1) misrepresents the Great Ends of the Church, (2) would limit consideration of matters of social righteousness to once every eighteen years, (3) reflects a flawed understanding of the nature of the Reformed church, (4) misrepresents conflict in the church, (5) would muzzle the church's ability to bear prophetic witness, reviving a distorted understanding of the spirituality of the church, and (6) appears to shrink and bind the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. This overture reflects a mistaken view of the great ends of the church. By mandating that General Assembly dockets "be organized around one of the Six Great Ends of the Church," it betrays an erroneous belief that the Great Ends is a list of discrete activities; when they are, in fact, integrally related dimensions of the church's single response to God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Consider how the "promotion of social righteousness" is integral to living out ALL the Great Ends. Can we "proclaim Jesus' gospel" among people who have historically suffered injustice without promoting social righteousness? Can we proclaim the salvation Jesus Christ makes possible without addressing how Jesus heals (a meaning of salvation) our relationships with God and one another? Can we proclaim Jesus' gospel without also confronting sinful principalities and powers of this world the way he did? Can we "preserve the truth" without also challenging the ways in which we call evil, "good," and injustice, "necessary"? Can we "maintain divine worship" if we do not confess our complicity in the world's injustices? Can we foster the "shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the Children of God" if we do not confront sinful systems that divide and diminish us? Can we "exhibit the kingdom of God" if we do not promote social righteousness in Christ's church and world? If we approve this overture and put the Great Ends on a rigid cycle, we will compromise every aspect of the church's life.

In conversation leading up to this General Assembly, the overture's advocates have admitted that the Great Ends are enmeshed. They have then tried to claim that this fact means that their overture won't diminish the church's life because we will not be limited by a singular focus on a single Great End. One can only conclude that if that is the case, then this overture does not appear to be thought through theologically.

2. Putting the Great Ends on a rigid eighteen-year-cycle will prevent future General Assemblies from responding to the needs and challenges of the church and culture in a timely way. The great length of time between opportunities for consideration might tend to rush General Assemblies to make decisions that they might otherwise consider more wisely at later assemblies, while leaving church agencies without effective guidance or oversight for years at a time. If we were dealing with the "proclamation of the gospel" this year, for example, it would have been the first time since 1998. Although we respect the place of scholarly symposia on particular themes, the purpose of the assembly is to lift up and strengthen mission in a holistic way, open to the Holy Spirit more than to a new form of legalism.

3. This overture's rationale reflects a faulty, congregational understanding of the church when it says, "The General Assembly exists to serve the individual churches that makes up the PC(USA), and not the churches to serve the General Assembly." In congregational polities the "church" is always and only the local church and denominational bodies exist solely to resource local bodies.

By contrast, Presbyterians believe that the General Assembly is an expression of the body of Christ along with presbyteries, synods, and General Assemblies. Just as our polity does not privilege local and individual congregations, neither does it privilege the higher bodies as “the church,” the way Episcopal polities do or as the writers of this overture charge. Each part exists for the sake of the Christ’s body, considered both as parts and together. In, congregational polities there are only fingers and toes and there is no organic whole.

The localism of congregational polities produces blind spots. We see this in the New Testament, when the Jerusalem Church mandated circumcision and strict adherence to Jewish ceremonial law. At the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), the church heard compelling testimony from representatives from other locales and made the controversial decision to welcome gentiles into fellowship without requiring circumcision. This decision continued to be controversial in much of the church decades after it was made (see Paul’s letter to the Galatians).

The promise of councils, such as the General Assembly, is that commissioners hear testimony from the broader church and are enabled to see beyond the blind spots of their local ministry contexts. We’ve seen this happen over and over again in the life of the church. In the 1950s, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, for example, was able to see the evil of “separate but equal” schooling in ways that many local congregations found challenging and resisted. By preventing the General Assembly from speaking, only a local, congregational witness would remain if this overture were approved.

4. Almost everything this overture says about conflict in the church is incorrect. Reading this overture one would never know that, with rare exception, General Assemblies have approved social witness policy on the consent agenda or by wide margins. Certainly the church does not seek conflict for conflict’s sake, but conflict avoidance is not peace, and avoiding choices also means making choices. (See ACSWP’s Advice & Counsel (A&C) on Items 11-01 and 11-02).

5. By muting the General Assembly’s prophetic voice, this overture compromises the church’s ability to confront evil and would lead back to the “spirituality of the church.” The “Spirituality of the Church” is a long discredited view held by Presbyterians who resisted attempts to overturn Jim Crow laws. Observing that confronting segregation cost the church certain members (though it may have made it possible for the church to reach others), they claimed that prophetic speech distracted the church from its true, spiritual mission, which they thought was gathering believers for heaven. They encouraged the church to be silent in the face of prejudice and institutional racism, or to address it only as individuals. The framers of this overture protest very much that this is not their intent and we do not accuse them of holding racist views held by previous advocates of the spirituality of the church. But, at the same time, we note that, had previous General Assemblies been hindered the way this overture would hamstring future General Assemblies, they could not have spoken against segregation. They would not have been able to create the discomfort and, yes, constructive conflict, that challenged long-held prejudice and was integral to changing church’s culture and promoting social righteousness.

6. This overture does not, in our view, reflect the full gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mt. 3:2). A kingdom is more than a king, but is a system of governance. Jesus’ proclamation included a confrontation with sinful systems and structures that diminished people’s lives. For people living without hope, who despaired that evil earthly powers held their destiny, the announcement of God’s kingdom was good news. Rebellious earthly kingdoms, however, responded to the challenge of God’s in-breaking rule by crucifying Jesus. Yet God, by raising Jesus from the dead, defeated these powers, named as sin, evil, and death. The promotion of social righteousness and confrontation with the powers of evil were not incidental to Jesus’ ministry. They cannot be incidental to our ministry.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-01.

In reading this overture, ACREC believes it is not a good idea, if even possible, to separate the “Great Ends of the Church” for the purpose of focusing on just one at each biennial General Assembly on a rotating basis. Also, why focus only on the Great Ends of the Church? This overture limits the level of creativity and newness of our General Assemblies.

The overture also proposes that, “Every third General Assembly [every six years] ... be called together to consider all amendments to the Constitution that have been properly submitted. All overtures to ... be considered by the General Assembly ... must have the endorsement of no fewer than [one-third] of the presbyteries in the PC(USA).” Six years is too long a period of time before considering and making necessary changes. (*Book of Order* F-2.02: “Yet the church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reform of its standards of doctrine as well as of governance. The church affirms *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda scundum verbum Dei. ...*”) We must continue to be able to respond to changes within the church as guided by the Spirit. Also this proposal would require that one-third (fifty-eight) presbyteries concur in any overture before it can be considered. This would place an enormous burden on presbyteries, particularly small presbyteries, to obtain that number of concurrences. Currently, overtures submitted must have the concurrence of at least one other presbytery in order to be considered. It is then the work of the General Assembly committees to study, debate, and perfect overtures before recommending to the assembly of the whole. Minority reports on overtures are also submitted to the assembly for consideration.

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

This procedure would obviously reduce both the frequency of considering *Book of Order* amendments, and the number of amendments reaching the General Assembly even in the designated year.

This overture may affect the capacity of General Assembly entities such as the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) or special committees to propose amendments, limiting proposals to presbyteries alone. If not, it would result in a higher percentage of business coming from those sources compared to presbyteries.

The overture would preclude projects such as the revision of the Directory for Worship, unless those working on such projects first submitted their work to the presbyteries for a vote prior to consideration by the more inclusive group gathered in General Assembly. How would differences among the presbyteries be handled? It also may conflict with the responsibility of synods to propose measures to the General Assembly (G-3.0402), or remove from synods the ability to propose this sort of measure.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-01.

The General Assembly does not exist to serve the individual churches that make up the PC(USA), nor do the churches exist to serve the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the church, an extension of the mission, ministry, and work of the individual congregations to create a connectional, unified, and greater witness for Jesus Christ in the world. A collective voice for justice in the world and in the church is important and does more than any one congregation could do.

The Six Great Ends of the Church collectively speak to the call and ministry of the church, and each is interwoven and builds on the others. While each one could arguably have a gender justice bend to them, it is unclear who decides what issues will fit for each General Assembly and what the criteria will be for each of the Six Great Ends.

Issues of gender justice, sexism, and patriarchy are recurring and must be addressed in a timely matter. Silencing and telling women who are oppressed to wait for the appropriate assembly gathering further marginalizes and silences the voices of women and the issues important to women.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-01

Comment on Item 04-01—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-01, on amending G-3.0503 and G-6.04 regarding meetings of the General Assembly and amending the Constitution.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

COGA sees no issue with using the six Great Ends of the Church as guides in the assembly’s discernment, but cautions the assembly to remember that the six Great Ends of the Church could be used in one voice and not broken into six individual mandates.

Item 04-01 brings an idea to the General Assembly that would radically re-form the focus and function of its work. The General Assembly, as the highest council in our Form of Government, exists to speak as an expression of the churches that form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We meet as the General Assembly to “[constitute] the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness” (G-3.0501). COGA’s chief concern with this overture is the ability of the General Assembly to be able to live into its mandate from the *Book of Order* to “... constitute the bond of union, community, and mission...” If the General Assembly only discerned, passed, and sent to the presbyteries overtures to amend the *Book of Order* every three assemblies, or six years, could the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) fully live into the above *Book of Order* prescription? COGA is convinced that God’s spirit moves in new and exciting ways each day, so it is our calling as God’s church to respond to God’s movements in the world quickly, faithfully, and creatively. COGA respectfully asks commissioners and advisory delegates to consider how we live into the hope that is our calling as we discern the mind of Christ and speak that discernment to the presbyteries.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-01

Comment on Item 04-01—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture asks the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to require certain proposed actions and votes to achieve percentages of support at levels that assure they will not be considered by future General Assemblies and assure defeat of those that are.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully reminds the assembly that any General Assembly cannot bind the subsequent General Assemblies. Historically, actions that require supermajority of approval of presbyteries have not passed because it limits access to and limits participation in the decision-making process of the church. In effect, it limits the ability of assemblies to discern the will of God.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 04-02

[The assembly answered Item 04-02 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 38.]

On Amending Standing Rule B.2.b. to Add the Category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates”—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to amend the Standing Rules of the General Assembly as follows:

1. Amend Standing Rule B.2.b. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“b. There shall be ~~four~~ *five* categories of advisory delegates: young adult, theological student; missionary, ~~and~~ *ecumenical, and executive presbyter*. When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one to three. The expenses of each *of the first four* advisory delegates shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception). *The expenses for the executive presbyter advisory delegate shall be paid by the presbytery on the same basis as expenses for commissioners.*”

2. Amend Standing Rule B.2. by adding a new paragraph “h.” to read as follows

“h. *Presbyter Advisory Delegates*

“For each General Assembly, 20 percent of the presbyteries may elect an executive presbyter advisory delegate (EPAD) who shall ordinarily be the presbytery executive (or person operating as the chief executive of the presbytery by any other title) to be an advisory delegate to the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall design a rotation system among the presbyteries to accomplish this.”

Rationale

Presbytery executives have a unique perspective, seeing intimately into the lives of congregations and closely into the life of the General Assembly at the same time.

This perspective gives them a view of the whole church in a way that few others have.

They care deeply about the life of the congregations and pastors they serve, and they care about the mission of the General Assembly as the whole Church ministers to the world.

The voice of presbytery executives has been systematically diminished for more than thirty years because they have no say at General Assembly meetings unless they are elected a commissioner. This might happen only once in an executive’s career because of the method commissioners are chosen. This important voice is effectively minimized at the assembly.

The voice of presbytery executives is very much needed at the assembly to keep the whole church in perspective and to prevent the assembly from seeming like an “other.”

Standing Rule B.2.c. would not be changed, so executive presbyter advisory delegates would have the same privileges as other advisory delegates. That is, they would serve on a committee with voice and vote and would have voice on the floor of the assembly.

Presbyteries would cover the expenses of executive presbyter advisory delegates, so financial implications to the assembly would not be a concern.

Concurrence to Item 04-02 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Covenant, and New Harmony.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-02.

Many understand that the purpose of advisory delegates is to provide a voice to those who are likely to be underrepresented in presbyteries. Presently, in addition to the teaching and ruling elder commissioners, advisory delegates consist of youth, theological students, missionaries, and ecumenical delegates. Executive presbyters (EPs) are (usually) members of the presbytery and eligible to be commissioners should the presbytery highly value their voice in this role; If not commissioners, they usually have close access to them, with great ability to make their views known.

Are some EPs seeking even more opportunity to influence their own presbytery's commissioners, sitting among them in plenary—half of whom know that their ability to find another call will be affected by the EP during reference checks? Sometimes EPs are perceived as controllers and authoritarians and certainly not advisers. Further, insofar as EPs can interpret the actions of the General Assembly so that General Assembly does not seem like an “other,” if they are not already working at that task, they are derelict in their duty regardless of whether or not they personally agree with the actions of the General Assembly.

Adding more advisory delegates would exacerbate the identified problem of the high proportion of advisory delegates to commissioners, especially in committees. The current *Manual* mandates that the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners cannot exceed one to three [Standing Rule B.2.b], and in 2016 the OGA will be strict about the deadline for receiving the names of YAADs (December 21) in order to stay within that mandate (expecting that some presbyteries will lose their opportunity to have a YAAD by missing the deadline). With thirty plus more advisory delegates, what has to give? Or, this would require another amendment to the *Manual*, to remove the mandated limit on the ratio.

Since expenses of commissioners are paid by the General Assembly, what does it mean that “The expenses for the executive presbyter advisory delegate shall be paid by the presbytery on the same basis as expenses for commissioners”?

Why the EP and not the stated clerk—which is, at least, a constitutional office?

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-02

Comment on Item 04-02—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-02, on amending Standing Rule B.2.b. to add the category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates.”

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

Item 04-02 is similar to Item 03-14 from the 221st General Assembly (2010), which came as a commissioners' resolution to the assembly. This motion was defeated by a margin of 63-452. In addition to issues of changing presbytery leadership models—specifically the elimination of presbytery “executive” positions and the reality that many presbytery leader position remain unfilled (twenty-five unfilled and most are not searching for permanent leadership)—COGA remains concerned that the addition of 35 voices to the approximately 120 voices already granted permission to speak on issues related to their entity may bog down the General Assembly with too many voices wishing to speak on business before the assembly. Additionally, as the membership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) dwindles and we struggle to achieve the one advisory delegate to every three commissioners mandate in the Standing Rules, COGA sees this item as a barrier to achieve the parity that is unique to our polity.

Item 04-03

[The assembly answered Item 04-03 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 38.]

On Amending G-6.04e. to Require a Two-Thirds Majority Vote to Amend the Constitution—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-6.04e be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of a majority two-thirds majority of all the presbyteries. The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment. The proposed amendment, if approved and enacted by the next General Assembly, shall become effective at the close of that General Assembly meeting.”~~

2. Engage the following approval process:

The thusly amended *Book of Order*, along with whatever other *Book of Order* amendments approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), will be sent out to presbyteries for a vote, and upon achieving a two-thirds majority, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) shall vote to ratify this change.

Rationale

Constitutions are social documents that assert and affirm the core beliefs, values, principles, and appropriate rules to express the given identity of a people. As such, constitutions are core social identity documents and should be stable across extended periods of time. In our American political experience this has been the case. The United States has only amended the Constitution a total of twenty-seven times across its near two and a half centuries (and only 17 times since the original first ten amendments).

In the formation of the PC(USA), the church chose to dilute its understanding of Constitution by creating a *Book of Order* that was a hybrid of a constitution and manual of operations. In doing so the democratic principle (“majority rule”) was raised above the constitutional principle (“supermajority to amend”). This choice led to not only a loss of a stable understanding of our core identity, but it also promoted factionalism within the denomination. The passage of this amendment will appropriately restore stability to our core identity document, reassert the constitutional principle, and aid the church in regaining an appropriate understanding of engaging in patient discernment of the Will of Christ for His Church.

Concurrence to Item 04-03 from the Presbyteries of Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, and New Harmony.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-03

Advice on Item 04-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 04-03.

This overture would change the requirements for approval of amendments to the *Book of Order* to mirror the requirements for amending the *Book of Confessions*: General Assembly approval, two-thirds of presbyteries approval, and enacted by a second General Assembly. Approval of this overture would overturn the historical and constitutional rights of the majority and minority.

Item 04-03 raises a fundamental issue of fairness. Everything in the current *Book of Order* was approved by a majority vote of the presbyteries.

In 1989, 1993, 1998, and 2000, the General Assembly considered requests to increase over a majority vote by which some or all of the steps in the process of amendment of the *Book of Order* may be approved. Most recently, this concept was considered in Item 03-06 during the 219th General Assembly (2010), which rejected increasing the approval requirements to a two-thirds vote.

The PC(USA) has historically understood since 1797 that a majority shall govern (F-3.0205). This overture creates a scenario in which the votes that produce an amendment at the General Assembly or approved in the presbyteries are by majority vote, but the ultimate approval of the amendment requires a cumulative two-thirds vote of the presbyteries.

The process to amend the *Book of Order* has a long history of governance by a majority that protects the rights of the minority while enabling the majority to exercise its will. While there are instances within the *Book of Order* that require more than a majority vote for approval, these are usually for specific exceptions to rules and requirements established by majority vote. The two-thirds vote required in “the process [of amending] the confessions of the church is deliberately demanding, requiring a high degree of consensus across the church” (F-2.02). The confessions establish standards by which we order our common life and mission.

Section G-6.01 states that the current procedures for amendment “are understood as a means to faithfulness” to the PC(USA) seeking to be “‘the church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit” (F-2.02). Those procedures include the balancing of majority and minority rights by requiring a majority of both the General Assembly and the presbyteries for amendments to the *Book of Order*.

The concerns over minority viewpoints have been considered previously. For example: (1) The Report of the Special Committee on Historic Principles, Conscience and Church Government (adopted by the UPC General Assembly, 1983) states, “The church protects its own minority point of view as if it were protecting its future, recognizing that the dissenter may well represent the will of God. The church makes explicit provisions for the protection of those whose positions are in the minority” (p. 8). (2) The 1952 General Assembly (PCUSA) considered the rights of a majority to decide issues stating, “It is of the very essence of the Presbyterian Church’s faith that a majority of Christians are more likely to understand the will of God aright than are a minority.” The rights of a minority, which are less than a majority, should not block an action of the majority.

The final paragraph of this overture is confusing as to its intent. It appears to apply the proposed amendment, if approved, to all amendments referred to the presbyteries by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Until the current G-6.04 is amended, all amendments are governed by that section: General Assembly action, majority vote of the presbyteries, and enactment on the one-year anniversary of the adjournment of the General Assembly. If approved, this amendment cannot be retroactively applied to other amendments referred to the presbyteries by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), but will govern amendments referred by future General Assemblies.

The ACC notes that *Robert’s Rules of Order* (pp.400–402) uses the terms “majority” and “two-thirds vote.” These are the terms used throughout the *Book of Order* and in this rationale.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-03.

In addition to requiring a supermajority of the presbyteries to approve an amendment, this overture seems to propose requiring a second General Assembly (GA) vote, and the delay of another year—becoming effective not a year after adjournment of the General Assembly that proposes it, but after the close of the General Assembly two years later. (So it seems that the GA following the General Assembly for Constitutional Change proposed in Item 04-01 will also have to deal with amendments.) Not very nimble or adaptable in a changing world.

Supermajorities are required in *Robert’s Rules of Order* primarily to protect the rights of minorities to be heard. This would extend the power to a minority to obstruct change that the majority favors, threatening the principle that “a majority shall govern” (F-3.0205).

The Foothills authors have made reference to the few times that the United States Constitution has been amended, in contrast to the fairly regular amendment of the *Book of Order*; however, this is not an apt analogy. Governing the USA requires thousands of federal laws and regulations in addition to a Constitution, not to mention fifty state constitutions and thousands more state and local laws.

The proposed “approval process” isn’t entirely clear. Does this mean that presbyteries would vote on the whole *Book of Order* as it would be amended by the 222nd General Assembly (2016), with the amendment proposed in Item 04-03 and any others coming out of the 222nd, and that this approval would have to be made by a 2/3 supermajority and the 223rd General Assembly (2018)—in order to establish a base line Constitution (Part 2) that is forever after harder to amend? Or just that this amendment would need 2/3? It could be pretty challenging to get a 2/3 vote for effectively freezing every single provision in the current *Book of Order*; and would seem to require a 2/3 vote for every amendment proposed by the 222nd. Would they all have to wait until 2018 to take effect? (In response to a question, the Foothills authors were unclear about what they were proposing, but did not seem to be contemplating a vote on the whole *Book of Order*.)

In either case, the General Assembly does not have the power to set aside the provisions of the current *Book of Order* in order to do this. At the point of voting on this proposed amendment, it would be subject to the simple majority of the presbyteries.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) does not have the power to instruct the 223rd General Assembly (2018) that it “shall vote to ratify.”

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03

Comment on Item 04-03—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-03, on amending G-6.04e. to require a two-thirds majority vote to amend the Constitution.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk . . .” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) understanding of church polity tells us that we look first to Scripture, which is the expressed essence of who we are as the people of God (*Book of Order*, F-1.01); second to the *Book of Confessions*, which bear witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ (F-2.01); and third to the *Book of Order*, which orders the church for mission and ministry (Chapter Three of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, F-3.00). If the assembly chooses to approve Item 04-03, this would delay amendments to the *Book of Order* deemed necessary by the previous assembly, which would cause confusion and divisiveness in our mission and ministry. COGA respectfully asks commissioners and advisory delegates to consider how we live into the hope that is our calling as we discern the mind of Christ and speak that discernment as an expression of the church and apply it to God’s tasks for us. Additionally, COGA notes the peculiar nature of voting to increase the majority to two-thirds with a simple majority vote.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-03

Comment on Item 04-03—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture asks the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to require certain proposed actions and votes to achieve percentages of support at levels that assure they will not be considered by future General Assemblies and assure defeat of those that are.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully reminds the assembly that any General Assembly cannot bind subsequent General Assemblies. Historically, actions that require supermajority of approval of presbyteries have not passed because it limits access to and limits participation in the decision-making process of the church. In effect, it limits the ability of assemblies to discern the will of God.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 04-04

[The assembly answered Item 04-04 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 38.]

On Adding G-3.0105c. to Permit a Presbytery to Abstain on Constitutional Changes—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-3.0105 be amended by adding a new paragraph “c.” to read as follows:

“c. A presbytery may register as ‘Abstaining’ when voting on General Assembly proposals recommending constitutional changes.”

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is called to work for peace, unity, and purity, and its member congregations are committed to reducing any factors that obscure Christian unity.

Church unity depends solely on Jesus Christ and not an unlikely if not impossible unanimity on the range of particular and partisan issues we encounter in society and culture.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to press votes on divisive issues that have disrupted the peace, unity, and purity of the church and diminished membership and mission momentum.

When abstaining on constitutional matters, a presbytery decision to abstain will not be recorded as a “no” vote. However, a majority of presbyteries will be required to vote “yes” for a constitutional amendment to pass.

A presbytery decision to register as abstaining may be accompanied by that presbytery’s rationale for abstaining. The abstaining presbytery, for instance, may abstain from conviction that a vote to change the constitution at that time is inadvisable, divisive, and that further prayer, discussion, and discernment will benefit the church.

Concurrence to Item 04-04 from the Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, and Yukon.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-04

Advice on Item 04-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the General Assembly disapprove Item 04-04.

Under the current process of amending the Constitution of the PC(USA), no presbytery is required to vote on any particular amendment. The freedom to not vote already is present. If a presbytery wishes to abstain, they simply should not vote.

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR), 11th edition, specifically states that the chairperson “should not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless” (p. 45, ll. 14–18). In RONR, an abstention does not count as a “no” vote, but has the same effect—it does not move the affirmative vote forward.

If the assembly wishes to allow the option of presbyteries abstaining on voting on Constitutional amendments, the better place to make that amendment would be G-6.04, by inserting this as a new paragraph “e,” and renumbering the following paragraph.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-04.

The rationale on Item 04-04 explains this as yet another way for presbyteries to avoid taking a stand on anything that people might disagree about. But since they would still have to vote (unless someone in the leadership has been given unilateral permission to deny the presbytery the opportunity to consider the matter), it's unclear how voting to “abstain” on a matter that generates enough passion to make it worth abstaining would be more acceptable/less divisive than letting your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no.”

Both those in favor and those opposed should be aware that an abstention has the effect of a negative vote in situations like this where a majority of the total number of presbyteries (or if Foothills prevails in other overtures, a supermajority) is required. *Robert's Rules of Order* for parliamentary guidance says: “Do abstention votes count? Answer: The phrase “abstention votes” is an oxymoron, an abstention being a refusal to vote. To abstain means to refrain from voting, and, as a consequence, there can be no such thing as an “abstention vote.” In the usual situation, where either a majority vote or a two-thirds vote is required, abstentions have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the vote since what is required is either a majority or two thirds of the votes cast. On the other hand, if the vote required is a majority or two thirds of the members present, or a majority or two thirds of the entire membership, an abstention will have the same effect as a “no” vote. Even in such a case, however, an abstention is not a vote and is not counted as a vote. [[RONR](#) (11th ed.), p. 400, ll. 7-12; p. 401, ll. 8-11; p. 403, ll. 13-24; see also p. 66 of [RONRIB](#).]”

It's rare, but presbyteries have abstained or voted to take no action already, without this encouragement/authorization, so why is this needed?

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-04

Comment on Item 04-04—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-03, to permit a presbytery to abstain on constitutional changes.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

COGA concurs with the comment of the ACC on Item 04-04.

Item 04-05

[The assembly answered Item 04-05 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 38.]

On Adding a New Standing Rule L.2. Identifying the Right of Presbyteries and Synods to Submit Overtures Changing the Standing Rules—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to amend Standing Rule L. by adding a new section 2. and renumbering current sections 2. and 3. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Amending the Standing Rules

“2. Presbyteries and synods may submit overtures to amend or suspend the standing rules. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), in consultation with the Stated Clerk, may offer their advice on any such overtures in the same way that the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) offers advice on amendments to the Constitution.”

~~“2. 3.~~ The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable.

“Suspending the Standing Rules

~~“3. 4.~~ A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.”

Rationale

A fundamental principle of Reformed polity is that the people shall have a vote in the way they are governed. The standing rules govern the meetings of the General Assembly in much detail, and the structure of these meetings has a great impact on synods, presbyteries, churches, and church members.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, together with the Stated Clerk, constitute a body much too limited to adequately represent the broader church in structuring General Assembly meetings.

Concurrence to Item 04-05 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, New Harmony, and South Louisiana.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-05.

A governing body or council should be the only one responsible for amending, deleting, or suspending the rules that govern them. Currently, the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), reviews and recommends to the next session of General Assembly any changes in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly deemed necessary. A process to regularly review the *Manual* and Standing Rules and make recommendations is in place. The General Assembly may amend the rules by majority vote and may suspend rules by two-thirds vote. (The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) consists equally of fourteen ruling and teaching elders from across the United States, plus the Stated Clerk and the Moderator and Vice Moderator of General Assembly.)

Has the General Assembly the right to amend, change, delete, or rewrite the manual and standing rules of presbyteries and synods? Why should these two councils have the power to change the manual and rules of the General Assembly?

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-05

Comment on Item 04-05—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-05, on adding a new Standing Rule L.2., identifying the right of presbyteries and synods to submit overtures changing the Standing Rules.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

Presbyteries and synods are given permission in the *Book of Order* (G-3.0302d) and the *Manual of the General Assembly* (Standing Rule A.3.c.) to overture the General Assembly and are not given restriction as to what business can be brought to the assembly. COGA advises that Item 04-05 is already allowed by the above citations and, additionally, by Standing Rule L.2.

Item 04-06

[The assembly answered Item 04-06 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 38.]

On Amending G-3.05 On the Review of the Manual of the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-3.05 be amended by inserting a new section, G-3-0502 and renumbering section G-3.0502 as G-3.0503 and section G-3.0503 as G-3.0504 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-3.0502 Organizational Review

“The General Assembly has the responsibility to regularly review the Manual of the General Assembly. Presbyteries and synods may submit overtures to amend, delete, or suspend sections of the Manual of the General Assembly.

~~“G-3.0502~~ *G-3.0503 Relations with Other Councils [Text remains unchanged.]*

~~“G-3.0503~~ *G-3.0504 Meetings and Quorum [Text remains unchanged.]”*

Rationale

A fundamental principle of Reformed polity is that the people shall have a vote in the way they are governed. The *General Assembly Manual of Operations* and standing rules govern the meetings of the General Assembly in much detail, and the structure of these meetings has a great impact on the synods, presbyteries, churches, and church members.

Both church and secular history show that bureaucracies, once established, have a tendency to become entrenched, isolated, and self-perpetuating far beyond their original purpose and function. As there has been a revolution in communications and as the rapidity of social and political change shows no sign of abating, it is important for us to have structures that are nimble and adaptable. Therefore, it is important for the Body of the General Assembly to regularly address and review the operations of the church.

Concurrence to Item 04-06 from the Presbyteries of John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, and New Harmony.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-06

Advice on Item 04-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 04-06.

Constitutional amendment is not necessary to achieve the desired result. The *Manual of the General Assembly* is reviewed prior to each biennial assembly. Presbyteries and synods may currently send overtures that deal with all aspects of the General Assembly, including its manual.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-06

Comment on Item 04-06—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-06, on amending G-3.05, the review of the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the experience of commissioners and advisory delegates at the assembly.

COGA concurs with the comment of the ACC on Item 04-06.

Item 04-07

[In response to Item 04-07, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 37, 38–40.]

On Merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a Single Entity—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

The Presbytery of Santa Fe overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to merge the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly upon the following time schedule and to replace them with the following structure and staffing:

1. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that at the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Board, the PC(USA), A Corporation, and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly be dissolved.

2. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that a Council of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Council”), be established, effective at the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) composed of the following voting members:

- a. A chair who shall be the Moderator of the General Assembly.
- b. A vice chair who shall be the Vice-Moderator of the General Assembly.
- c. A secretary who shall be the Stated Clerk/Director of Presbytery Mission Support of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- d. A treasurer who shall be elected by and from among the other members of the Council.
- e. The stated clerks of each synod, during their respective tenure as synod stated clerk.
- f. One representative from each synod, elected as follows:

(1) Nominees to serve as representatives of the synods shall be nominated utilizing the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and its processes, to ensure balance/diversity, insofar as possible, of racial ethnic, teaching/ruling elder, gender, age, and theological perspective.

(2) Nominees for the position of synod representative to the Council shall be open to anyone interested in the position; however, their presbytery of record must endorse their candidacy. A presbytery may endorse more than one candidate.

(3) The GANC shall seek candidates with the following credentials/experience, recognizing that younger persons may not have the experience in the life of the church to meet all of these church credentials/experience:

- (a) Be an elder (teaching or ruling) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- (b) Active participation at all levels of life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through
 - (i) demonstrated leadership/active participation within mid councils (i.e. moderator of synod, moderator of presbytery, etc.);
 - (ii) demonstrated leadership/active participation at national levels of the church [i.e. service boards of agencies of the PC(USA)];
 - (iii) active participation at meetings of the General Assembly (i.e. as a commissioner or volunteer staff—not simply as an observer);
 - (iv) demonstrated understanding of the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

(4) The GANC shall give consideration in making its nominations that synod representatives shall have the following responsibilities/expectations as members of the Council to their respective synod and presbyteries:

- (a) Actively engage in two-way communication/dialogue between the Council and the synod, and presbyteries of that synod.
- (b) Report to the synod assembly at each of the respective synod assembly’s meetings.
- (c) Insofar as the respective synods may by their manual of operation provide that their synod representative on the Council shall be an ex-officio, without vote, member of their synod.

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

(5) Direct that the elected synod representatives set forth above shall be elected for a term of two years and for a total of no more than six years of continuous service on the Council.

(6) Direct that the elected synod representatives shall not automatically be reelected and that the decision of whether to re-nominate a person shall be subject to the approval of the respective synod before being considered for re-nomination.

3. That the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct that the day-to-day operations of the Council shall be overseen by one person who shall be the Stated Clerk/Director of Presbytery Mission Support effective at the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

4. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that effective at the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) become the Interim Director of Presbytery Mission Support.

5. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that the major functions of the Council shall include

- a. Constitutional Services, in support of the synods, presbyteries, and congregations;
- b. Presbytery Mission Support, including support of Domestic and International Mission;
- c. Service as the secular corporate expression of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

6. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that the committee structure of the Council shall include, at a minimum:

- a. Leadership (Council Chair, Vice-Chair, Stated Clerk/Director of Presbytery Mission Support, Treasurer and four others from the Council to ensure teaching/ruling elder, racial ethnic, theological, and gender balance);
- b. Finance & Audit;
- c. Domestic Mission Support;
- d. International Mission Support;
- e. Personnel Committee;
- f. Task forces, etc., as the need may be identified).

7. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the establishment of a committee composed of four members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of Directors, four members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and two commissioners from the 222nd General Assembly (2016), staffed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director and the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to, consistent with this overture:

- a. work out the details of merging the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and PC(USA), A Corporation, including addressing secular legal issues, and changes to the *Book of Order* and the *General Assembly Manual of Operations*;
- b. establish a two-year staffing plan (including budget) and plan of reorganization to be brought to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for its consideration and approval;
- c. create such other positions as may be necessary for the work and administration of the organization, including a Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Director for Presbytery Mission Support, Associate Stated Clerk for Constitutional Services, etc.). (Other staffing will be subject to realignment of the entire organization and its mission to serve the presbyteries and congregations in their mission and ministry; BUT it shall include support of racial ethnic domestic mission & ministry and the 1001 Worshipping Communities Initiative.)

8. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that the Council

- a. establish a two-year staffing plan and plan of organization (including a budget) for the work and mission of the Council to be brought to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for its consideration and approval;
- b. propose plans of staffing, work, and mission, and a budget for consideration by the General Assembly every two years subsequent to the approval of the initial plan of reorganization;
- c. create such other positions as may be necessary for the work and administration of the organization, including a Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Director for Presbytery Mission Support, Associate Stated Clerk for Constitutional Services, etc.). (Other staffing will be subject to continued review of the entire organization and its mission to serve the presbyteries

and congregations in their mission and ministry; BUT it shall include support of racial ethnic domestic mission & ministry and the 1001 Worshiping Communities Initiative.)

9. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that the Council nominate persons to serve on a search committee to be established for the purpose of nominating and recommending for election by the 224th General Assembly (2020) a Stated Clerk/Director of Presbyterian Mission Support to oversee the day-to-day work and mission of the Council.

10. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that the Council shall also serve as the secular corporate expression of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with

- a. its officers being:
 - (1) President—the Moderator of the General Assembly,
 - (2) Vice President—The Vice Moderator of the General Assembly,
 - (3) Executive Vice-President/Secretary—The Stated Clerk/Director of Presbyterian Mission Support,
 - (4) Treasurer—The Treasurer of the Council elected by the Council from within its own membership;
- b. and its directors being the members of the Council.

Alternate Resolution:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), together with the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), name a Way Forward Commission to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA). That vision shall take into account the ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), but shall not be bound by the current configuration of those ministries, except where mandated by the church’s Constitution. The mandate of the commission is to engage/contract a qualified, examination team that may include some or all of the All Agency Review team, with the requisite skills and abilities to assess institutional performance, both internally among the agencies and externally as they interface with the congregations. This examination team is charged with conducting a comprehensive, detailed analysis that will provide clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements to the commission for implementation by the agencies. The commission shall further describe and implement a General-Assembly level staffing pattern that will accomplish its vision. The commission shall be guided in its development and articulation of this vision and structure by Reformed ecclesiology as expressed in our Constitution.

In the discharge of its responsibilities, the commission shall:

- 1. **Integrate the recommendations provided by the All Agency Review Committee, the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.**
 - a. **All recommendations should be reviewed by the commission to determine which should be implemented by the appropriate agencies.**
 - b. **The commission will monitor implementation across the agencies**
- 2. **Visit with and explore**
 - a. **the best practices of other national church bodies,**
 - b. **the best practices of corporations and nonprofits, as deemed helpful.**
- 3. **Consult with**
 - a. **seminary faculty and presidents,**
 - b. **presbytery and synod leaders.**
- 4. **Explore other resources they deem helpful and prudent**

And shall be empowered to

- 1. **take such administrative actions in both OGA and PMA as may move the General Assembly staff in the direction of its vision;**

2. recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) such changes in Standing Rules as may move the church in the direction of its vision;
3. recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) any amendments to the *Book of Order* as may move the church in the direction of its vision.
4. explore the best way for Shared Services to serve these agencies.

The commission shall be comprised of no more than twelve voting members (with a quorum to be a simple majority of seven) at least two of whom should be members of the 2016 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, with every effort made to include an advisory delegate from that committee. The commission membership will include a representative from both the PMA Review Committee and the OGA Review Committee, a representative from both the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and at least one mid council staff person.

We agree with the PMA Review Committee that the commission consist of the following:

1. The commission shall be made up of ruling and teaching elders with broad geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, a total of at most twelve commissioners.
2. The PMA and OGA will each appoint a staff person to serve as staff support for the commission.
3. The commission's work will be informed by other churchwide conversations on the future of the church and its structure.
4. The assembly will allocate sufficient resources so that this commission can meet regularly and consult with other PC(USA) constituents, as well as others who could provide insight into the process. There should be at least two face-to-face meetings in one year and with as many electronic meetings as deemed necessary.
5. Recommendations for any missional and structural changes will be brought to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in compliance with all Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

Rationale for Alternate Resolution

The business before this committee consistently called for study of our current structure, expressed concern for the culture and administration of the PMA and OGA bodies, and posited a hope for change that will make us a more efficient, inclusive, culturally sensitive, and visionary denomination.

We appreciate the substantial work of the PMA and OGA review committees and those who developed and concurred with the amendments that have been brought to our committee. As we pursued responses to what was proposed, we recognized that it would be better to first identify the purposes and immediate foci that will govern our next steps and then address issues of structure and staffing.

We have limited the size of the commission in response to studies, and in consideration of our own process, which indicate that the decision-making abilities of committees is diminished as size increases. The inclusion of a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD) is a direct response to the insightful, articulate input our committee has received from its YAAD participants. We believe their involvement is an important component in achieving greater inclusivity and broadened perspective as we make our way forward.

Rationale for Original Overture

A bicameral system is no longer the norm throughout the rest of the church and it can reduce duplication of effort/financial expense. National expression of the church should be no different.

Direct accountability to the General Assembly is essential.

This should facilitate clarity of purpose and mission—forces review and reconfiguration. Form should follow function (support of presbytery mission).

As currently structured, members of the PMA Board and COGA rarely have any accountability to, or connection with, their synods and presbyteries.

Members of a new unicameral council should be directly accountable to the General Assembly and be required to interact with their respective mid councils. This should make that connection more important and more accountable. This will require connection and a reporting stream that now does not exist between the Board of PMA and COGA and the rest of the church.

The hope is that eventually the Stated Clerk and Executive (or its equivalent) positions will become one throughout the synods and as members of the Council; the new national expression of the church will become even more accountable and representative of the needs and concerns of the presbyteries and their congregations.

This creates a structure that is more related to the church and its function than to a national corporation that seems to have lost its identity as a church organization engaged in the work and ministry of our Lord, as expressed by the presbyteries and their congregations.

This is about being an ecclesial body, not a secular corporation. For a long time that has been the greatest criticism of the national expression of the PC(USA), that it has become a secular corporation rather than a national organization engaged in and governed as an ecclesial body.

This should create an environment in which the role of the national expression of the church is to serve the presbyteries and their congregations, rather than ensure the institutional life of the national expression of the PC(USA).

This reorganization will clarify roles and who speaks on behalf of and represents the PC(USA) in all facets of its national expression.

The tension between a Stated Clerk and Executive Director will be eliminated.

Further, with the Moderator of the General Assembly serving as chair of the Council and president of the secular corporation, and the elected voice of the assembly, coupled with one person on staff, the Chief Ecclesial/Executive Officer (the Stated Clerk), with a complimentary role makes mixed messages from “the top” less likely.

Decreasing funding makes it imperative to consider alternative models of leadership—both per capita and mission, and reduction of reserves in each area (per capita and mission).

Other mainline/partner denominations have functions consolidated into one position.

This provides for more strategic partnerships with mid councils and partner denominations.

Current upheaval in PMA and timing of election of a new Stated Clerk and a new Executive Director of PMA provides an opportunity for assessment and revision in response to changing realities.

Reduced staffs in both OGA and PMA within last twelve to twenty-four months speaks to a need to streamline our national structure.

This should increase our capacity to be nimble in response to evolving denominational issues, funding patterns, mid council and external mission priorities, and responses/reactions.

This creates an opportunity for a more cohesive presentation of ecclesial and mission priorities across PC(USA) that reflects the realities of the life of the congregations, presbyteries, and synods.

Increasing financial pressures on mid councils are resulting in decreased staffs in mid councils (including some with no staff), and moving toward significant decreases in amounts of any money sent to the national structures.

Accountability to the General Assembly is critical. For example, money is diverted to a non-PC(USA) agency. Four months later, PMA goes to the General Assembly and does not disclose that information. There must be a direct accountability to the General Assembly by PMA.

The expression of the church in all manifestations—synods, presbyteries (mid councils), General Assembly—has become increasingly corporate in its expression rather than mission-driven. This is an opportunity to put the ecclesial expression of the church as the primary focus and to acknowledge as a church that we are called into being (*Book of Order*, F-1.0203, F-1.0401, F-1.0404, F-3.0203).

There needs to be an understanding that the national expression of the church exists to facilitate the work of presbyteries and their congregations. It does not exist to be served and financed by the other councils of the church to further its own purposes.

In 1983, we moved from two corporations in PC(USA) (pensions and PC(USA), A Corporation) to six. For more than forty years we have lived with this model and though it has proved valuable in many instances, relative to the expressions of the church most related to the General Assembly, that has proven not to be true.

Money is fading. Presbyteries have pulled way back, designated some, sent other money directly to mission coworkers.

The PMA and the OGA have both downsized because of decreasing funds. They have not collaborated as they’ve done that—there is nothing compelling them to do so.

The experience of 1001 Worship Communities is a firm example of the way the national church should be resourcing the presbyteries and their congregations, allowing for proactive response to changing circumstances within and without the church.

Concurrence to Item 04-07 from the Presbytery of de Cristo and Sierra Blanca.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that this item be disapproved.

First, we address our basis for speaking to this item. While the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is clearly assigned matters of Christian conscience related to social witness, it is also tasked to advise on matters that affect the church's capacity for social witness as a church within the Reformed tradition, guided by our confessions and the needs of our time.¹

Second, we agree with some of the concerns in the proponents' rationale concerning the need for a distinctively Christian character to our assembly agencies. They make some of the same points made by the Review Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency about secular approach and management distance from the congregations, presbyteries, and synods. But it is important to be clear: those criticisms were not made of the Office of the General Assembly, where form seems to follow function pretty consistently. As in the case of the review committee's report, however, the proponents have gathered some accurate symptoms without sufficient metrics or analysis, and are prescribing the wrong medicine, reorganization on a larger scale than is necessary. Rather than a new combined structure, the need is new vision, theologically driven program support, and effective, church-savvy leadership in the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

This Advice & Counsel memorandum will start with a summary of our objections, then turn to the logic of the council structure proposed by this overture, and conclude with an analysis of the theological, polity, and pragmatic arguments presented for this reorganization.

To summarize, the overture's proposal is not based on an actual study of the tasks performed by both bodies, it does not address the reasons why the Presbyterian Mission Agency sought a nonprofit board rather than council structure, it clearly minimizes the importance of any mission program (other than racial ethnic ministries and the 1001 worshipping communities effort), and does not reflect the complementary roles of the four councils of our church described in the Form of Government (*Book of Order*), specifically the purposes for General Assembly programs laid out in G-3.0501a-c.

The assertion that many bodies have combined clerk and executive functions is not a strong argument but one based primarily on the relative lack of funds and program work in those presbyteries and synods, as Presbyterian polity generally does not favor combining all powers in one executive (bishop) at any level. This item would put two key and different leadership roles in one "basket," so to speak, doubling down on a concentration of power. The recent leadership transition in the already centralized PMA would suggest that such a combination is unwise. There is certainly an ongoing need for coordination, which could be met in part by returning the Stated Clerk to be an ex officio member of the PMA Board's Executive Committee. The Stated Clerk served in that role until the early 2000s.

As for cost savings, as often predicted in corporate mergers, we see little duplication in operations. It is more important to assess the purposes served by either or both entities. The decision of the Presbyterian Foundation to outsource much of its actual funds management and to do certain kinds of program is an argument for the role of the six agency review to play a role in any study of potential consolidation. But financial arguments alone cannot address the OGA's independent responsibility to steward a deliberative council—the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency's responsibility to continue the mission of the many prior boards whose funds are held by the Foundation. The OGA is not a mission agency, and in our view, the PMA should be as much a mission agency as possible.

With regard to structure, the overture proposes a council comprised of synod representatives that would come into being after the 223rd General Assembly (2018), a body that would be headed by the most recent Moderator, and whose members would be elected for a maximum of three, two year terms, with higher turnover encouraged, perhaps to meet existing diversity goals with a smaller body. The immediate effect would be the loss of institutional memory in elected members, intensifying the power concentrated in the director and staff associated with finance and administration. Immediate past Moderators of the General Assembly currently become members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, but the proposal that they would chair a combined PMA and OGA council underestimates the various kinds of work involved, and the need for informed continuity for both General Assembly functioning and the guidance of national and international mission programs.

To examine the use of synod representatives as members of the council, we note that synod executives had an ex officio role in the former United Presbyterian Church's General Assembly Mission Council, a considerably larger body that had some oversight over all assembly agencies. The overture is seeking a measure of accountability for the council members, but

the content of the work of the OGA and PMA, or even their combination, should play the larger role in determining membership needs. It is also instructive to look at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, one of our Full Communion partners. The Lutherans have nine synod-type bodies, rather than fifteen, and sixty-five presbytery-type units rather than 170, for a denomination with about 4 million members. In contrast to PC(USA) mid councils, many of which only do administrative tasks, the Lutheran units often have enough staff to maintain some capacity for mission program. If the de facto model for a council of the General Assembly proposed in Item 04-07 is a synod, and most of our Presbyterian synods do little program at this point, commissioners may see why ACSWP would be concerned about maintaining General Assembly mission capacity under this plan.

With regard to theology and vision, the limited outline provided in this item does not suggest that the combined body would have the capacity to be in serious conversation with the seminaries and mid councils of our church, and with our ecumenical partners. That conversation includes tensions and disagreements, within a bond that is based on a commitment to Jesus Christ as he is witnessed to in scripture, read with the help of our confessions. This is not to say that the current structures of the PMA have functioned at full capacity, but there are some signs of staff rebalancing and improvements in board organization. For all that the rationale to this item speaks against the “secular corporation,” their argument seems to be for a “CEO” approach. This would also eliminate the function both agencies have performed in holding each other accountable to the church as a whole.

The purpose of national agencies is not institutions for institutions’ sake, but programs that provide models and resources for identity formation and mission opportunities and care to the whole body. Historically, the General Assembly agencies play a key role in churchwide initiatives. Leaders of both the mission boards (predecessors to the PMA) and the Stated Clerk contribute unique gifts to our Presbyterian culture. “Let all be done decently and in order,” remains a key motto for our church. In our view, this proposal is not that.

Endnote for ACSWP Advice & Counsel on Item 04-07

1. The Advisory Committee draws on its own history as a distinct group of elected members dating back to 1936 in both main predecessor churches (see Item 11-09). The policy work done by ACSWP functions at the intersection of the two agencies under consideration, as the assembly assigns matters of Christian conscience to ACSWP for study, and only after approval by subsequent General Assemblies do any recommendations from those studies become policy. Policies, rather than simple “pronouncements,” require action or implementation by agencies of the General Assembly and are advisory to the other councils and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Like other ongoing committees of the assembly, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is comprised of Presbyterian volunteers; due to our subject matter, a majority of our members are not pastors but persons with careers in a range of fields.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 04-07.

The structure, as proposed in this overture, does not include programmatic emphasis or advocacy for women, women’s ministries, women’s leadership development, or women in ministry. As a church that has committed to work against oppressive structures of patriarchy and sexism (*Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*, <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/hearing-and-singing-new-songs-god-shunning-old-dis/>), we need to commit resources and staff persons to dismantle said structures and to support women in the church. In the policy statement, *Building Community Among Strangers* (1999), the 211th General Assembly (1999) not only explicitly named the systemic nature of sexism and its prevalence in both society and the church but also committed to doing the work to reverse the damage of this oppression. All levels and entities of the church were urged to: “address the brokenness of male-female relationships caused by sexism and gender inequality by educating men and women about the damaging spiritual, communal, and social effects of sexism ...” (*Building Community Among Strangers* (1999) https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/building-community-among-strangers.pdf, p. 15).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) renewed the call to the church to “[develop] an understanding of and ability to use a “gender lens,” that is—to view issues, institutions and actions through the lens of gender specific needs and realities; ... recognizing the intersectionality of gender and race, along with other factors such as ethnicity and class, that contribute to unique or particular experiences of oppression and/or privilege” (*Hearing and Singing New Songs to God*, <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/hearing-and-singing-new-songs-god-shunning-old-dis/>, p. 8).

At a minimum, ACWC would urge that if this merger is considered, gender justice is held as a priority for the PC(USA) and that priority is reflected in whatever new structure may be created.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-07

Comment on Item 04-07—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-07, on merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a single entity.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

COGA acknowledges that the structures of the church as they were shaped in 1983 may no longer serve the needs of the changing PC(USA). However, COGA is concerned that as the assembly, and any task force or committee created by the General Assembly, consider changes to structure, it first be clear as to our denominational and ecclesial identity before we change any structure. While the overture asserts, and COGA agrees, that one function of the General Assembly and mid councils is to serve as a resource to congregations, a firmer understanding of what that means needs to emerge before the denomination undertakes a full restructuring.

The committee urges that in any action the assembly considers, appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the Stated Clerk, the denomination’s highest elected ecclesial officer, remain independent. The Stated Clerk serves an irreplaceable role in our polity by offering independent parliamentary and constitution advice to the Moderators of the General Assembly as it conducts its work. She or he thereby protects both the appearance and the reality of fairness in the General Assembly’s deliberations. Such independence could be compromised in at least two ways in a restructuring of the OGA and PMA. Placing the Stated Clerk under the supervision of another employee of the General Assembly could directly compromise his or her ability to give independent advice. On the other hand, combining the current roles of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director could place a future Stated Clerk in the position of having to evaluate whether the right parliamentary advice on a controversial issue could cause a loss of mission funding, thereby creating an internal conflict of interest. COGA urges these concerns be weighed carefully in any decisions regarding restructuring.

COGA also suggests that if the assembly believes a task force should be formed to explore the possibility of restructuring, said task force not be limited to considering only a merger model. Similarly, the COGA supports such a task force exploring, with care, the reality of proposed synergies between the two agencies, not assumed synergies. For example, the Office of the General Assembly currently is able to procure its IT services more inexpensively from another vendor than from the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Actual review of the costs and benefits of any proposal is essential in consideration of any approach to restructuring.

If a task force is formed, COGA urges that the membership specifically include two to three current and immediate past board members from each agency. The complexity of the agencies demands that more than one person with knowledge of each agency’s history, ethos, and effectiveness be included on the task force. Further, COGA urges that no former staff members of either agency be appointed to such a task force.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-07

Comment on Item 04-07—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture seeks to merge the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) into a single entity.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully advises that as the national structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is considered and changed, that the GACOR be included in all levels of discussion and where staff and volunteers are sought to serve. With the task to be an accountability structure for participation and representation at the national level of the church and in light of Constitutional requirements at F-1.0403 “Unity in Diversity” and G-3.0103 “Participation and Representation,” GACOR is a necessary advisor.

As all church councils above session must have implementation plans for full participation and representation and they are required to have committees on representation to advocate for diversity in leadership (G-3.0103); GACOR is an essential partner and accountability structure to enable the church to live into its foundational principles. The committee provides a portion of its role of “advocating for diversity in leadership” by advising the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC). We ask that GACOR’s role be included in any action that prescribes new decision-making bodies. Recommendations 2.f (3) and (4), 7 and 9 are such places. To do so without GACOR is to bypass the purposes of assembly actions to date. The GANC and any person or persons charged with nominating leaders should be directed to consult with GACOR in those selections and process.

Recommendation 7 directs the creation of a small council with considerable power. The responsibilities of F-1.0403 and G-3.0103 should always be operational and need to be reflected in assembly directives to remind the body of the concern for selecting decision-making bodies from the full diversity available in the church.

Recommendation 9 directs the council to nominate the search committee, which is an alteration from the common nomination processes used for executive search (GANC, with GACOR consultation). If this action is taken, GACOR requests it be a mandated consulting partner to the body offering the nominations to the church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-07

Comment on Item 04-07—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Response to Recommendation 1

The Presbytery of Santa Fe has overtured the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to merge the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Office of the General Assembly in the manner and following a time schedule that is set forth in the overture. This comment does not seek to weigh in on the topic of agency consolidation, but instead focuses on one line in the overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe: “The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs that at the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Board, the PC(USA), A Corporation, and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly be dissolved.”

Dissolving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“Church Corporation”) is an unnecessary, and possibly very costly, action that should not be taken absent a compelling reason. No compelling reason to dissolve the Church Corporation has been provided in the recommendations. Neither the Office of the General Assembly nor the Presbyterian Mission Agency is a corporation. The Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency conduct all secular activities through the Church Corporation. This is in compliance with the *Book of Order* mandate at G-4.0101, which states in relevant part “Where permitted by civil law, each presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained and shall determine a method to constitute the board of trustees by its own rule.”

If the Church Corporation were to be dissolved, a new corporation would have to be created. If the General Assembly wishes to make changes in the Office of the General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency, a more cost-effective alternative would be to leave the Church Corporation intact and determine which functions of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency are redundant or duplicative and consolidate those functions. (This, too, is not a simple process, but it would be less intensive than dissolving the Church Corporation and starting over with each of the church’s secular agreements and relationships.)

Any Church Corporation governance issues can be implemented through changes to the Church Corporation’s Deliverance and Articles of Incorporation with approval from General Assembly and changes to the Church Corporation’s bylaws with approval from the Presbyterian Mission Agency at the direction of the General Assembly.

See also PMA’s comment on Item 04-11, Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 04-08

[The assembly answered Item 04-08 by the action taken on Item 04-07. See pp. 37, 40.]

On Authorizing the Hiring of a Consultant to Assess the Relationship of OGA and PMA and the Need for Their Continued Existence as Two Separate Entities—From the Presbytery of St. Andrew.

The Presbytery of Saint Andrew overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to:

1. Authorize the Moderators of the 222nd and 221st General Assemblies (2016 and 2014), the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, in consultation with the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to hire a top-tier national consultant with expertise in organizational analysis to assess and make recommendations on the nature, function, and relationship of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to each other and to the presbyteries and congregations of the PC(USA), including the need for their continued existence as two distinct entities.
2. Direct the Advisory Committee on the Constitution to receive the report of the consultant and make recommendations regarding the implementation of the report’s recommendations to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Rationale

The charge given to the Mid Council Commission appointed by the 220th General Assembly (2012) (MCII) included the charge to “review the nature and function of the [Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)] and the Office of the General Assembly [(OGA)] ... with respect to their relationship with and support of mid councils” (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 22).

This portion of the charge was, presumably, the response of the 220th General Assembly (2012) to a section of the first Mid Council Commission’s report that stated:

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

In addition, even the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council need to be reviewed as to how their practices serve presbyteries in their mission to serve congregations. Over and over, stories were told about the pervasive distrust of General Assembly, about the amount of resources that go into our six-part structure, the lack of an effective and clear national strategy toward immigrant populations, and the ways in which the GAMC “competes” with presbyteries and synods for giving dollars. A flatter hierarchy with a focus on the congregation as the center of the mission of the church will not be complete until the church reconsiders the bureaucratic structures of GAMC and eliminates any competition for power or resources between the GAMC and OGA. These conditions foster a bureaucratic mentality at a time when we need to do get back to mission and ministry, doing “whatever it takes” to revitalize local congregations. It is not within the purview of commission to make such recommendations, so we call on the 220th General Assembly (2012) to establish a task force to review the nature and functions of the General Assembly offices and departments in light of the charge given to us (MCC Final Report, pp. 38 ll. 8-21; see also *Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 294).

In response to its charge, MCII appointed a sub-committee to conduct an assessment of these entities from the perspective of presbyteries and synods. That sub-committee concluded that:

This admittedly limited review of the relationships that characterize the presbyteries and synods with the PMA and OGA respectively offers some insights even though it was neither broad enough nor deep enough to be definitive. Positively, the collected data do not reveal any acute or critical points of tension. Yet, the review did reflect a rather disquieting and widespread malaise concerning a sense of shared identity of the church as a whole. In the present moment, there was expressed a concern for whether the church can afford, financially and in terms of human resources, the continued existence of what are seen as two large and expensive national agencies, as well as two levels of mid council structures . . . (MCII Report, Section V.C.; see *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 326).

However, although MCII reached the conclusion that we do need “two levels of mid council structures” moving forward, it did not make any recommendations regarding the reported “concern for whether the church can afford, financially and in terms of human resources, the continued existence” of the two separate and distinct entities.

We believe that the time has come to step back and take a look at the big picture of the PC(USA)’s governance and structure for mission, which were created in an era that nearly everyone agrees is no longer our reality.

We further believe that an outside, objective assessment, while its results may need to then be interpreted in light of our Reformed faith and polity, is nevertheless not only warranted but necessary.

Concurrence to Item 04-08 from the Presbyteries of Charleston-Atlantic, Huntingdon, Mid-South, New Harmony, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that this item be disapproved.

The issue is one of theology more than management. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, the real focus of this overture, has persons with management, management consulting experience, and executive search expertise on its board. For the last ten years plus, management consulting books have been a regular feature of agency board and executive staff meetings. Yet it may be that management itself cannot be separated from the content of what is being managed, perhaps especially in the case of the church. Thus, in the first instance, the definition of how one arrives at a judgment about the merger of two church agencies must be challenged. And for those who believe the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) has become too similar to a secular corporation in its operation and values, this recommendation would tend to reinforce that criticism, whatever good analysis the person (or firm) might perform.

In our Advice & Counsel memorandum on Item 04-07, we identified our assigned role as a servant of the General Assembly working within the Presbyterian Mission Agency. While our focus is on “social witness policy,” it is also on the capacity of the church’s agencies to fulfill the hopes that are in our confessions and our tradition of “world-formative Christianity,” to quote Nicholas Wolterstorff, the Reformed Christian philosopher. This is one of the reasons why the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy believes the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board needs to be more intentional in hiring Presbyterian staff, especially as the percentages involved in mission program are steadily reduced. Thus, as with the report of the Review Committee on the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Item 04-07, symptoms are being correctly identified, but the diagnosis is misdirected.

We are concerned that if the work of any General Assembly agencies are to be measured, that the forms of measurement be intrinsically theological. Otherwise, the danger is that church structures may be viewed in a reductionist or overly functionalist way. The PMA also retains a Research Services office for survey and analysis. But to “benchmark” what we are in fact doing as a denomination, serious conversations with seminary faculty and administrators, and ecumenical partners, would be very important. In our view, it should be part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s normal work to help convene those conversations, and the self-study process should have contained more of it, with appropriate metrics where possible.

Our predecessors since 1729 built a denomination to accomplish God’s purposes on this continent and countless faithful Presbyterians contributed to endow national boards to do specific kinds of mission. If commissioners want a hard-headed

analysis of the areas of possible overlap and cost savings, or for a more transparent analysis of administrative and program costs, they should ask the agencies for it, individually and jointly, and go carefully over the audits that already exist.

Although we recognize that there should be a work of restructure within the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Six Agency review should always address areas of overlap and possible cooperation. Commissioners may want to ask the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for another response to the review committee report in 2018, when the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board currently plans to present a candidate for Presbyterian Mission Agency Director. Commissioners may want to ask for a real “platform” to be presented by that person being nominated, with clear targets, objectives that would reinforce moves toward transparency, and above all a vision for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Such a real process of approval for the new Presbyterian Mission Agency Director would build accountability more than any “rubber stamping” of the board’s chosen candidate, just as the possibility of an open election does for Stated Clerk.

If commissioners do want an outside assessment, at whatever cost, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that any management consulting report itself be critiqued by Presbyterians with training and experience in theology, ethics, and pastoral ministry, within and outside the agency or agencies examined.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-08

Comment on Item 04-08—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-08, on authorizing the hiring of a consultant to assess the relationship of OGA to PMA and the need for their continued existence as two separate entities.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

COGA refers the assembly to its comments on Item 04-07, On Merging the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly into a Single Entity.

Additionally, COGA would urge that in any consideration of the restructuring of the PC(USA), the full depth and breadth of the theological, regional, racial, gender, and ethnic constituents of the PC(USA) be represented. Such representation cannot be reflected in one person.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-08

Comment on Item 04-08—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s first recommendation is to forgo the normally scheduled All Agency Review* and instead spend that time (and financial resource) to examine the possible merger of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly. The All Agency Review was mandated by the General Assembly in 2008 as a way of ensuring that agencies worked cooperatively together and that there were no duplication of services by the national agencies of the PC(USA).

We support the goal of enhancing coordination and effective missional and ecclesiastical support for our denominational agencies, mid councils, and our congregations. The scheduled All-Agency Review would give an overarching view of the six agencies and reveal a range of possible approaches to restructuring or for more collaboration and sharing of resources. That review would also help ensure that we are moving together with a sense of unity of mission and ministry rather than proceeding in a piecemeal fashion.

For these reasons, we find the proposals for considering a Presbyterian Mission Agency/Office of the General Assembly merger presently pending before this assembly to be premature and unduly narrow in scope. It is also without the benefit of having all our agency partners, General Assembly commissioners, and others at the table. Proposing that a different committee move directly to examining a structural merger of only two agencies prematurely forecloses the benefits of a wider, more careful analysis.

In a time of unprecedented and rapid change, our first step should be careful, prayerful, and thoughtful discernment of how we can best serve God, our congregations, and global partners. We believe understanding contextual realities will inform a wider, careful assessment of the various needs and strengths of all the agencies of the denomination. It will help us identify the best structural, financial, and staffing synergies with confidence that these proposals will help the PC(USA) be responsive to the challenges of our times at every level of the life of our denomination.

While a full exploration of the best approaches is wise, we recognize that structural changes for all agencies may not be needed or appropriate. Nonetheless, the perspective and experience of all six agencies would be valuable additions to a dis-

cernment process. Under the provisions of Agency Review Manual, the All Agency Review Committee is to be composed of a representative from each assembly agency, commissioners to recent General Assemblies (representing mid councils) and at-large members. With the benefit of the established process of the All Agency Review, having all our agency partners, and others at the table will best inform such an important structural decision and its possibilities for the coordination of resources.

In order not to lose the important work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee, we suggest that Recommendation 1 be referred to the All Agency Review Committee as an intentional part of their work.

*In 2008, the General Assembly approved a recommendation from the last Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee to create an additional cycle in the six-year review process that provides for a review of the “service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives” at the end of each cycle. Such a review occurred in 2010, and another is scheduled for 2016. In its rationale, the review committee wrote: “Such a review should focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives and should not duplicate the more detailed work of the individual agency review committees. Particular attention should be given to how or if these agencies work cooperatively and where or if there is duplication of services in the system.”

See also PMA’s comment on Item 04-11, Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, on p. 248.

Item 04-09

[The assembly answered Item 04-09 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 40.]

On Creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew the Practice of Our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century—From the Presbytery of Foothills.

The Presbytery of Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to create a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee, with the aim to reform, renew, and refresh the practice of our Reformed polity for the 21st century, centered in the koinonia of our shared participation in Jesus Christ, the true Head of the Church (*Book of Order*, F-1.02). The General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee will:

1. Coordinate with synod and presbytery stated clerks and executives to organize regional gatherings of the commissioners to the 222nd and subsequent General Assemblies, plus ruling elders, teaching elders, deacons, educators, presbytery and synod staff persons, and lay persons, to come together to study the core principles of our historic polity, to reflect upon the sweeping religious, political, cultural, and social changes in which we find ourselves, and advise the General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee regarding the content and organization of the Constitution, the creation of a strategic ten-year, shared denominational mission plan, and to devise the most effective structures to faithfully and boldly uphold our Reformed polity and practice.
2. Study and devise a strategy to most effectively use the modern communication that is afforded to us through the internet and social media.
3. Receive, organize, and report to the 223rd and subsequent General Assemblies faithful summaries of the regional gatherings.

Rationale

The Presbytery of Foothills, affirming G-3.0501 that, “The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness,” has submitted eight overtures with the aim of engaging our denomination in the sustained work of reform, renewal, and modernization. These individual overtures represent key strategic changes in our recent practice that we believe will instigate the church to enter a new era of reform. Binding these diverse overtures together are the following principles:

1. *Stability of Identity*: The PC(USA) needs a stable Constitution that is undergirded by renewing the Constitutional Principle above the Democratic Principle (Item 04-03).
2. *Change through Building Broad Consensus*: The PC(USA) needs to move away from seeking change by legislation, and rather move to broad consensus building in and between the Councils of the Church (Item 04-01).
3. *Holistic Witness*: Through a balanced focus upon “The Great Ends of the Church” (F-1.0304) at the meetings of the General Assembly, the PC(USA) needs a more holistic and faithful practice of living out the breadth of our calling (Item 04-01).
4. *Focus and Depth*: The PC(USA) needs to improve and deepen its commitment to and practice of meaningful social witness by moving away from the practice of pushing “yes/no” votes on highly partisan issues at the biennial meetings of the General Assembly, and rather work to engage every congregation and every council of the church to find deep and rich consensus (Item 11-01 and Item 11-02).

5. *Mutual Interdependence*: As presbytery administrative leaders are in the unique position of relations between congregations and all higher councils, the PC(USA) needs their wisdom and perspective as advisory delegates to the meetings of the General Assembly (Item 04-02).

6. *Adaptability and Nimbleness*: As the world of the 21st century is rapidly changing and as bureaucratic structures, once established and funded, tend towards outliving their original purpose, the PC(USA) needs the regular input of presbyteries into the issue of best practices and most fitting structures of the national church (Item 04-05 and Item 04-06).

7. *More Than Yes or No*: As complex and multifaceted issues are often made simplistic by simple “yes” or “no” choices, the PC(USA) needs to create a third category of voting that allows for the message, “no, not now.”

Believing the whole church and every level of council in the church must be engaged in this work of reform, renewal, and refreshment, the creation of a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee is the best method to engage in serious season of reform that is neither too hasty nor too tardy, but will help the PC(USA) reform, renew, and modernize its practice in a manner that upholds the venerable standard, “let it be done decently and in order.”

Concurrence to Item 04-09 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, John Calvin, and New Harmony.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-09

Comment on Item 04-09—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 04-09, on creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to renew the practice of our Reformed polity for the 21st century.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly.

COGA appreciates the concern for the continued reformation of the church, and the ongoing need for renewal of our Reformed polity in the 21st century. However, it is unclear how the proposed General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee would be constituted, what the body would be empowered to do, and how long it would serve.

Item 04-10

[The assembly answered Item 04-10 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 40.]

On Amending Book of Order G-6.04e and Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) to Require Two-Thirds Vote on Constitutional Changes—From the Presbytery de Cristo.

The Presbytery de Cristo overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-6.04e of the *Book of Order* be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of a ~~majority~~ *two-thirds majority* of all the presbyteries. ~~The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment. The proposed amendment is approved and enacted by the next General Assembly following the amendment’s receipt of the necessary two-thirds approval of the presbyteries.~~”

2. The Presbytery de Cristo overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to amend Stand Rule F.5.b.(1) as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“b.(1) The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The Moderator may also call for unanimous consent by voice vote or show of hands. All decisions made by assembly standing committees by a three-quarters (supermajority) vote shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda to be considered as the first order of plenary business following committee meetings. Any actions requesting constitutional change must be considered in plenary *and shall require a two-thirds majority for passage.*”

Rationale

The General Assembly has frequently experienced extremely close votes while meeting in plenary session, particularly in recent sessions.

These votes result in slim margins of passage or rejection.

Such margins reveal deep diversity in faithful discernment of issues of considerable controversy and importance.

While the prophetic role of the minority or slim majority of a body seeking God's will cannot be dismissed, nonetheless, in matters of broad interest to the entire church, striving for consensus in matters of faith and practice gives greater opportunity for the diversity of voices within the church to be thoroughly understood. In seeking unity within the faithful, broad consensus would allow both for greater support within the church and greater weight in the church's witness in the world.

Concurrence to Item 04-10 from the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-10

Advice on Item 04-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 04-10.

The first change proposed by this overture would require a "two-thirds majority" of the presbyteries to approve amendments. This is similar in part to Item 04-03. See the ACC rationale and comments on that item. The second and third proposed changes to G-4.02e require additional constitutional interpretation.

The second proposed change is to require all amendments be "*approved and enacted by the next General Assembly.*" This process is not necessary. The next General Assembly, should it desire to change the outcome, could simply approve an amendment that changes the presbytery-approved amendment(s). This inverts the power of General Assembly relative to the presbyteries by giving authority to the General Assembly over the expressed will of the presbyteries.

Section G-6.01 states that the current procedures for amendment "are understood as a means to faithfulness" to the PC(USA) seeking to be "the church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God' in the power of the Spirit" (F-2.02). Those procedures include the balancing of majority and minority rights by requiring a majority of both the General Assembly and the presbyteries for amendments to the *Book of Order*.

The third change proposed by this item would amend the time at which approved amendments become effective. Currently the amendments take effect one year after the proposing General Assembly adjourns (G-6.04e). This proposed change would make the approved amendments effective when the next General Assembly both approves and enacts the amendment(s). Section G-6.04d currently requires presbyteries to transmit their votes to the Stated Clerk no later than one year following the adjournment of the transmitting assembly. This overture does not address this section; adoption of the two-year period does not change the one-year transmittal requirement. There is no compelling reason to extend the time other than to provide for an additional vote by the second General Assembly.

The final change proposed by this item is to amend Standing Rule F.5.b (1). The ACC has no mandate to consider changes to the Standing Rules concerning voting requirements.

Item 04-11

[The assembly answered Item 04-11 by the action taken on Item 04-07. See pp. 37, 40.]

Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency

The Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following: [Note: We recognize that approval of some of these recommendations may make others unnecessary.]

1. That the General Assembly delay the appointment of the All Agency Review scheduled for 2016 and instead direct the Moderators of the 220th, 221st, and 222nd General Assemblies (2012), (2014), and (2016), in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), to name a committee of fifteen people to explore the possibility of a merger between the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

a. The committee shall be made up of ruling and teaching elders with broad geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

- b. The committee membership will include a representative from both the PMA Review Committee and the OGA Review Committee, a representative from both the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and at least one mid council staff person.
- c. The PMA and OGA will each appoint a staff person to serve as staff support for the committee.
- d. The committee's work will be informed by other churchwide conversations on the future of the church and its structure.
- e. The assembly will allocate sufficient resources so that this committee can meet regularly and consult with other PC(USA) constituents, as well as others who could provide insight into the process.
- f. Recommendations for any missional and structural changes will be brought to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Rationale for Recommendation 1

The review committee has done its work during a time of calls for churchwide introspection, including an invitation by the General Assembly Moderator to explore the church's identity, a conversation led by COGA on the future of the church, as well as many other concurrent dialogues. In addition, transitions in both the PMA and OGA leadership offers a unique opportunity to envision new ways of leading the church.

The committee found significant duplication and siloing within the Presbyterian Mission Agency and between the PMA and OGA. This has contributed to the ongoing confusion regarding who speaks for the denomination and bears the primary responsibility for communicating the church's message to its constituents and the world.

This moment in our church's history presents us with a unique opportunity to become a more nimble organization that can better serve the mission of the denomination. We believe that the proposed committee would be the best way forward in crafting and clarifying the future structure of the church.

2. That the General Assembly direct the Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), in consultation with the GANC, to name a committee of eight people to review the responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and provide a plan for restructuring the Board so that it can be better able to do the adaptive work necessary to provide leadership and guidance for the PMA and the church, today and into the next generation.

Rationale for Recommendation 2

It was apparent to the review committee that the current Board size (57) and structure are unwieldy and outdated. While this served as an important transitional body, the current composition hinders the body from the adaptive change required for today.

While both technical tasks and strategic vision are within the purview of the PMAB, the strong emphasis on oversight and compliance has moved the Board into a narrower, hands-on prescriptive approach with many layers of accountability and decision-making. This has come at the expense of both the broader strategic work of vision-casting and the necessary commitment to communicating that vision.

3. That the General Assembly direct the directors of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) to appoint a staff committee to explore the best ways for Shared Services (finance and accounting, information technology, payroll, communication, translations, human resources, legal and risk management, internal audit, building services, mail and print, Presbyterian Distribution Service, and the Hubbard Press) to serve those four agencies.

- a. The committee shall be made up of equal staff representation from the four agencies using the Shared Services.
- b. The committee shall bring recommendations to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Rationale for Recommendation 3

Currently, Shared Services is housed with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and is accountable to the PMA Executive Director. However, the department serves OGA, PILP, PPC, and PMA. We heard about expensive duplication of shared services in all four of the agencies. In addition, we heard of difficulties in sharing services without shared supervisory authority.

Executive Summary

Responding to the call to join God's mission for the transformation of creation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) equips, inspires, and connects the church to share the love of God in Jesus Christ. God has blessed the church with many talented and faithful servants at the PMA who feel called to minister with the church in their various capacities. Their hard work is all the more admirable in light of recent transitions and controversies.

Though the PMA has produced good work, it is evident that there are significant weaknesses in a number of areas, including: strategic decision-making and priority-setting; organizational culture and work environment; and collaborative efforts with other General Assembly agencies. This report outlines what we gleaned from interviews, correspondence, and promotional materials. We believe that what we observed permeates PMA organizational structure and culture and should not be considered isolated to particular situations or departments.

In addition to the recommendations above, the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider the following:

1. That the PMA develop internal educational opportunities for staff to become better informed about the other five agencies in order to foster creative collaboration.

In our interviews it was apparent that PMA staff is in need of a broader understanding of the work of the other agencies to foster greater collaboration. While we understand there are existing staff development days, these have not been sufficient to provide the information and opportunities for building relationships that staff need.

2. That the PMA develop and implement a plan to educate all donors about how their donations are allocated, including a clear breakdown of what percentage goes directly to mission funding and what percentage is applied to administrative costs. This information should be easily accessible.

The review committee had great difficulty obtaining information regarding the allocation of mission funds. We discovered it is a variable amount between 5 percent and 22 percent for donor designated contributions. It seems that it is not fully understood by the program staff or senior leadership. Allocating for administrative costs is a common standard and is a standard measure of efficiency of a charity. We believe transparency in education and communication related to these allocations also provides an incentive for PMA to keep these costs as low as possible.

3. That the PMA provide a chaplain for the Presbyterian Center.

After several years of what many characterized as an environment of anxiety and grief related to precipitous and/or impending layoffs, almost constant restructuring and organizational shifts all on top of general life events, the review committee found staff at every level in need of spiritual support. As a church agency, the PMA has a serious responsibility and unique opportunity to create a work environment that fosters health for the whole person. The chaplain would provide spiritual care for people of all faith traditions.

4. That PMA engage in regular cultural humility training provided by outside consultants for PMAB and staff.

Recent events (including culturally stereotypical and offensive printed materials for Special Offerings and the confusing “Ask Me Why You Matter” campaign) highlight the systemic lack of cultural humility and awareness at the agency. We recommend ongoing and regular education for *all* personnel led by experienced professionals in this discipline not employed by the agency. We view this as a necessary first step toward expanding cultural humility that can then lead to models for the wider church.

Overall Rationale

I. INTRODUCTION

The Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency was charged by the 221st General Assembly (2014) to evaluate the relationship of the PMA with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We were guided by the Agency Review Manual, prepared by the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), which is based on the agency review committee guidelines in the *Manual of the General Assembly: Organization for Mission*. Over a period of more than sixteen months, beginning in Fall 2014, we met in person on three separate occasions, communicated via email and conference calls regularly, and interviewed more than sixty-five individuals. These interviews were with PMA staff, Board members, mid council representatives, staff of other General Assembly agencies, and other stakeholders. We also consulted with the Committee to Review the Office of General Assembly. Because there was a significant amount of existing data from previous surveys, we decided not to conduct yet another formal survey for this review.

We began our review by reading a self-study document prepared for us by PMA staff and the PMAB. We were very thankful for this document and the work that went into it. The report did a very good job of orienting us to the PMA and of documenting the PMA’s work in response to the recommendations of the last PMA review committee. The report also highlighted the breadth and quality of the PMA’s mission around the world. Our committee also reviewed additional documents provided by the PMA as well as reports from the General Assembly.

It is important to note that during the course of our work PMA experienced significant challenges and controversies, all of which were highly publicized by church-related press and in social media. The agency discovered that some staff assigned to the 1001 New Worshipping Communities initiative had established a separate, nonprofit organization to receive funds to support

that initiative. A routine audit of the 2013 Presbyterian Youth Triennium showed larger losses than had previously been reported. The Special Offerings department released promotional materials for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering that were culturally insensitive. In addition, since our review work began, the Executive Director of the PMA has resigned and the PMAB has named an Interim Executive Director. While it was not this committee's responsibility to address these specific incidents, we did look closely at how the culture and systems within PMA might have allowed these incidents to occur.

The committee members include: Teaching Elder Debra Avery, Oakland, California, San Francisco Presbytery; Teaching Elder Eric Beene, Savannah, Georgia, Savannah Presbytery; Ruling Elder Tacey Braithwaite, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, South Dakota Presbytery; Teaching Elder Eliana Maxim, Seattle, Washington, Seattle Presbytery; Teaching Elder Nancy Muth, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Presbytery; Teaching Elder Ken Page, Phoenix, Arizona, Grand Canyon Presbytery; Ruling Elder Stephen Proctor, Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, Carlisle Presbytery; Ruling Elder Chris Rhodes, Santa Rosa, California, Redwoods Presbytery; Ruling Elder Barbara Sarjeant, Orangeburg, South Carolina, Charleston Atlantic Presbytery; Ruling Elder Elizabeth Swee, Moorhead, Minnesota, Northern Plains Presbytery; Ruling Elder James Tse, Woodhaven, New York, New York City Presbytery; Teaching Elder Perry Wootten, Mt. Kisco, New York, New York City Presbytery.

II. A BRIEF OVERVIEW

A. *Accolades*

Throughout this process, our committee found much to be affirmed in the work and ministry of the PMA. The PMA is determined to share the good news of Jesus Christ by demonstrating a true and meaningful commitment to those in need in every area of life and the world, regardless of economic or social strata, including providing assistance in times of disaster, offering guidance to congregations, assisting displaced persons, helping the unemployed, supporting youth in developing faith, and raising the level of education. Not only is the PMA doing good work, but successes are communicated broadly throughout the denomination.

The use of denominational magazines, news reports, annual reports, promotional materials, websites, social media, and many other sources makes it possible for everyone to learn about the many successes of the PC(USA). We were provided with many well-written articles and colorful images describing the wonderful works of ministry and mission accomplished on behalf of the whole church. Our committee celebrates the scope of the ministries and the successful outcomes of the work of PMA. We are also encouraged by new initiatives of the PMA communications staff to better share the stories of the accomplishments of the PMA and encourage greater commitment by the whole church to the work of PMA.

B. *Mission and Values*

To focus the broad range of work the PMA is tasked with completing, PMA executive staff and PMAB members have developed and clearly articulated statements on the mission and core values of the PMA. The PMA's mission is "to inspire, equip and connect the PC(USA) in its many expressions to serve Christ in the world through new and existing communities of faith, hope, love and witness." The PMA lives out this missional expression through the core values of Collaboration, Accountability, Responsiveness, and Excellence. The materials provided to us by the PMA for the review make clear that these statements of the organizational mission and values are meant to serve as the guideposts for the agency's work.

C. *Staff*

Our committee was impressed by the quality of the PMA staff. The PMA has many talented and faithful employees doing ministry in Louisville, deployed across the United States, and around the world. We want to emphasize that the staff we interviewed are passionate about their jobs, have a deep love of Christ and the work of the church, and feel called to serve. It is apparent that PMA staff members are highly qualified for the work they do. This shows in the high quality of the materials and programs that are developed and presented. In addition, PMA staff should be commended for their high level of commitment, especially when significant upheaval and controversy has been the norm.

Despite the many successes, the clearly articulated mission and values, and the great talent and commitment of PMA staff, we found some important areas of concern. Our concerns center in three areas:

- A lack of a clearly communicated *strategic* direction for the PMA among staff and PMAB members.
- Poor coordination with other agencies of the General Assembly.
- An organizational culture and work environment characterized by anxiety, distrust, and a clear lack in the areas of spiritual leadership, transparency, and cultural humility.

III. PMA STRATEGY OBSERVATIONS

In our research, we found that there was a frequent disconnect between decision-making and priority-setting and operational strategy. In some cases, though Mission and Values were clearly articulated, in the execution of the work, there seemed

to be no strategic plan guiding overall priority setting and decision making. This seemed to contribute to tension among staff and may have served to dilute the overall effectiveness of the PMA.

A. *Resource-Driven*

The entire PC(USA) recognizes that the membership and the resulting revenue of the church have been declining. The PMAB and staff have communicated internally and externally about the financial limitations at PMA and the expected short-falls in the near future. The reality of decreasing resources requires the denomination to be more aware of and concerned about balancing the need to demonstrate fiscal responsibility with the importance of sustaining current programs and leaning into the ongoing challenge of creating programming that leads us into the future. However, as our work progressed, it seemed clear that there has been a shift from attending to the strategic priorities that emerge from the Mission and Values to an overwhelming focus on decision-making driven solely by the availability of resources.

Though it may be that some denominational programs will not be sustainable in our more resource-constrained church, it is critical for the church to become more open to inspiration rather than allowing financial desperation to dictate the terms of change. Inspiration needs to be rooted in missional identity and shared values. Though more limited financial resources characterize the current context for decision-making, it is imperative that the PMA be more intentional about attending to the Mission and Values as a first priority as strategic decisions are made.

B. *Communication*

Our committee found that PMA communications also do not reflect strategic decision-making. This is not to imply that there is a lack of information being shared. In fact, from a messaging standpoint, there is a blizzard of information that comes from the PMA. The overwhelming amount of information provided for denominational use hinders clarity about the mission and work of the PMA. For instance:

- At the time of our study, there were more than 100,000 pages on the denomination's website. Staff has primarily maintained the information in their respective departments. We understand that each area within the PMA has a compelling story and that each area needs to respond to requests for information and resources that come from mid councils and congregations. Unfortunately, while important content continues to be added, information is rarely removed and the indexing of each additional page has created a labyrinthine agglomeration of data, which is barely accessible even through a Google search.

- Beyond the official website, there are a number of stand-alone sites that are maintained outside of the PMA's administration. For example, the 1001 Worshiping Communities site utilized a tool that was not part of the range of tools utilized by the IT staff, making it difficult for them to provide support. Issues of standardization of platforms and the need for security are obvious.

- In addition to the PMA's communication through websites, there are more than 100 electronic newsletters. According to the Communications staff, fifteen of those electronic newsletters are on the issue of hunger alone. At the time of our interviews with staff, attempts to consolidate these publications had been unsuccessful.

We believe that the PMA has good intentions behind the desire to share more information. However, there is a lack of clarity around vision and focus. A collaborative communication plan developed by communication experts and with consensus of leaders is essential for the PMA to be better equipped to communicate its strategic direction and align vision and values across the denomination.

Finally, there is a lack of a unified, strategic denominational voice in the public arena. In ecumenical, interfaith, and secular engagement, there are multiple voices offering a multiplicity of identities. This lack of a single person empowered to speak as the "voice" of the General Assembly was raised in previous agency reviews. While the Stated Clerk was named as the person empowered in that role, with the volume of communication coming from the PMA touching on such a breadth of issues, it is easy to see why some would be confused about that role.

C. *Board Involvement*

Our committee understood that the primary responsibility for setting strategic direction for the PMA rests with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). However, we do not believe the PMAB has a good understanding of the big picture that includes both the work of the PMA and the PMAB's role in that work. In actual practice, we observed that missional goals seem to be set by a subset of PMA staff.

The PMAB has changed significantly in its responsibilities, structure, and composition in recent years. Previously, the General Assembly Council was comprehensive of all agencies of the denomination and had broad authority to act on behalf of the General Assembly between meetings. It was a large body meant to be representative of the whole church. In recent years, how the six agencies are structured and relate to each other and the General Assembly have changed. When the General Assembly Council was eliminated, the PMAB was created. It is clear to us that the current configuration of the PMAB is not effective. Board members, staff, and other stakeholders we interviewed shared the following insights:

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THE WAY FORWARD

- There is a lack of clarity in the church at large as well as among Board members related to the scope of their work.
- There is significant pressure to “be all things to all people.”
- The size of the PMAB is too large, with a total of forty-seven voting and ten non-voting members.
- The process by which Board members are nominated and assigned lacks the focus and intentionality required to assure that the PMAB is flexible enough to accomplish their work.
- There is confusion regarding specific responsibilities and lines of accountability between the PMAB and the advisory committees, including the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and how they relate to other agencies including the General Assembly.
- The inclusion of Shared Services (Information Technology, Finance and Accounting, Building Services, etc.) within the PMA creates problems because, while they provide services to several agencies, they are accountable only to PMA.

PMAB members told us that they believe it would be helpful to them to reconfigure and envision the structure and role of the PMAB in order to align Board governance with strategic and fiduciary roles. In the past two years, to overcome a feeling that the Board was unable to achieve more than routine approval of the recommendations of staff and others, the PMAB has spent time in training on their governance role. Members of the Board told us of their desire to be more engaged in their roles, particularly in setting priorities for their work and using their time together as a Board more wisely.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

We observed a tendency for PMA staff to emphasize their many successful outcomes and outputs while attention to organizational culture, processes, and management are inconsistent. In our interviews, PMAB leaders and senior management maintained that recent controversies are isolated incidents and not evidence of any systemic problems in the agency. However, our committee believes that there is a direct relationship between systemic organizational culture and these incidents.

A. *Work Environment*

In interviews and conversations, the PMA staff, PMAB members, and other stakeholders repeatedly told us that even though there are clear successes in mission and ministry, these successes have been accomplished despite an organizational culture that is heavy-handed and a management style that has made for a highly stressful and sometimes even unhealthy work environment. In recent years, a secular corporate model has emerged as the primary organizational form. In that shift, it seems that the PMA has lost what is essential and unique to this organization: an ecclesial identity, a foundation in the Form of Government, and a sense of corporate spirituality. This has been seen not only in frequent downsizing actions, but also in the handling of specific personnel concerns connected with recent controversies connected to PMA work.

The organizational culture has not only hindered the best intentions and efforts of staff, but also come at a spiritual cost. We consistently heard concerns about the following:

- Low morale and often unbearable anxiety among staff and PMAB members.
- Cumbersome and unresponsive hierarchy with more layers of management than are appropriate for an organization the size of the PMA.
- Failure to include staff in decision-making processes that affect the programs they manage.
- A “silo mentality” fostered by poor internal communication, competition for scarce resources, and interdepartmental distrust.
- The perception that staff members are not trusted by management.
- Responsibility for accomplishing significant work without the authority to make and implement decisions.
- A sense that some individual staff members have special status allowing them to bypass processes and systems designed to assure accountability.
- Inconsistent leadership training and skills for managers and supervisors.

We believe that outcomes are important and should be properly acknowledged and affirmed. But the long-term success of the PMA, as an organization committed to following Jesus Christ, is dependent on healthy relationships fostered in a culture that rewards collaborative behavior and nurtures health and wholeness for the whole person. This is especially true in a time of significant change.

B. *Anxiety and Distrust*

In our interviews, our committee discovered that the overarching problem of the current culture of anxiety, fear, distrust, and conflict avoidance was a significant factor in the difficulties within the PMA. The incidents involving the 1001 New Worshipping Communities program, the Youth Triennium, and the production of Special Offering materials that many found to perpetuate disturbing stereotypes, both illustrated and perpetuated that anxiety and distrust. Several people that we interviewed even used the term PTSD to describe the mood at PMA before and, especially, after those incidents. Others referred to distrust between staff and leadership. Several times, comments made in interviews provided evidence of this low-trust, high anxiety environment, such as:

- We don't want to consult the bean counters in accounting—we just want to get things done.
- We built a “rogue website” because we don't believe the tech department is capable of creating something that will meet our needs.
- We don't want to consult with the advisory committee or program area because that would be a pain.
- We don't want to go through the legal department, so we'll just use a website to provide legal advice.

We often heard the objection that collaboration can make for slow decision making. For example, when some departments have worked outside of established systems to set up stand-alone websites, the staff in those departments told us they did so because they needed to be more nimble and responsive. While it is true that in the past administrative departments such as accounting or legal have slowed down or advised against programming and working with advisory committees can be ponderous, it is also true that these consultative processes provide necessary checks and balances and offer appropriate checkpoints for program staff. We do not believe that transparency, collaboration, and clarity need to be sacrificed for the sake of speed and decisiveness. Given current realities, it is clear to us that it is important for PMA to encourage this kind of departmental collaboration in order to avoid the kinds of problems that we have seen at PMA over the past year.

C. *Spiritual Life*

As a faith-based organization, the PMA has a unique opportunity and responsibility to create a work environment that fosters health for the whole person. The PMA's open hiring policy means people of different faith backgrounds work together. However, the values inherent in Reformed spirituality can provide a starting point from which diverse spiritual practices can emerge and be part of the overall plan for employee support. Though some individuals in the organization are living into this potential, there seems to be a general lack of spiritual leadership among the staff. Three areas in particular were noted:

- **Spiritual Care:** After several years of what many characterized as an environment of precipitous and/or impending layoffs, almost constant restructuring and organizational decision making driven more by budget demands than ministry needs, staff at every level are in need of pastoral care. Currently, there is no overarching program for the spiritual care of PMA employees.
- **Worship Life:** Chapel attendance is low. In fact, some staff reported fear that chapel attendance signals a light workload, which could trigger elimination of their position. Other staff shared that they had been actively discouraged from attending chapel by supervisors. To be sure, chapel attendance cannot be required. However, staff members should be encouraged to engage in specific times of prayer and praise as part of community life.
- **Reformed Theology and Presbyterian Polity:** PMA staff comes from a variety of faith backgrounds. While this diversity is a gift, it also presents a unique challenge with regard to how staff represents the unique witness of Presbyterian theology, history, and polity.

D. *Transparency*

In our interviews, we found a significant lack of trust and silo behavior across all departments. This is part of a “vicious cycle” that is both derived from and contributes to a lack of transparency. It is apparent that collaborative efforts have suffered when individuals and departments have felt outside of the loop in the decision-making process. It is no surprise that those working in this kind of environment have become wary and protective of their own interests rather than reach out to work with others. We observed that open communication is particularly lacking when the lack of resources has threatened existing programs.

While it is understandable that staff would be reluctant to communicate bad news, transparency in difficult times is all the more important. In addition, lack of transparency often contributes to a sense that there is a corresponding lack of self-understanding. A clear example of this was seen in the PMA's own self-study, which was provided for our committee. Though there is plenty to celebrate, there no section that details growing edges. This concerned us. In order to foster a culture of trust and transparency, PMA will need to demonstrate a willingness to share all news even when disclosure is unflattering.

Our committee believes that there is a sincere desire among PMA staff and PMAB members to be more transparent and engaging. Because of this, culture has shifted some. For instance, there was a greater openness to input from all staff and departments in the budget planning in the past two years. However, we discovered other areas in which transparency actually seems to be discouraged. For example, it is very difficult for a donor to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to fully understand what portion of their donation is allocated to administrative costs and what portion actually goes to mission. We were unable to get a firm answer to this question, even in our multiple interviews.

E. *Cultural Humility*

Cultural humility has been defined as the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is “other oriented” (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person. The PMAB has a high commitment to the mandate of racial and ethnic inclusiveness at the national level. Cultural proficiency and competency is underscored through agency training and responsible engagement. The PMA has also made some efforts to develop a more culturally inclusive staff, and we encourage them to deepen this effort in PMA and at all levels of the church.

However, our committee observed a need for further expansion and affirmation of cultural humility within the PMA. This assessment is confirmed by the admission of Board members that the PMAB as a whole has a long way to go in regards to cultural awareness and humility. In several interviews with staff, we also heard that privileged staff (often Caucasian) operate outside of policies with no communication with other departments. In addition, when racial ethnic staff raised concerns it was disregarded. That was certainly the case with the decision to use racially biased materials for the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Even though there was some consultation over racial ethnic concerns, the decision to go ahead with the objectionable materials was made unilaterally and ignored those concerns.

Because racial ethnic concerns are at the heart of denominational values and vision, collaborative efforts should always include the advice and/or participation of people of color. Further, when that advice is sought, decision-makers, particularly those who are white, need to be aware that they may lack cultural perspective. For example, we noted that the only resources produced by PMA in languages other than English are those that the PMA staff, not the communities of color who are the recipients of those resources, deem important to be translated. The privileged determine what the rest need to know. This lack of cultural perspective often makes it impossible for the experience and knowledge of people of color to be truly known and understood.

At every level of the denomination, we need to hire and call people of all races. In addition, white staff members need to be especially aware of the seen and unseen effects of privilege on collaboration. Our committee believes that in our efforts to be a more inclusive church it is essential that the PMA staff lead us by example in deepening personal cultural humility and integrating it into every aspect of the church.

V. COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Our committee’s investigation of the overall work of the PMA revealed that there is a paucity of coordination with the other agencies. This has resulted in a lack of integration and uncertainty regarding their common purpose. This lack of coordination leads to competition and distrust between the agencies rather than appreciation and collaboration. We noted frequent themes of siloing not only within different program areas within PMA but also among the six different agencies of the PC(USA). Such stories included:

- The PMA has launched a number of new fundraising initiatives on its own in the last several years. While this may be an appropriate and necessary endeavor in the times we live in, it seems to us that this kind of effort would be much better undertaken in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation, which has significant expertise in this area.
- The Office of the General Assembly bid out a computer programming services contract for \$200,000. PMA’s tech department had been providing those services, but OGA was dissatisfied because they were unable to provide oversight and accountability. PMA was invited to be one bidder among several on the contract, but the PMA bid expressed no interest in meeting the OGA’s request for changes in programming support and accountability.
- In March 2015, the PMA produced an issue of *Presbyterians Today* entitled “The Presbyterian Resource Guide for Ministry.” It is an excellent issue, full of helpful resources from PMA. However, we were told that a few weeks before publication, OGA noticed that the issue being produced did not include anything about OGA’s resources for ministry. OGA was given a page or two at the last minute, which was the immediate response to this concern.
- In July 2015, the PMA launched an antiracism awareness campaign “Ask Me Why You Matter.” The campaign was rolled out at Big Tent 2015 after three months of development and minimal collaboration with other denominational agencies. This was glaringly apparent when there was no communication between the PMA staff working on the campaign and the General Assembly appointed committee on churchwide conversation on race, racism, ethnicity, and ethnocentrism.

Approaching the issue of collaboration among all six agencies from a review of only one agency, we are not completely able to fathom whether and/or to what extent this disconnect exists between all the agencies. The perceived and perhaps intentional disconnect between the agencies concerns us. Situations such as these highlight missed opportunities to draw on shared “in-house” expertise and denominational wisdom.

It is clear from the interviews we conducted that the staff sincerely desire better coordination and communication between the PMA and the other agencies of the PC(USA). We did learn that concerns about better coordination and collaboration have been discussed and reviewed on a number of occasions. However, it is clear to us that these periodic reviews and discussions did not always bring about action. It should be noted that the 2010 PMA Review Committee also called for a closer collaboration between the six agencies. We acknowledge that efforts have been made to respond to this goal, including quarterly meetings of agency heads (two of which include the PMAB chairs); the identification and pursuit of joint projects between agencies; collaboration on the six-agency annual report; collaboration on the Big Tent conference, etc. However, we believe that more needs to be done in this area in order to ensure greater efficacy of ministry and mission.

VI. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that something new is happening in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Congregations and mid councils are pursuing new models for planning, staffing, and funding ministry. As a church, we can be inspired by the growing cultural diversity found in local congregations. We can work to support each other as we learn to live into the reality of smaller congregations with limited financial resources and unlimited possibility for mission in their communities. We can celebrate the emerging energy for collaboration within creative ecumenical and entrepreneurial partnerships both within and among our congregations. Even in the midst of this reality of such great change in the life of our denomination, there is still significant passion and excitement around evangelism, social justice, biblical scholarship, world mission, and church planting.

We believe it is essential for the future of our denomination that the PMA embrace the change that is already among us. We pray that the PMA will begin to make the adaptive organizational changes needed to serve in this new reality. This is not simply another appeal for restructuring endeavors. Our opportunity now is change on a deeper systemic level. It is our strong hope that in addressing the strategic, spiritual, and functional challenges presented in this report, the PMA will be better able to lead the church in creatively, strategically, and adaptively leaning into the future God is bringing us with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY (PMA)

02.16.2016

Since the January 6, 2016, release of this committee's report, we have been made aware of changes and one lapse in process that merit addressing.

1. The committee apologizes for neglecting to provide an advance copy of our report to the PMA Executive Board and Interim Director as requested in our charge. This was regrettably (and simply) an oversight on our part.
2. Information PMA staff provided us in spring 2015 regarding the triennium audit and agency communication strategy were at that time in process. We understand that these situations have been resolved and implemented since then.
3. The number of email newsletters and stand-alone websites we cited in our report has been disputed by PMA executive staff. Our committee members, through several interviews with various PMA employees, obtained information regarding PMA electronic communication. Although we do not dispute the actual number of electronic newsletters on the issue of hunger, for example, we do question why different PMA staff members would provide us with varying numbers.

The goal of this review report was to take a snapshot of the agency; to celebrate accomplishments and address issues occurring at one particular time in the life of the agency's mission and ministry. Our hope is that by identifying systemic matters, we would provide both the PMA and the assembly with a working document that will be a useful tool as our denomination moves forward in this next season of ministry.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 04-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 04-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises disapproval of Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency in their current forms.

The Advisory Committee is authorized to speak to specific matters of Christian conscience related to social witness and to the capacity for social witness within the assembly agencies, primarily the Presbyterian Mission Agency. As it has noted on Items 04-07 and 04-08, the danger in any reorganization proposal is that it be insufficiently theological and not address the mission and polity purposes for which the agencies were designed. These purposes are outlined in the Design for Mission and in G-3.0105a-c of the Form of Government, and were given extensive analysis in prior reorganizations by committees drawing on considerable management expertise. Yet the basis of any structures should be a theological vision of how the church should be serving Jesus Christ, "in the world but not of it."

The Report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency named many hard truths and is to be commended for their wide-ranging conversations. Yet neither the self-study nor the review contain much structural analysis or use of metrics. Thus, claims about duplication with the Office of the General Assembly are hard to assess, and seem overstated. In one example given, that of speaking for the General Assembly, multiple voices are mentioned, but the role of General Assembly policy as a basis for speech or action by any agency representative was not examined. In fact, specific offices (such as the Office of Public Witness) are directed to address specific kinds of issues, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Director speaks primarily to program initiatives and the Stated Clerk authorizes all “head of communion” statements. At this and other points, the question for commissioners is whether the symptoms identified partly by anecdote match the overall recommendation of merger, with all the reorganization it would entail.

More fundamentally, the review committee did not analyze why and with what consequences the General Assembly (Mission) Council changed itself into a Mission Agency with a board and centralized and hierarchical staff structure. The review committee calls it a “secular corporate model,” but senior staff and board sought to become a nonprofit body. Though the review committee comments on morale and competition among silos, they did not analyze staff structure and did not feel they had enough transparency to weigh cost-effectiveness. The comments made about the roles of the advisory and advocacy committees, and other corresponding bodies, do not note the way these groups were designed to provide ethical and theological perspectives to a deliberative body that implements mission program determined by the assembly. These committees reflect the care taken in the past to distinguish polity, policy, and program, precisely for clearer accountability and transparency.

The review committee was right to lift up the governance issues related partly to the shift from a council to a board. Yet this shift underlines the degree to which the Office of the General Assembly has a very different assignment to steward the most inclusive council of the church, the General Assembly. Theologically, would any merger be wise that put two important and distinct leadership functions in “one basket,” so to speak, merging constitutional judgments and program considerations? Coordination between the agencies could be improved by simple things like putting the Stated Clerk back on the Presbyterian Mission Agency executive committee, *ex officio*. Overall, the review process shows the importance of a separate body to hold the Presbyterian Mission Agency (in this case) accountable. Despite the weaknesses identified in the review, it cannot be forgotten that the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency stepped up and took considerable responsibility in last year’s leadership transition. They deserve respect for that institutional stewardship.

Whether in a special committee or in an enhanced six agency review, the church has an opportunity for an intentional and informed conversation about the purposes of General Assembly agencies. Theologians and experts on church organization should be commissioned to analyze the best data, best practices, and best preaching about what the church is called to do and how best to do it. Yes, there are organizations in the church addressing pieces of this, and management consultants should also be heard, but any committee or review group would need to frame its own questions rather than bring in unexamined assumptions or agendas. The PMA itself needs opportunity to present a vision of its work in dialogue with other agencies and perhaps in fuller response to the review committee’s observations. (In past council forms, the Presbyterian Mission Agency was a place where significant theological, ethical, and missiological discussions were held.)

In practical terms, the review committee’s Recommendation 1 has several weaknesses. While it rightly emphasizes representation, it does not address expertise and resources needed, allowing for the possibility of more political process. The proposed committee size seems large but even in a nine-member team at least two persons each would be needed from both agencies for a fair assessment of their respective functions, strengths, and weaknesses. The scope of mission being done by other of the four agencies also needs to be understood, as bodies with more abundant funding are always tempted to “mission creep” and yet were designed for specialized functions in accord with General Assembly policies. The advantage of the larger agency review would also be that it is already structured, even if a focused public theological consultation were attached to it. Last but not least, serious ecumenical comparisons should be made as to national denominational structures, purposes, locations, and costs.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 04-11

Comment on Item 04-11—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions supports the review process recommended by the Review Committee in Recommendation One of Item 04-11—to explore the possibility of a merger between the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA)—and urges its approval.

The Board of Pensions observes that the issues identified by the Review Committee involve governance and finances, but says nothing about the six agency structure. The report specifically calls out “significant duplication and siloing within the Presbyterian Mission Agency and between PMA and OGA.” The committee that reviewed PMA noted that there exists the “Responsibility for accomplishing significant work without the authority to make and implement decisions.” Unified governance for the PC(USA) will allow the denomination to set priorities for the whole communion and escape the damaging cycles of budgetary decline.

In contrast to a perceived budgetary crisis, over the last three years the assets and wealth of the PC(USA) have grown larger by approximately \$15 million. The PMA and OGA already exist as one legal entity inside PC(USA), A corporation. This is the urgent problem:

- one legal entity,
- one financial statement,
- two boards,
- two budgets,
- multiple leaders, and
- too few solutions implemented.

The suggestion proposed by PMA in its comment that there should be an “All Agency Review” would only delay the needed work of reevaluating the governance, structure, and finances of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and how it relates to the Office of the General Assembly in particular. Nothing in the Review Committee recommendation would preclude input and participation from the other four agencies.

The Review Committee’s concerns on issues of trust, leadership, transparency, financial efficiency, and legal disputes are unique to PMA and not the six-agency structure. The Board of Pensions believes that the review process recommended by the Review Committee in Item 04-11 is an excellent first step in solving these structural problems and commends its approval.

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW OGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-11

Comment on Item—From the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

The Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly urges the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Recommendation 1 in the report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency as written in Item 04-11.

The committee echoes the concerns expressed by the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and sees the need for a focused and complete assessment of the roles of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and whether or not it would serve the mission of the church to merge these agencies. It should be noted that our advice does not presume an answer to this question, but reflects our belief that it is a question worth asking.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-11

Comment on Item 04-11—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

These recommendations direct the creation of several bodies: (1) to implement merger of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA); (2) to restructure the PMA Board; and (3) to explore the Shared Services of four agencies.

Comment on Recommendation 1

The General Assembly Committee on Representation commends to the assembly Standing Rule K.1.c, which lists GACOR with GANC as consulting partners to General Assembly Moderator(s) in appointing special committees and bodies created by General Assembly action. The GACOR advises and advocates ensuring the widest participation, diversity, and representation be attained throughout the review process and any resulting slate.

Comment on Recommendation 2

The GACOR reminds the assembly that the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and the GACOR work together to fulfill F-1.0403 and that relationship is reflected in the Standing Rules and *The Organization for Mission*.

Comment on Recommendation 3

Any group selecting a decision-making body in the PC(USA) must be mindful of F-1.0403 and would be enriched including a consultation with GACOR in their processes of creating their slate(s) of leaders.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-11

Comment on Item 04-11—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Comment on Recommendation 1

The Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency's first recommendation is to forgo the normally scheduled All Agency Review* and instead spend that time (and financial resource) to examine the possible merger of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly. The All Agency Review was mandated by the General Assembly in 2008 as a way of ensuring that agencies worked cooperatively together and that there were no duplication of services by the national agencies of the PC(USA).

We support the goal of enhancing coordination and effective missional and ecclesiastical support for our denominational agencies, mid councils, and our congregations. The scheduled All-Agency Review would give an overarching view of the six agencies and reveal a range of possible approaches to restructuring or for more collaboration and sharing of resources. That review would also help ensure that we are moving together with a sense of unity of mission and ministry rather than proceeding in a piecemeal fashion.

For these reasons, we find the proposals for considering a Presbyterian Mission Agency/Office of the General Assembly merger presently pending before this assembly to be premature and unduly narrow in scope. It is also without the benefit of having all our agency partners, General Assembly commissioners, and others at the table. Proposing that a different committee move directly to examining a structural merger of only two agencies prematurely forecloses the benefits of a wider, more careful analysis.

In a time of unprecedented and rapid change, our first step should be careful, prayerful, and thoughtful discernment of how we can best serve God, our congregations, and global partners. We believe understanding contextual realities will inform a wider, careful assessment of the various needs and strengths of all the agencies of the denomination. It will help us identify the best structural, financial, and staffing synergies with confidence that these proposals will help the PC(USA) be responsive to the challenges of our times at every level of the life of our denomination.

While a full exploration of the best approaches is wise, we recognize that structural changes for all agencies may not be needed or appropriate. Nonetheless, the perspective and experience of all six agencies would be valuable additions to a discernment process. Under the provisions of Agency Review Manual, the All Agency Review Committee is to be composed of a representative from each assembly agency, commissioners to recent General Assemblies (representing mid councils) and at-large members. With the benefit of the established process of the All Agency Review, having all our agency partners, and others at the table will best inform such an important structural decision and its possibilities for the coordination of resources.

In order not to lose the important work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee, we suggest that Recommendation 1 be referred to the All Agency Review Committee as an intentional part of their work.

*In 2008, the General Assembly approved a recommendation from the last Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee to create an additional cycle in the six-year review process that provides for a review of the "service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives" at the end of each cycle. Such a review occurred in 2010, and another is scheduled for 2016. In its rationale, the review committee wrote: "Such a review should focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in implementing the General Assembly's mission directives and should not duplicate the more detailed work of the individual agency review committees. Particular attention should be given to how or if these agencies work cooperatively and where or if there is duplication of services in the system."

Comment on Recommendation 2

We support the importance and timeliness of this recommendation to consider revisions to the structure, composition, and work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). In fact, in February 2016 the board itself appointed a Governance Task Force with a similar charge to work intensively to propose changes in the structure and size of the board and to clarify strategies for electing persons to the board whose skills and experience will be helpful for its work. Clearly this action reflects the board's priority for moving ahead immediately with adaptive changes to clarify our relationship with the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). This PMAB Task Force also includes two at-large members who bring history and experience from the initial General Assembly Council (GAC) in 1983 formed following reunion and modifications to that structure in 2006. The task force has worked intensively in order to bring initial recommendations to the board for action in April 2016 with the expectation that a complete reorganization requiring General Assembly action will be developed for 2018.

The interim model proposes substantive structural and procedural changes to the board's current practices that will assure focused attention at every meeting to three primary tasks:

- generative discernment of God's calling for the energies of the PMA,
- programmatic planning to implement its discernment through the use of ad hoc strategic teams, and

- oversight of fiduciary, missional, and corporate responsibilities of the board through standing ministerial committees.

The model also assures more effective use of the current voting members of the board as well as at-large and nonvoting members and staff.

(A detailed description of the proposal is posted at www.presbyterianmission.org/governance-task-force-report.)

Because we believe it is wise to move ahead now, we propose that the General Assembly take advantage of the interim model and future work of the PMAB Task Force to respond to this recommendation. The assembly could also consider appointing several additional at-large members to join the PMAB Governance Task Force.

Comment on Recommendation 3

We affirm and support the value of interagency collaboration and thus support this recommendation for consultation among the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. We believe strategies for enhancing this collaboration could be achieved effectively as part of the All Agency Review proposed in response to Recommendation 1.

Item 04-12

Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.

[The assembly approved Item 04-12, Recommendation 1. See pp. 12, 40.]

The Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) take the following actions:

1. Instruct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) to conduct regular assessment on the progress of their response to the recommendations in this report, and to include the results of this assessment in the minutes of their committee meetings.

Rationale for Recommendation 1

Currently, there are two points at which agencies are accountable for follow-through on General Assembly recommendations stemming from the review process: First, as part of the “response to referrals” at the subsequent General Assembly to the review in question and, second, as part of the next six-year General Assembly-level review. Thus, as part of its agency self-study, the agency has listed its responses to recommendations passed at the 218th General Assembly (2008). In the committee’s review of these recommendations and responses, we have found that a number of the concerns listed in 2008 remain growth areas in 2014. A mechanism for annual progress reporting may help direct the agency’s responses more effectively, and for COGA to help shape the work of the Office of the General Assembly accordingly.

[The assembly approved Item 04-12, Recommendation 2. See pp. 13, 40.]

2. Instruct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to strengthen its long-range planning process and document a three- to five-year plan.

Rationale for Recommendation 2

In the last six years, the OGA has undertaken a major study, with the assistance of outside consultants, of its operations and efficiencies, and made significant changes to both. Acknowledging that the OGA is still living into these shifts, the committee still feels that this recommendation, which mirrors a recommendation from the 2008 review, is warranted. In our interviews with staff across the OGA, it was acknowledged by leadership that perhaps because of the upheaval of reorganization, the OGA is “woefully weak on a work plan.” A three-to-five year plan, undertaken after the election of the new Stated Clerk, could assist the OGA in realistically addressing its mission and vision with the resources at its disposal.

[The assembly approved Item 04-12, Recommendation 3. See pp. 13, 40.]

3. Instruct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to consult with the other General Assembly agencies on strategic alignment for certain departments that might service more than one agency (finance, human resources, audit, communications and funds development, building services, etc.) and to assess, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, potential programmatic synergies around immigration and ecumenical/interfaith relations.

Rationale for Recommendation 3

Agencies of the General Assembly, particularly the four agencies primarily located at the Presbyterian Center, routinely assess how they can serve most effectively for the good of the whole church. A focused discussion on those services that might be duplicated within or useful to other agencies, whether conducted in a manner consistent with the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Recommendation 3 (Item 04-11) or not, would be of value to the OGA before embarking on a long-range planning process. Further, while programmatic alignment with the Presbyterian Mission Agency may be answered with action on Recommendation 1, if it is not, the committee believes that these two areas are deserving of particular attention, as significant work on behalf of the PC(USA) regarding immigration and ecumenical/interfaith relations are housed in both PMA and OGA ministries.

[The assembly approved Item 04-12, Recommendation 4. See pp. 13, 40.]

4. Instruct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to take the following recommendations under consideration and to include their response to or progress on these items in their accountability process:

a. Recognizing that difficult decisions on the allocation of resources are being made quite often, the committee suggests that COGA look to prioritize the staffing and resourcing of the Mid Council Relations Office (a shared office with the PMA) in light of the significant challenge of increased demand from both presbyteries and congregations.

b. While it is appreciated that leadership from the six agencies meet informally to discuss General Assembly business prior to the convening of the assembly, it may be that this overlooks the reality that the business coming out of a committee may be significantly different than initial overtures. Our committee would recommend the COGA consider initiating a conversation with leadership from the other five agencies during the proceedings of the assembly itself, in order to discuss business that has been amended in committee and to formulate collaborative response, if deemed necessary, for presentation where appropriate in the plenary session.

c. In order to assure that the priorities set by the General Assembly and COGA would be the same priorities for work adopted by the staff of OGA, we recommend that benchmark goals for the OGA should be presented, discussed, reviewed, approved, and reported upon afterwards at COGA meetings, as was done in 2009 and 2011.

d. We recommend that annual or otherwise periodic reviews of the Stated Clerk be conducted and reported upon in the COGA minutes. As required in the *Organization for Mission* (IV.C.2.d.(2)), COGA should prioritize a formal, annual, review process for the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. While the COGA moderator indicated, and our committee observed, an excellent working relationship with the Stated Clerk, including time at each COGA meeting for the Stated Clerk to present and update the board with progress, issues, and concerns, a more structured review of the Stated Clerk should be helpful, particularly as the denomination elects a new Stated Clerk in 2016.

e. Our committee recommends that COGA review and ratify the Stated Clerk's recommendations on the staffing of agency review committees in order to ensure they are staffed in a manner consistent with the Agency Review Manual. While staff support for this review committee has been capable and helpful, the appointment of a (now retired) staff person from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., does not meet with the expectation outlined in the Agency Review Manual, Chapter 1, II, which states that "Staffing is provided by the General Assembly Mission Council (now Presbyterian Mission Agency) in the year the Office of the General Assembly is reviewed." While the committee assumes no malice on behalf of the Stated Clerk, and understands a desire for efficiency, in an environment where trust of national church leadership is at a premium, it is best to ensure accountability that meets or exceeds the standards that the church has established.

f. The committee recommends, echoing the recommendation of the 2008 review committee, that the OGA Self-Study report be made available in a more timely fashion. Our committee received the document on the same day as our first meeting, and it was challenging to prepare adequately without having reviewed the material prior to our gathering.

Rationale for Recommendation 4

The review committee would like very much for these items to be taken under consideration by COGA, but acknowledges also that COGA has much more intimate knowledge of its work, policies, procedures, and process than this review committee, and may already have addressed or be addressing some of these concerns. The review committee is reluctant to ask that these recommendations become mandated by action of the General Assembly; rather, we are asking that the General Assembly mandate their *consideration* by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, trusting that COGA will welcome these suggestions and the spirit in which they are offered.

Overall Rationale

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) met in Dallas on March 11–13, 2015, and in Louisville on October 28–31, 2015, and conducted its work according to the guidelines of the Agency Review Manual of the PC(USA). The committee concludes that the OGA is fulfilling its mandate according to the accreditation standards set forth in the manual, which are *church relatedness, policy and program effectiveness, and collaboration*.

The review committee uniformly found that staff members in the Office of the General Assembly are deeply committed to Jesus Christ and to the work of the church. The sense of vocation among the staff is profound. More than once we were inspired by the passion with which staff members support the mission of the PC(USA). We found not only great personal alignment with the mission of the church but also strong interrelatedness among staff members, creating a positive spirit within the organization.

The review committee finds two major areas of concern for the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). The first stems from the OGA undertaking a significant reorganization and restructure in 2013, impacting nearly every aspect of the agency. Elimination of positions, shifting of full-time positions to part-time, consolidation of responsibilities as a result of restructure, deployment of staff outside of Louisville, and reduction or elimination of support staff create a larger work load for a smaller staff. There seems to be no clear sense of how responsibilities can be prioritized with reduced personnel and resources. These factors have a potentially negative impact on morale and the health and wellness of staff members.

The second issue of concern is the changing situation in the church, particularly at the level of mid councils. As mid council staffs are reduced or eliminated entirely, increasing amounts of OGA staff time are spent doing the resourcing that presbyteries and synods previously have done. With the challenge of departing congregations and an increasing percentage of mid council leadership with little or no experience, communication that once proceeded along a relatively stable network of presbyteries and synods now relies more on OGA staff itself.

The review committee concurs with a proposed resolution of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) regarding merger of the OGA and the PMA. Our committee makes no comment on the advisability of merger, but commends to the church the merits of a deliberate and thoughtful conversation on the subject. At the beginning of this report are recommendations for this assembly and that we hope will be helpful in the work of a task force considering the future structure of our denomination at the national level.

The Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly is composed of Teaching Elders Raymond Anglin (Plantation, Fla.), Catherine Rice Harrison (Spokane, Wash.), Diane Kareha (Allentown, Pa.), Cliff Lyda, moderator, (Elmhurst, Ill.), Carmen Rosario (Bradley Beach, N.J.), Matthew Schramm (Bay City, Mich.), Jane Searjeant Watt (Pittsford, N.Y.); and Ruling Elders Kenneth Kim (Knoxville, Tenn.), Marcy Moody (Jacksonville, Fla.), Manley Olson (Minneapolis, Minn.), and Patricia Valentine (Charlottesville, Va.). The committee is staffed by Ruling Elder Ben Blake (Louisville, Ky.) of the Presbyterian Loan and Investment Corporation, Inc.

CHURCH RELATEDNESS

The first criterion for assessment set forth in the Agency Review Manual is *church relatedness*. Is the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) doing what the church and its congregations and governing bodies need for it to be doing, and in a way that is faithful to its defined role? How does OGA serve and support the church's mission and exhibit a constant awareness of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA)? Accountability, the exercise of appropriate leadership, and cooperation with other agencies of the church in areas where responsibilities may overlap were part of our consideration.

The Executive Summary in the self-study from 2008 to 2014 of OGA, announces that the office is "alive and well." The staff continues to navigate through the "troubled waters" of diminishing membership and diminishing per capita. Diminishing resources and fewer staff are the major challenges. As the Stated Clerk said in our interview, "we have a thin bench, but it is the bench that the church affords us to have." There may be a need for further assessment as to whether the strategy and vision of OGA needs to be reduced to more accurately reflect the staff afforded them by the church. The self-study enumerates several significant accomplishments and a rearranging of tasks, especially relating to the meetings of the General Assembly and the election of a new Moderator every two years. The report also explains very well the role, support, and contributions of the COGA as it discerns the mind of Christ and strives to be the church.

The committee believes that the Office of the General Assembly is accomplishing the work it has been assigned. It has a skilled, diverse, and dedicated staff resourcing the PC(USA) in three areas: Churchwide Ministries, Mid Council Ministries, and Ecclesial and Ecumenical Ministries. It demonstrates constant awareness of its servant role in the life of the PC(USA).

As part of this committee's work, we issued a survey to key constituencies of the OGA. After assessing the responses from surveys, the committee finds that there is a slight increase from 2007 to 2015 in constituents being familiar with the

OGA in general and its exhibition of leadership. The dedicated and knowledgeable staff were noted several times, and the Stated Clerk received excellent reviews. On the other hand, several comments were made concerning workload of a downsized staff and the resulting inability to respond in a timely manner. This is compounded by the downsizing of middle governing bodies, the increase in new or transitional presbytery leaders, the elimination of some staff in presbyteries and synods, and a corresponding decrease in responsiveness from mid councils to congregations and leaders. The staff is spread too thin to do much constitutional interpretation in the field, especially explaining the new *Book of Order* and interpreting the impact of General Assembly decisions. The staff of Constitutional Services relates to the whole church for training and field work with only one person with this job description and minimal help from support staff.

Presbyteries are struggling with leadership challenges. There are a substantial number of new executives and clerks in our presbyteries, and a significant number of presbyteries have no executive staff. The OGA staff is now doing much of the constitutional interpretation required by the mid-level bodies. OGA staff would like to be more proactive, but there is not sufficient time for this.

Fulfilling the mandates and instructions from General Assembly action provides a significant OGA staff workload. Combining these demands with the resourcing of congregations and mid councils makes for an almost unrealistic expectation. As part of that resourcing, OGA must respond, expertly and with authority, to congregations and mid councils that have vastly different needs. For example, the needs of a presbytery without any staff, comprised of a dozen congregations, are usually quite dissimilar to the needs of a presbytery with multiple full-time ordained staff and 40,000 Presbyterians in its membership. Further, this challenge is exacerbated by the significant staff hours committed to working with congregations and presbyteries in discernment and dismissal processes, a major factor in the increased workload at the OGA since 2008. The review committee was impressed with and grateful for the dedication, expertise, and passion of OGA staff, particularly in light of a crushing workload and nearly impossible expectations.

With the advent of a new Stated Clerk and a new Executive Director for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, there is a feeling of anxiety among the OGA staff. There is widespread call in the church for merger of the agencies, but we have observed a desire among staff for stability and clarity. It seems to be a painful time for both the OGA and the PMA to keep their heads above water while others make decisions around them.

The OGA is accountable to the General Assembly through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The OGA sees as its charge to “encourage the PC(USA) to be a people of hope—seeking together the mind of Christ; working for justice and mercy in the world; and participating in God’s continual reformation of the church.” As we interviewed OGA staff and read their self-study, it was clear that this mission is truly internalized in their ministry. It seemed clear to the review committee that any shortcoming in delivering services is not due to a lack of fidelity and accountability of staff but rather due to the lack of staff time and resources to meet all of the demands on their offices. This deficiency in resources exists because OGA functions come from per capita, and per capita income has been in steep decline.

As far as the review committee could determine, the diverse, dedicated, skilled staff of the OGA faithfully honors and responds to General Assembly policy statements to the best of their abilities. The OGA responds to directives and requests from the General Assembly, and, where appropriate, seeks to ensure that other agencies of the PC(USA) respond to directives and requests from the General Assembly. The OGA is the clearinghouse for all General Assembly overtures, directives, and requests. It is the agency that is the recipient and sender of communications to and from the General Assembly. The OGA staff honors the policy statements of the General Assembly of the PC(USA), and both Presbyterian (who are the majority) and non-Presbyterian staff who were interviewed understand, respect, and express loyalty to the PC(USA).

POLICIES AND PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The second criterion for assessment is *policies and program effectiveness*. The committee finds that the assets of the Office of the General Assembly are well managed. We do believe, however, that the OGA is severely understaffed. The 30 percent reduction in staffing in the spring of 2013 due to budget concerns does not appear to have been accompanied by a similar reduction in required job duties and responsibilities. It appears that some job responsibilities might benefit from a more comprehensive review of what is essential and what is not to address the overall OGA mission and vision. This review should be part of a three-to-five year strategic planning effort to be sure that OGA can realistically address its mission and vision with the resources at its disposal from the per capita budget.

The OGA receives its oversight from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA). COGA is well constituted to provide leadership and oversight to the OGA with a diverse group of fourteen elected members plus the General Assembly Moderator. COGA meeting minutes over the past seven years show that its members met regularly, at least twice a year in person with additional conference calls for specific issues as needed on a timely basis. Subcommittees, work groups, and task forces were regularly organized to address specific areas of responsibility. Orientation sessions were provided to help new members get up to speed quickly. An executive Coordinating Committee held numerous conference call meetings to address issues needing timely action between face-to-face meetings.

The Stated Clerk, Moderator of the General Assembly, and Vice Moderator of the General Assembly all made regular reports and appeared integral to the work of COGA. OGA staff (including staff of the Presbyterian Historical Society) and other bodies were in frequent attendance to address their areas of responsibility and expertise. Regular financial progress reports were provided by the Stated Clerk and the full committee discussed and approved per capita budgets on an annual basis. Many subcommittees and task forces were organized to respond to General Assembly mandates and there was an enthusiasm and sense of spiritual devotion in subsequent progress reporting on the all the issues mandated by the General Assembly. COGA appears to understand well its leadership responsibilities and it appears to tackle each General Assembly-directed responsibility with positive energy and a broad concern for the larger church body and its long term future. While the minutes of two meetings in 2009 and 2011 reflected a review and approval of benchmark goals for OGA for 2009–10 and 2011, those were the only two meetings where OGA benchmark goals appeared to be approved. One recommendation would be for annual benchmark goals for OGA to be presented, discussed, reviewed, approved, and reported upon afterwards. This would help assure that the priorities set by the General Assembly and COGA would be the same priorities for work adopted by the staff of OGA.

The OGA financials are audited as part of the larger PC(USA) consolidated financial picture by an independent accounting firm, Crowe Horwath. The accountants' report provided a clean opinion, indicating no problems with maintaining or reporting financial activity by any of the PC(USA) entities, including the OGA.

The Stated Clerk is elected by the General Assembly of the PC(USA). In accordance with the *Organization for Mission*, the COGA minutes of February 2008 reported an end-of-term comprehensive review of the Stated Clerk that was very complimentary. Subsequent COGA minutes from then through 2014 did not reveal any annual or otherwise periodic reviews of the Stated Clerk. We recommend that annual or otherwise periodic reviews of the Stated Clerk be done and reported upon in the COGA minutes. While the COGA moderator said that the committee regularly gave the Stated Clerk time at each meeting to discuss his issues and concerns, it might be helpful to provide a more structured review to the Stated Clerk on an annual basis.

During our interviews we found that anticipated succession in the Stated Clerk's office makes long-range planning a primary challenge. This is followed by uncertainty as to whether the OGA will need to again downsize staff. No long-range planning is a major symptom of the staff drawdown. Long-range planning (three to five years) should be undertaken as soon as possible after the new Stated Clerk is elected at the next General Assembly in June 2016. Intentional organizational long-range planning should help the long-term vitality of the OGA and the church at large.

In the last eight years there seems to be a strong and personable relationship between senior staff, the Stated Clerk, and all other staff. All interviewees stated that they felt that they had easy access to all senior staff. The healthy collegiality has helped accomplish staff input and output.

In the seven years under review (2008–2014), the OGA reported operating deficits in four years and surpluses in three. The combined net was a positive surplus for the seven-year period. The OGA appears to manage its ongoing operating budget in a very fiscally responsible manner, making adjustments quickly when events suggest changes are needed. When the expense budget has needed to be reduced due to shrinking per capita revenues, staff have acted quickly to make hard but necessary adjustments. The Stated Clerk and his team should be complimented for responding so quickly and decisively to the shrinking per capita revenue budget. Salary levels have been watched carefully with few increases and changes in ranges over the past seven years. Creative one-time bonuses were used in lieu of raises when the budget was most uncertain in order to avoid building in a larger base salary expectation that OGA might not have been able to sustain. When the Presbyterian Historical Society needed a loan (\$790,000) for capital repairs and improvements to their facility in Philadelphia, the COGA Coordinating Committee (Sep 8, 2014 minutes) carefully reviewed the request and approved it as part of the COGA approval process before it was sent to the PMA board for its approval.

Should a surplus exist, the committee believes budget funds should be used to add staff to work with the mid council bodies and for contract tech staff support (more cost-effective than in-house staff). The staff seems well-versed in new technologies, but an OGA dedicated tech contract could truly help. It seems to be very difficult for staff to produce additional communication with its constituencies as they spend almost all of their time responding to calls of constituents in crises. They cannot be truly proactive in this climate.

There is one person in human resources/personnel to deal with accreditation of all OGA staff. This is working insofar as the staff does not turn over that greatly but it does not provide for counseling and educational input that an additional staff person could give. The COGA minutes refer to various updates on different policies within the Personnel Policy Manual so they are probably very current and up-to-date.

COLLABORATION

The third criterion for assessment is *collaboration*. The review committee finds that the OGA is collaborative, insofar as it is able, with the other agencies of the General Assembly. This is an area of demonstrable improvement over the past six years, and continues to be a point of emphasis as the OGA navigates a continually changing church landscape that is impacting both national bodies and their constituents. A restructure and downsizing of the OGA staff, along with shifting leadership

models and staff instability at the mid council level has impacted every aspect of the OGA's work, forcing the OGA to do as much, or more, ministry with fewer resources.

Our conclusions with regard to this criterion are based on the impressions and research of the OGA review committee itself, and not informed by any direct self-assessment by the OGA, as this was not included in the materials received by the committee or prepared by the OGA. In order to form our opinion, the committee was grateful to consult with leadership from the other five General Assembly agencies. It should be noted that the focus of this review is 2008–2014; thus, reviewing these relationships in 2015–2016 is somewhat more challenging because of significant leadership turnover in four agencies. However, we are confident that our findings accurately reflect the climate in the evaluative period on the topic of collaboration. Additionally, the committee has benefitted from contracted work by the Office of Research Services, which surveyed various constituencies, including leadership of other General Assembly agencies, in collecting data on our behalf.

The committee finds that, where appropriate and directed by the General Assembly, the OGA presses beyond communication and consultation to genuine collaboration, sharing agendas and work with other agencies toward fulfillment of shared goals. Unfortunately, there are times when the General Assembly directive, or at least the agencies' interpretation of it, have discouraged, rather than encouraged, equalitarian collaboration. For instance, the 221st General Assembly (2014) amended an overture, Item 15-04, to include the directive,

instruct the Office of the General Assembly to immediately fill the vacancy of the position of coordinator of immigration issues in the Office of Immigration Issues. This position will help facilitate the Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative. This staff person should be multilingual, have theological and legal training, community organizing experience, and a passion for justice for all the people of God but especially those who find themselves marginalized and discriminated against by unjust immigration policies. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 1030)

It was the desire of the assembly that the national church resource a new, grassroots organization (PIDI) and concentrate on advocacy and civil liberties for immigrant communities. Indeed there was a vacancy for a "co-manager" in Immigration Issues at that time. Thus, the assembly's action called for one co-manager to be hired to focus on public advocacy and the other co-manager to continue work centered on legal resources for immigrant and immigrating Presbyterians. A large percentage of the advocacy work within this office, as directed by previous assemblies, includes specific instruction to engage with the PMA's Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., for immigration advocacy. Thus, the insistence of the assembly that the OGA fill this particular role within the OGA structure in Louisville may have prevented a more synergistic and efficient model that could have housed this work at the Office of Public Witness itself. However, it may also be that this type of collaboration between the OGA and the PMA is difficult from a purely financial perspective, in that General Assembly directives to OGA are funded by adjustments to per capita, whereas General Assembly directives to PMA ministries must be absorbed into the mission budget, thus forcing reductions in budget allocations and/or programming in other PMA ministry areas. It may be that there exists a perception amongst overture advocates that because the six agencies, particularly the PMA and the OGA, have different streams of funding, programs are more "safely housed" within the OGA and its "adjustable" and constitutionally obligatory per capita funding stream rather than the "voluntary," uncertain nature of unrestricted mission giving to the PMA. While this does not assert by any means that this work is ill-suited to the OGA, the OGA and PMA did not consult to consider these questions in advance of the action, and there may be issues of perceived financial "security" impacting decision making on how best to accomplish a General Assembly priority. It may be helpful to create some mechanism whereby such consultation can occur.

The OGA maintains regular communication with, and provides timely and appropriate access to information to other agencies and PC(USA) constituencies. From our interviews, it is clear that "top-level" communication and collaboration is very good. Board leaders and top executive leadership of the six agencies regularly prioritize spending time together, building collegiality that has proven fruitful in offering consistency and creativity across the General Assembly's work, as well as an opportunity to collaborate. Projects such as 2012's "Six Agency" video for General Assembly commissioner orientation, as well as the "One Church, One Field, One Staff" events have grown out of this collaboration and are to be commended.

PC(USA) agencies are encouraged to conduct an evaluation of potential gains and risks associated with collaborative endeavors with other agencies whenever new programs are initiated. During the time period this review covers, the OGA did undertake a major restructuring of its operations, guided by outside consultant recommendations. From interviews with the other five agencies of the General Assembly, it is indicated that the input or consultation of leadership from these Presbyterian agencies was not sought in advance of said restructure. While top-level leadership was informed of the changes that were being made, there was no collaboration on the planning for or initiation of those changes, or focused conversation regarding potential synergies. Whether this was an intentional strategy in order for the OGA to work in a more focused manner, the byproduct of a territorial impulse that can emerge in times of uncertainty, or simply an oversight is not something that this committee can conclude, but it is a potential growing edge as further changes are considered.

Agencies are also encouraged to seek pragmatic solutions to operational challenges by relying on the assets, resources, and strengths of other agencies. As stated, it appears that collaboration "at the top" is quite good. Notably, the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) has initiated what they described as a "full-tech partnership" with the Board of Pensions, as they are both located in Philadelphia, which has been quite successful thus far. The PHS has also received a loan through the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and been in conversation with the Presbyterian Foundation about fundraising and expanding the reach of their funds development efforts.

However, this is not an area without challenges, particularly “down the chain” on a day-to-day operational level. For example, while PHS has collaborated successfully on many “larger” projects, since the elimination of a local records manager in Louisville, there has been a significant struggle in obtaining operational records from the six agencies, creating a significant backlog. And while GA Meeting Services has been lifted up by other agencies as particularly helpful and willing to collaborate, assist, and work collegially on items of mutual interest, there are aspects of the OGA’s work in Louisville and at the General Assembly that lag behind with regard to collaboration, notably information technology and communications. Staff reductions at both OGA and PMA, shifting responsibilities, and unclear lines of accountability have made the attempt to share technical support services fairly unsuccessful. IT staff are outnumbered by the work needed from them in such a tech-dependent environment and spreading services across the agencies has been difficult at best. Even at the OGA, for IT to function at an acceptable level has demanded cooperation and collaboration and patience from all.

Regarding communications, it is noted that communications at the General Assembly meeting and the General Assembly “communications tent” have been a collaborative effort across agencies for many years. However, in interviews with the committee, OGA staff indicated they plan to take responsibility to “cover all that is going on at General Assembly” without collaboration from Presbyterian News Service or communications staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, or the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. While the General Assembly meeting is the responsibility of the OGA, with the Stated Clerk directing communications about its proceedings, a collaborative vision should make a “place at the table” for other agencies and the news service of the denomination to collaborate on the most significant expression of our national, shared identity. In a time when collaboration is perhaps more crucial than ever, working together at the General Assembly meeting models mutuality for the denomination rather than exhibiting division between agencies. Again, whether this was an intentional strategy in order for the OGA to work in a more focused manner, the byproduct of a territorial impulse that can emerge in times of uncertainty, or simply an oversight is not something that this committee can conclude, but it is a potential growing edge as further changes are considered.

From the interviews with staff members it became increasingly evident that there was a great deal of internal collaboration at the OGA. With the drastic reduction of staff across the units, it has been necessary for staff to combine their efforts and energy in order to maintain the level of performance and production that was established. All staff indicated that both “superiors and subordinates” within the OGA were open to working together for the good of the church, and accessible for collaboration when necessary.

It needs to be noted as well, that reductions in workforce have included the shifting of some full-time staff positions at the OGA to part-time. While very capable staff have filled these roles admirably, perhaps even in an environment where job expectations and working hours were not decreased proportionally, the committee observes that some of these part-time positions are only “part-time” because they are filled by longtime employees of the PC(USA). Were these staffers to retire or move on, the steep learning curve of these roles would make it nearly impossible for them to be done effectively as part-time staff positions.

As a general comment, one staff member indicated that the amount of work needing to be done could only be accomplished on the strength of collaboration among “amazing colleagues.” While this level of collegiality and trust is admirable, internal and external collaboration are always worth exploring when assessing the health of an organization. For the OGA, it could be that challenges in the work of collaboration find their origin in a disproportional workload to staff ratio. When staff persons have job descriptions that completely occupy their working hours, it is unreasonable to assume that they will take additional, valuable time to solicit the resources of other agencies in the exercise of that work. It is our view that collaboration is an early casualty of an outsized expectations and downsizing. The unfortunate irony is that this area could potentially have a positive impact in alleviating the burdens of the same.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-12

Comment on Item 04-12—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) offers the following comment in response to Item 04-12, Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.

In response to Recommendations 1 & 2, COGA agrees that it would be good practice to conduct regular assessments of the recommendations of the report and to strengthen our long-range planning process by conducting a three-to-five year plan. Especially following the major restructuring of the OGA, a long-range plan and regular assessments of progress of the goals and tactics of that plan would help COGA to prioritize issues and work as directed by the actions of the General Assembly.

In response to Recommendation 3, COGA agrees that continuing to find strategic alliances and to build relationships with other agencies of the church will only bring positive results.

In response to Recommendation 4, COGA has accepted and is implementing the recommendations of the review committee that we take into consideration the suggestions made about staffing of the OGA, having a more formal review process

of the Stated Clerk, consulting with representatives from the other church agencies during the General Assembly when possible, and formalizing the process of aligning goals of OGA staff with those directed by the General Assembly and COGA. We also agree that the staffing of the OGA Review Committee be done in accordance with the Agency Review Manual.

Item 04-13

[The assembly answered Item 04-13 by the action taken on Item 04-01. See pp. 37, 40.]

On Amending Book of Order, G-6.04e, Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend G-6.04e as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“e. The Stated Clerk receives written advice that a proposed amendment to the Book of Order has received the affirmative votes of a ~~majority~~ *two-thirds majority* of all the presbyteries. ~~The proposed amendment so approved shall become effective one year following the adjournment of the assembly transmitting the proposed amendment.~~ *The proposed amendment is approved and enacted by the next General Assembly following the amendment’s receipt of the necessary two-thirds approval of the presbyteries.*”

Rationale

It seems obvious that some changes need to be made in the General Assembly’s Standing Rules so that they more clearly and explicitly define the governing procedures and express the scriptural basis upon which our denomination was ordained.

Understanding that recommendations of the Advisory Committee of the Constitution (ACC), which become authoritative interpretations (AI) when passed by the General Assembly, commissioners not only carry with them the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) but also become effective immediately. Nevertheless, they should *not* be enacted in haste. The importance of such action and its effect upon the numerous individual church bodies requires much thought and prayerful deliberation in order to prevent the abuse of power by a few.

The commissioners to General Assembly must have the ability to clearly understand the implications resulting from their support of an authoritative interpretation (AI), the rationale of the issues placed before them, and the process by which an AI is both rendered and implemented. The existing procedure has a tendency to be self-serving and does not provide for transparency. The ability of the permanent judiciary committee to issue a stay of enforcement of an enacted AI is essential to protecting the integrity and the credibility of the Presbyterian denomination.

The current rules for amending the *Book of Order* by a simple majority vote of one General Assembly and a simple majority of the presbyteries has fostered the instability of the church’s Constitution. The result of this condition has led to both the loss of support for the work we are commissioned to achieve and a decline in the denomination’s membership.

Concurrence to Item 04-13 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 04-13

Advice on Item 04-13—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

This overture would change the requirements for approval of amendments to the *Book of Order*: General Assembly approval and two-thirds of presbyteries’ approval. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 04-13.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 04-13

Comment on Item 04-13—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of General Assembly respectfully advises the assembly to disapprove Item 04-13.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It also regularly reviews the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

To require a two-thirds majority of presbyteries to enact constitutional change is contrary to our Reformed tenet that the Church is reformed and always to be reformed according to the Word of God (G-6.01) (“Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei”). When this recommendation has come before previous assemblies, it has been repeatedly rejected. Finally, it would be anomalous for the Form of Government, which was adopted by a majority vote, to be amended by majority vote in a manner to require future Presbyterians to gain a 2/3 vote of the presbyteries to make further changes.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 04-13

Comment on Item 04-13—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture asks the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to require certain proposed actions and votes to achieve percentages of support at levels that assure they will not be considered by future General Assemblies and assure defeat of those that are.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully reminds the assembly that any General Assembly cannot bind subsequent General Assemblies. Historically, actions that require supermajority of approval of presbyteries have not passed because it limits access to and limits participation in the decision-making process of the church. In effect, it limits the ability of assemblies to discern the will of God.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 04-NB

2020 Vision Team.

Approved. [See pp. 37, 40–41.]

The Assembly Committee on the Way Forward recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Co-Moderators, in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), to name a “2020 Vision Team” of fifteen people to develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed. The process of developing such a guiding statement will help us to name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future.

1. The committee shall be made up of the following:

- a. At least six teaching elders and at least six ruling elders.
- b. The following demographic traits should be considered when naming members of the committee: gender identity; geographic location; inclusion of people under the age of forty (with special attention paid to young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) serving on the Assembly Committee on “The Way Forward” of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)); racial ethnic minorities; those engaged in both parish and validated ministries; theological diversity (people representative of all the “clusters” identified in “When We Gather at the Table”).
- c. The following skill sets should be considered when naming members of the committee: strategic planning, visioning, experience on administrative commissions.
- d. The Co-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall serve as additional, ex officio, members of this committee.

2. The committee shall build upon the work begun in “When We Gather at the Table” as well as Moderator Heath Rada’s report made to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. The committee should conduct targeted listening exercises with various constituencies throughout the PC(USA) in an effort to discern where the Spirit is leading the church in the future. These may include, but are not limited to, congregations, presbyteries, synods, and seminaries. Such conversations should center on the calling of the church (*Book of Order*, F-1.03) as well as the vision these constituencies have of how God is calling them to respond to “what breaks God’s heart” in their communities.

4. The committee should also look outside the walls of the church to seek best practices and resources for being relevant to the changing landscapes of local, national, and international communities.

5. The committee will develop recommendations that shall be the only business for the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward to review at the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The only exception would be overtures that respond directly to any reports from the 2020 Vision Team. The intention is that there will be a new vision for the denomination by the 224th General Assembly (2020).

6. The assembly shall allocate sufficient resources for this committee to effectively accomplish its work.

Item 04-Report

When We Gather at the Table—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

[For full text of report, see pp. 259–78 of the electronic file.]

WHEN WE GATHER AT THE TABLE

A PC(USA) Snapshot

Figure 1: Frequently Occurring Words in Participants' Suggested Mantras



FAMILY PORTRAIT

Across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), congregations, mid councils, and other interested groups are discerning together who we are as a church and who God is calling us to be. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) has also engaged in this discussion as it sought to understand the current nature of our ecclesiology, the theology of church. In the summer of 2015, COGA came to an understanding that it would be valuable to attempt to bring these many conversations and their insights together for the benefit of the whole church. COGA worked with the talented people of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Research Services and developed an instrument to gather these conversations. The key goals of the process were:

- Open to anyone who wished to participate
- Open-ended questions with no preset list of answers
- Open to wherever the data lead

This report is the results of the gathered data. The full report, “Final Report: The Church in the 21st Century,” can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/final-report-church-21st-century>. Another report, “Coding Instrument for PC(USA) Identity Survey Data” can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/coding-instrument-pcusa-identity-survey/>.

COGA offers it to the PC(USA) as a portrait of who we, the PC(USA), see ourselves to be.

COGA commentary of our findings is presented with “shaded” background. All other text in the report is provided by Research Services in their work in collecting and analyzing the data which COGA sought.

Study Design and Implementation

Areas of Investigation

This work originally sought to explore several general research questions, though the instrument that was used ultimately focused on these:

- What does it mean to be part of this denomination? How important is that to Presbyterians, and why?
- What is the church better equipped to do as a national denomination that it could not do as well as individual congregations and mid council offices?
- What is the church called to be and do in the context of 21st-century American culture?
- What is central to our shared identity, and how do we express it?
- On what things do we achieve a strong consensus, and on what things do we have a broad diversity of opinions?

Who Participated

Because this project invited the input of any and all people and entities of the PC(USA) (individuals, congregations, seminaries, mid councils, and various affiliated groups [e.g. New Worshiping Communities, immigrant fellowships]) within a short timeframe, creating a probability sample to ensure a representative group of Presbyterians was not feasible. Instead, a convenience sample (that is—a sample of volunteers) was used. As such, we cannot calculate a response rate.

Findings from the resulting convenience sample will not be as generalizable as findings would be if they had been taken from a (random) probability sample. However, an analysis of the demographics of those who participated in the study reveals that the sample somewhat matches the known demographics of Presbyterians as a whole.

Exceptions are noted in the Demographics section, which follows.

Demographics

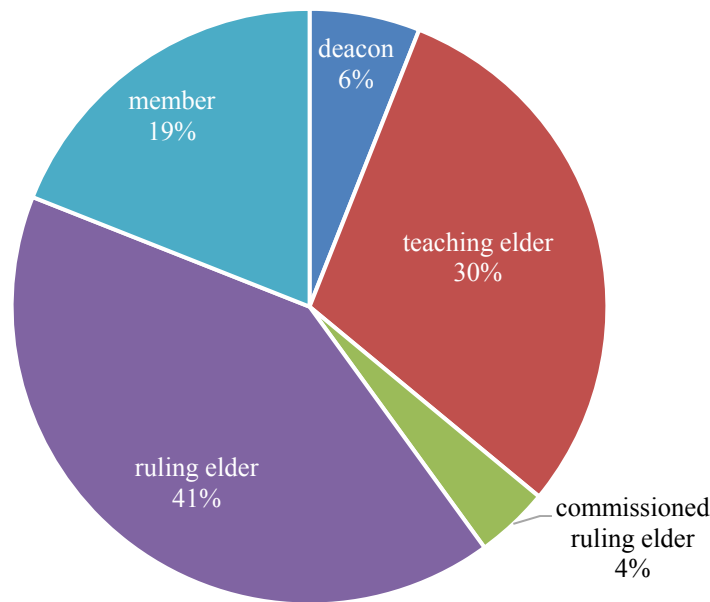
Length of Membership: Because we were specifically interested in hearing from PC(USA) members, we asked, “Are you a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?” Participants were presented with four different response options:

- Yes, I am a member of the PC(USA).
- Yes, I consider myself Presbyterian but don’t identify with any particular denomination.
- No, I belong to another Presbyterian denomination.
- No, I’m not Presbyterian.

If participants answered “no” to this question, they were sent to an exit screen where they were thanked for their participation and were asked no other questions. Of the 3,427 who answered this question affirmatively, 98 percent said they are members of the PC(USA) and 2 percent said they consider themselves Presbyterian but do not identify with any particular Presbyterian denomination. About half (55 percent) of the participants were raised in the denomination. Those who joined or converted to the PC(USA) average 24 years with the denomination, with a range of 1–71 years.

Role: Participants were asked which role(s) they have in the PC(USA) (see Figure 2). Though many participants hold more than one role, a hierarchy was used to show only one role for each.

Figure 2: Participants’ Roles within PC(USA)



More than a third (41 percent) of all participants are ruling elders (but not commissioned ruling elders), about a third (34 percent) are commissioned ruling elders or teaching elders, and one fourth (25 percent) are neither (members, 19 percent, and deacons, 6 percent). These proportions are consistent with our expectations for who would be most informed about the denomination and, therefore, more likely to participate in this process. Overall, 16 percent of the participants serve as a pastoral leader of one or more congregations, and 18 percent are commissioned ruling elders or teaching elders serving in some other capacity.

Those who checked “teaching elder” or “commissioned ruling elder” were asked to select from among fourteen categories to describe their current employment. They were able to check all that apply. Among the 34 percent of the participants who are either commissioned ruling elders or teaching elders:

- 61 percent of teaching elders and 14 percent of CREs serve as a pastoral leader of one or more congregations (16 percent overall)

- 10 percent of teaching elders and 3 percent of CREs serve as PC(USA) presbytery, synod, or national staff
- 3 percent of teaching elders and 21 percent of CREs serve in a non-pastoral position in one or more congregations
- 5 percent of teaching elders and 3 percent of CREs serve as faculty or staff at a seminary or theological school or other educational institution
- 6 percent of teaching elders and 2 percent of CREs serve as a chaplain in the military, a hospital or other health-care facility, or some other location
- 28 percent of teaching elders and 79 percent of CREs serve in some other way, have positions outside the church, are not currently employed, or are retired

Gender: More than half of the participants (54 percent) are female, and almost half (46 percent) are male. This compares to a 58 percent female/42 percent male PC(USA) ratio for members of PC(USA) congregations, according to the most recently available OGA data (2014).

Age: Three in five participants (61 percent) are over age 55. In comparison, the median age range of Presbyterian members is 56–65, according to 2014 OGA data, which tells us that more than half of Presbyterians are in this age range or older.

- 25 or under: 2 percent
- 26–45: 19 percent
- 46–55: 18 percent
- 56–65: 27 percent
- over 65: 34 percent

Race/Ethnicity: Ninety-five percent of participants self-identify as White or Caucasian; in addition, 2 percent identify as Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin, and 2 percent as Black or African American. Few participants identify with other racial ethnic groups (1 percent Asian, 1 percent multiracial, and less than 1 percent Middle Eastern or Native American). White or Caucasian participants are slightly overrepresented compared to 2014 OGA statistics; Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish Origin participants are similar in proportion to 2014 OGA statistics, as are Middle Eastern and Native American participants. Black or African American participants are slightly underrepresented, as are Asian or Pacific Islander participants.

Region: Teaching elders were then asked to which presbytery they belong; all others were asked the name, city, and state of their congregation. These data were used to identify the geographic regions in which participants belong (see Figure 3). When a congregation or presbytery name was not listed by participants, we used the location from which they logged in to fill in the instrument to map their state and region. A list of participants by state is also provided in Figure 4, with counts in each state. The darker the color, the more participants who were from that state.

Figure 3: Participants' Regional Locations

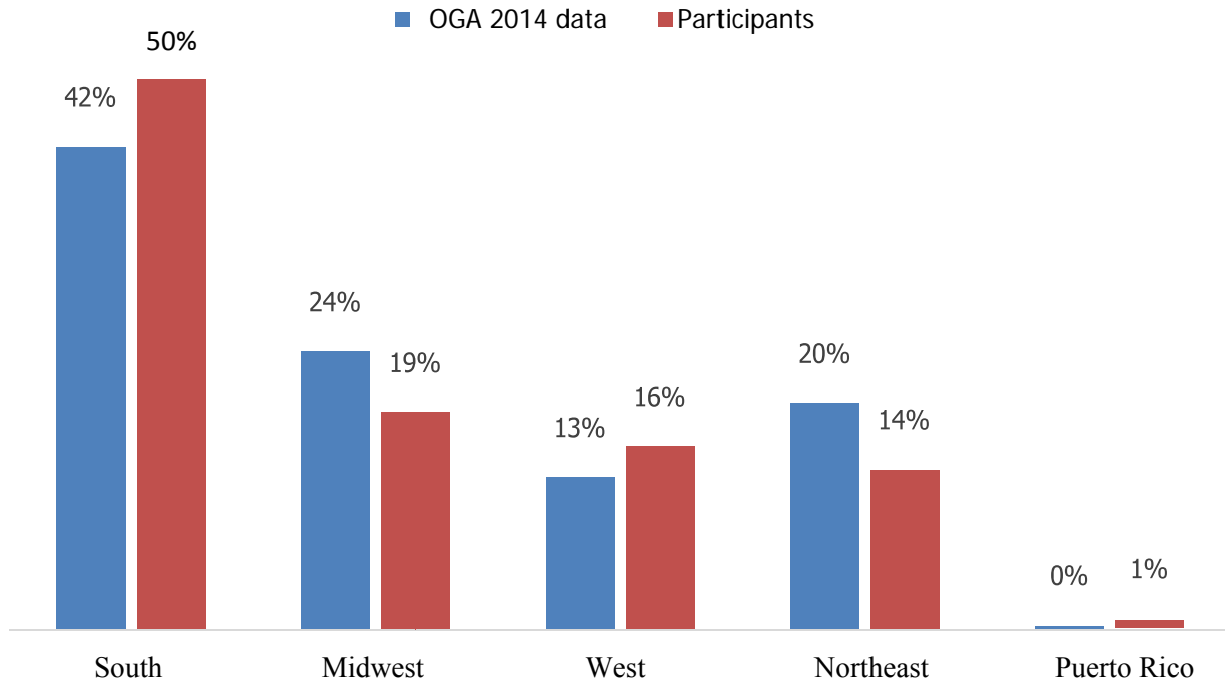
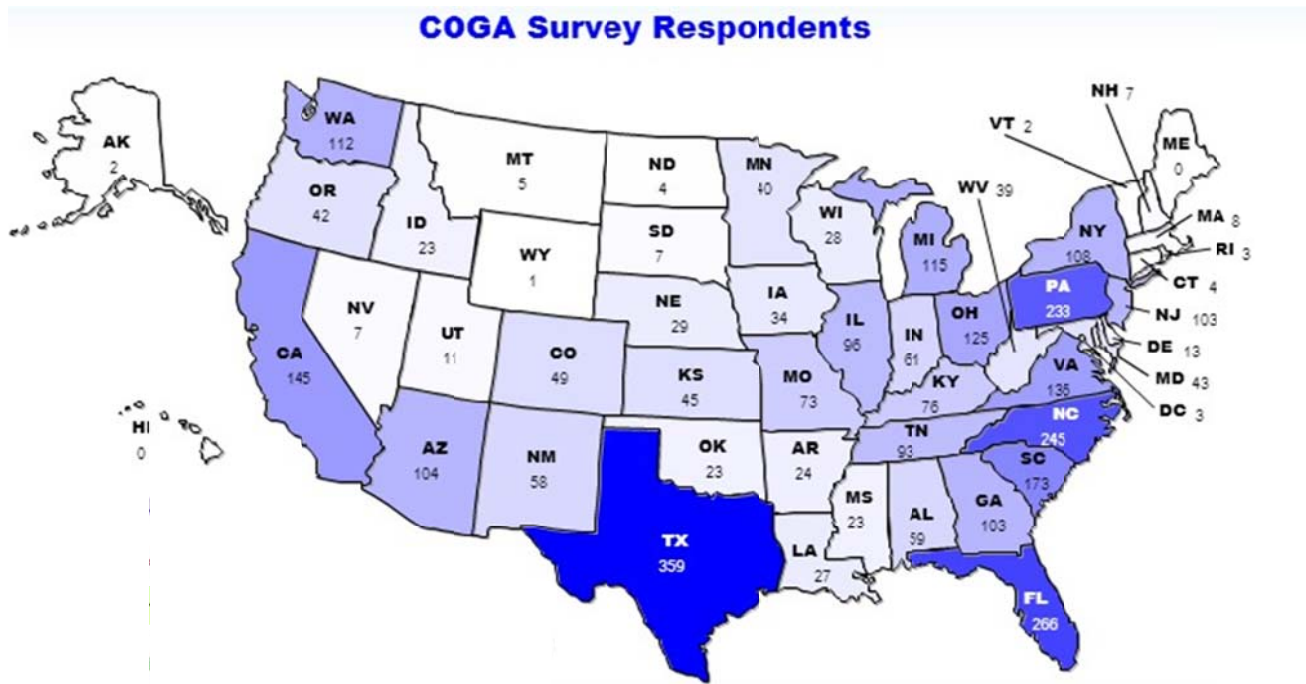


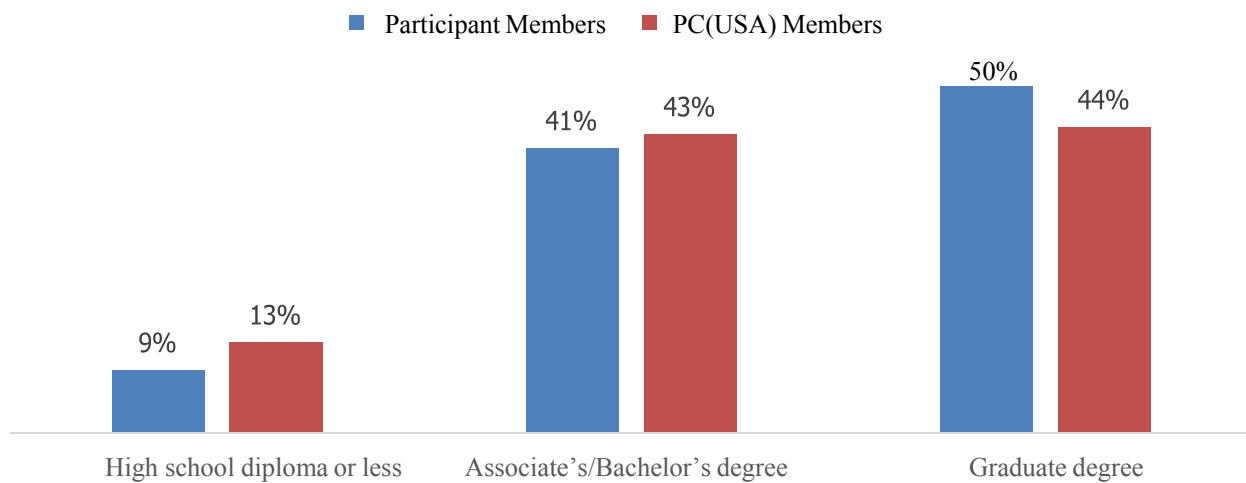
Figure 4: Participants' Location by State



Due to rounding, percentages do not add up to 100 percent

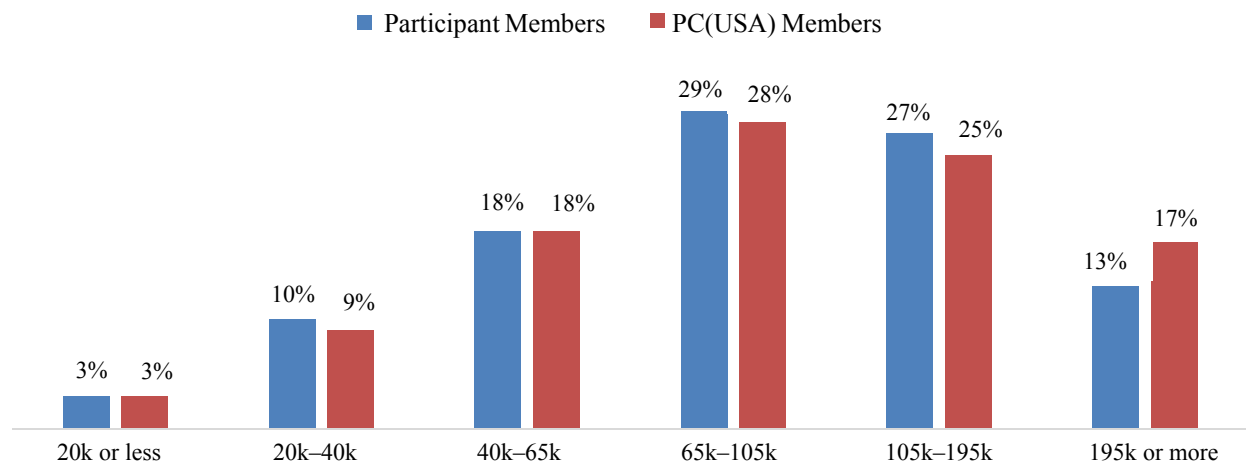
Educational Level: Compared to the general U.S. public, Presbyterians are more educated and have higher total household incomes. Teaching elders all have graduate degrees, so to compare education, only the participants who are not teaching elders are examined here. Member participants in this study are slightly more educated in comparison to Presbyterian members in general (Figure 5), based on data from the 2016 Presbyterian Panel demographic report.

Figure 5: Participants' Educational Levels



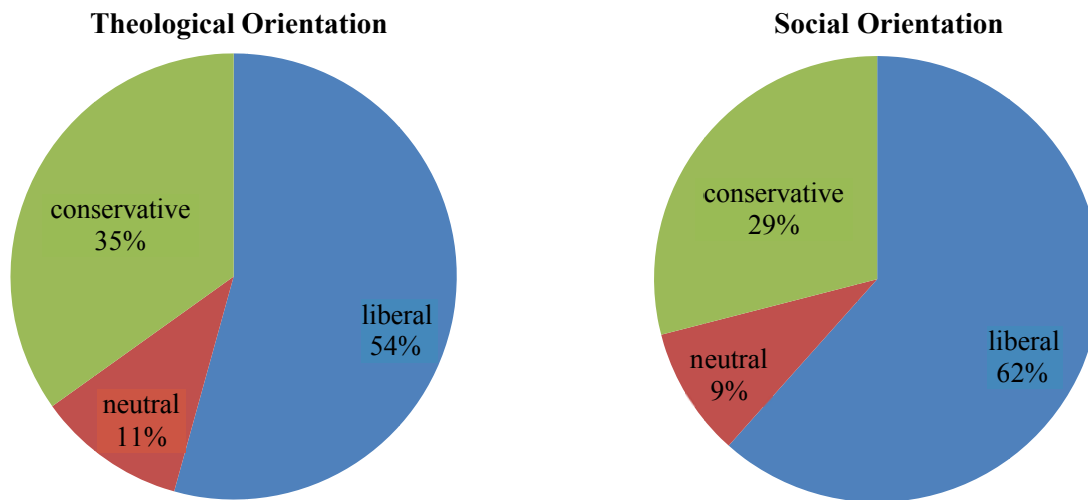
Household Income Level: Member participants in the COGA study are slightly less likely than the PC(USA) member population as a whole (again, compared to the profile of the Presbyterian Panel, recruited in 2015) to have a household income of \$195,000 or more (Figure 6). Since the income levels of members and teaching elders differ, the comparisons in Figure 5 are restricted to members.

Figure 6: Participants' Household Incomes



Social and Theological Orientations: Participants were asked, “Would you say that you are more POLITICALLY liberal, conservative, or neutral?” (1–7 scale with 1 as “liberal” and 7 as “conservative”). Then they were asked a similarly worded question to place themselves on a THEOLOGICAL spectrum. See Figure 7.

Liberals and conservatives are *both* over-represented in this sample, by about the same amount. Social (political) and theological “moderates,” (shown in Figure 7 as “neutral”) on the other hand, are under-represented. This is understandable, as those with a political or theological leaning may have been more vested in providing their opinion on the state of the denomination.



In comparison to participants in this study, PC(USA) members are 41 percent theologically liberal, 26 percent theologically conservative, and 32 percent neutral. Teaching elders are 45 percent theologically liberal, 20 percent theologically conservative, and 35 percent neutral.

The response to this COGA inquiry exceeded all our expectations. It seems evident that within the PC(USA) we are eager both to give expression to their interests and concerns and to participate in shaping the future of the church. While our sampling methodology allowed any who wished to participate to do so, the responses largely mirrored and are reflective of the known demographics of the church as a whole.

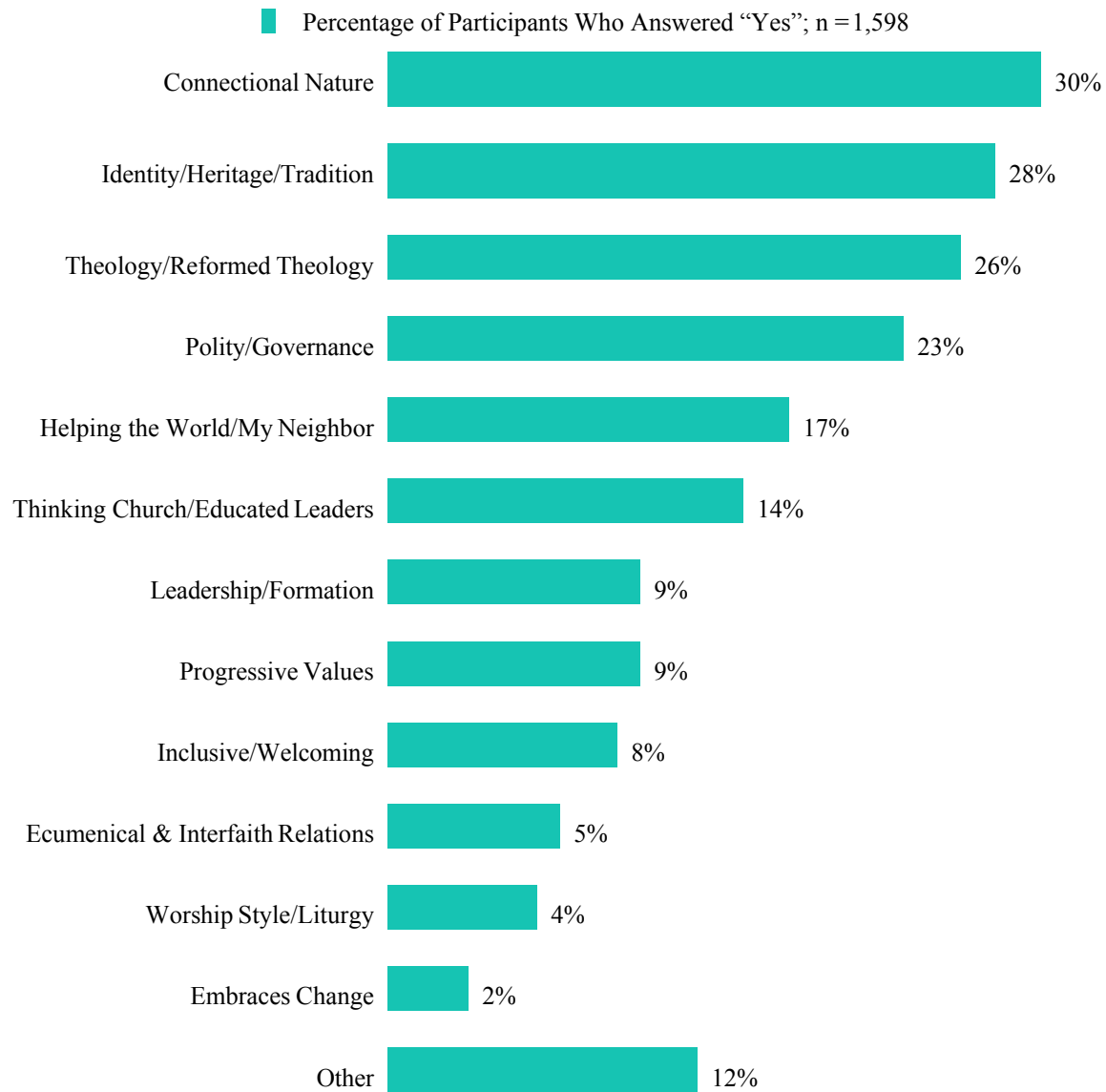
Is It Important to Be Part of the PC(USA)?

One of the first questions we asked was whether it is important to participants that any congregation to which they belong has a relationship with the PC(USA). Of the 2,871 participants answering this question, 56 percent said “yes” and 44 percent said “no” or “I don’t know.” Participants were also asked if they could explain further.

Yes

Among the 1,598 participants who said that it *is* important, the most frequently reported reason participants cited was the connectional nature of the church (Figure 8); particularly the sense of community and friendships that they enjoy, and the way that this connectionalism leads to pooled resources for more effective ministry (if they referred to the connectional nature in terms of accountability structures or discipline, we counted those as part of the polity/governance theme instead).

04 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON "THE WAY FORWARD"
Figure 8: Why It's Important That My Congregation Is PC(USA)



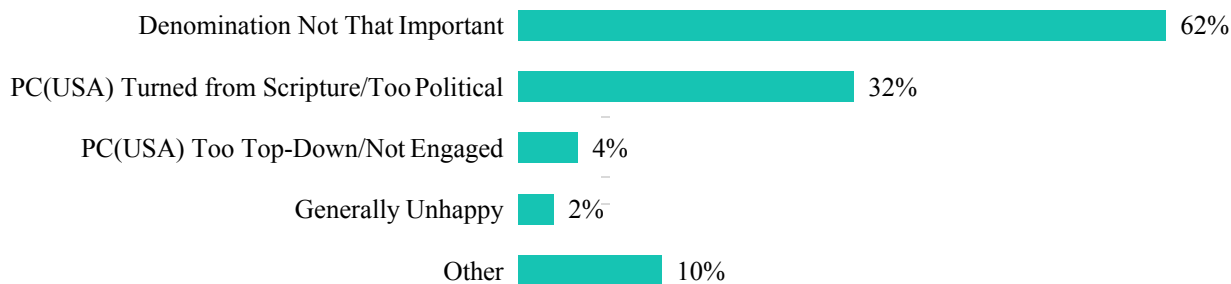
No/NotSure

It may be surprising that only 56 percent of the participants said yes (34 percent said no; 10 percent didn't know). It might lead one to wonder if fully a third of Presbyterians are unhappy.

However, we also asked these participants to explain their answers, and when we started analyzing the "No" and "I don't know/Can't decide" responses, it became clearer that for many, it's really the congregation that matters, not the denomination. (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Why It's *NOT* Important That My Congregation Is PC(USA)

■ Percentage of Participants Who Answered "No" or "I Don't Know"; n = 1,273



We could divide the 1,273 participants who said "No" or "I don't know/Can't decide" into two main groups. The larger group (62 percent of those who said "No" or "I don't know/Can't decide") consists of those for whom it doesn't really matter to which denomination they belong. Their comments suggest one of two things:

- First, that the denomination isn't all that important, as long as it's either
 - Mainline,
 - Reformed,
 - Open to the ordination of women,
 - Progressive,
 - Theologically aligned with their beliefs.
- Second, it wouldn't matter which denomination they belong to as long as they like their congregation. They pointed to the health and vitality of the congregation as being more important than denominational affiliation.

The smaller group (38 percent) consists of those who seem genuinely unhappy to be part of the PC(USA), citing either that they feel that the denomination

- has lost its way (32 percent say the PC(USA) has turned its back on God, ignored scripture, is too political, or has caved to the secular culture);
- is too top-down and out of touch with congregations (4 percent);
- has changed or cannot be trusted, without being specific (2 percent).

This suggests that the percentage of participants who are unhappy with the denomination can be estimated at 17 percent (38 percent of the 1,273 who answered "no" or "don't know" is equal to 17 percent of the 2,871 participants answering the question).

Importance of Belonging to PC(USA) by Social and Theological Orientation

There is a significant difference in how participants responded to this question by their social and theological orientation (Table 1). Whereas 74 percent of liberals in this sample (theological and social) say it is important that any congregation they belong to is in relationship with PC(USA), only 29 percent of social conservatives and 33 percent of theological conservatives say the same. Furthermore, more than half of conservatives (59 percent of social conservatives and 55 percent of theological conservatives) state that it is NOT important that they belong to a PC(USA) congregation.

Table 1: Orientation by Importance of Belonging to PC(USA)

	<i>Social Orientation (n=2,911)</i>		
	<i>liberal</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>conservative</i>
Yes	74%	44%	29%
No	19%	42%	59%
I don't know	8%	14%	12%
	<i>Theological Orientation (n=2,888)</i>		
	<i>liberal</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>conservative</i>
Yes	74%	55%	33%
No	18%	33%	55%
I don't know	9%	12%	11%

**Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%*

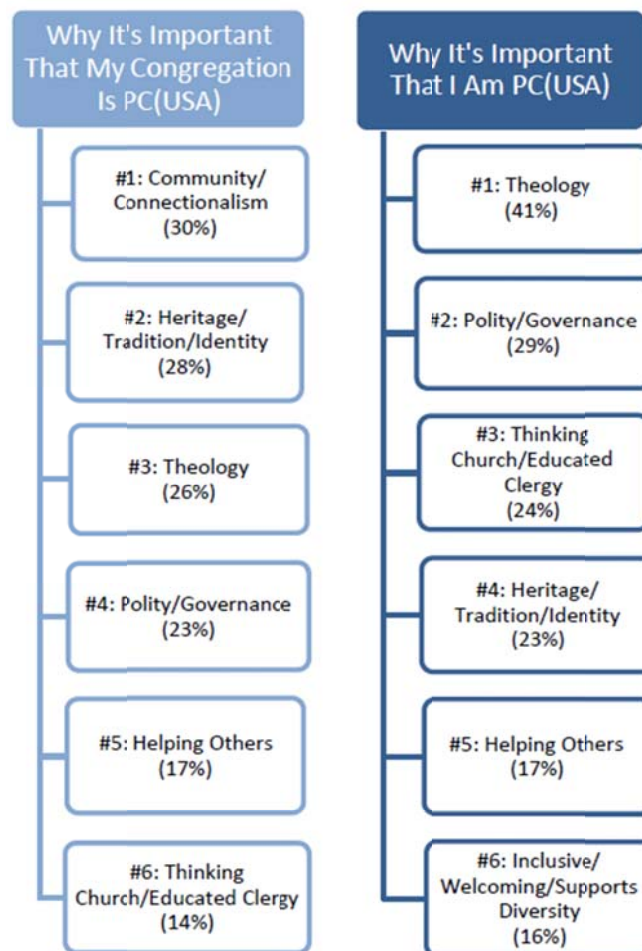
Liberals in this sample are more connected to the denomination; in general, it is more important to liberals that they belong to PC(USA). Conservatives in this sample, on the other hand, are not as likely to say their PC(USA) affiliation is important to them.

What Presbyterians Value about the PC(USA)

Why Presbyterian?

Participants were then asked, "If someone asked you why you are Presbyterian rather than belonging to some other denomination, what would you tell them?" Results are shown in the right-hand column in Figure 10; 3,052 participants answered this question.

Figure 10: What Presbyterians Value about the PC(USA)



Not surprisingly, the themes found in these responses closely mirror those of the previous question, which asked why it's important that their congregation be associated with the denomination. However, the relative importance of these themes (based on the number of people who gave similar responses) shifts as they move from thinking about their congregation to themselves (Figure 10 compares the rank ordering of the top themes from the previous question, shown on the left, with the ordering of the top themes from this question, shown on the right). It's important to note that many of the participants offered multiple reasons.

In the most frequently appearing theme from responses to this question (41 percent), participants said that the theology is the main reason (or one of the main reasons) they are Presbyterian.

About a third (29 percent) say that one of the reasons is polity. Participants especially value the ruling elder/teaching elder balance, the Presbyterian Constitution, and the clear processes for decision making.

About a fourth (24 percent) cited the fact that we are a thinking church: being intentional about thinking and praying through a discernment process when faced with difficult decisions, being open to listening to different voices, and valuing intelligence and education, especially when it comes to having highly educated clergy.

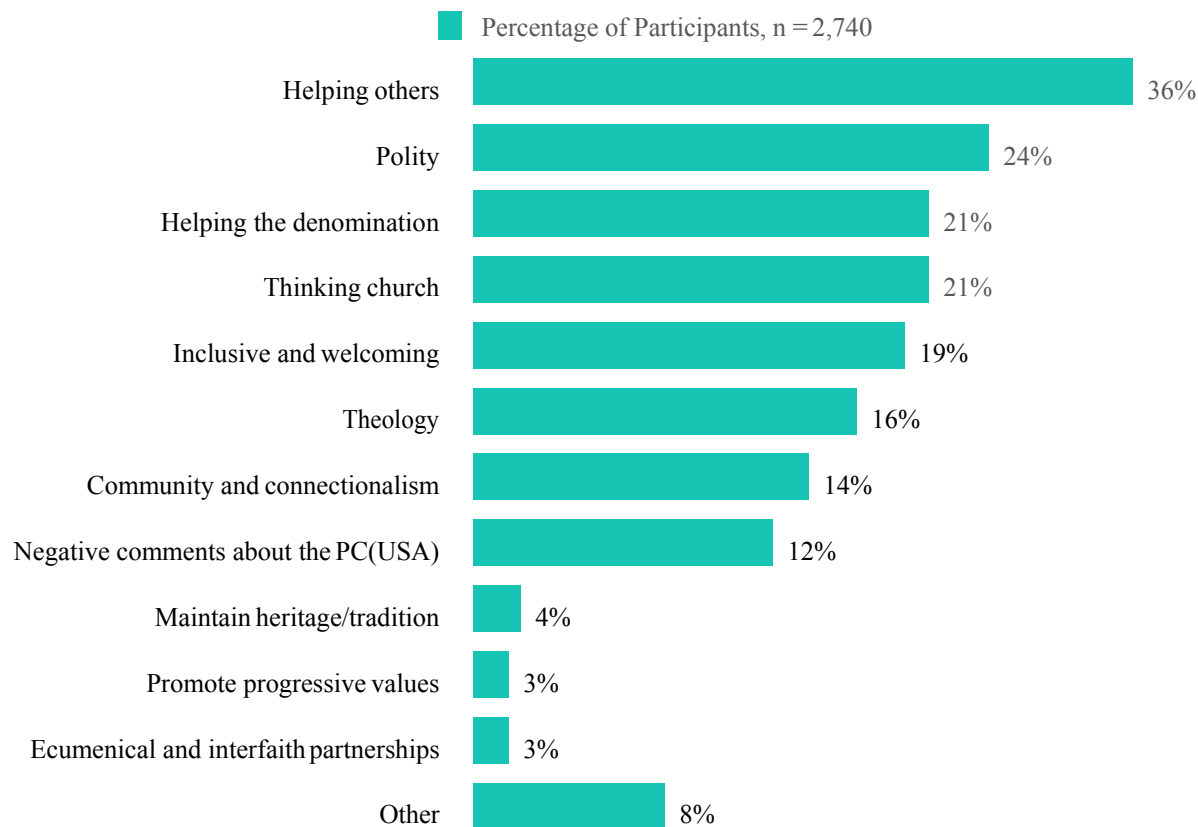
Another fourth (23 percent) mentioned something about personal or denominational identity, heritage, or tradition as a reason why they are Presbyterian. For many, it goes so far back in their family history they cannot imagine not being Presbyterian. For others who may be newer to the denomination, some personal exploration or research has led them to value the rich history of the Presbyterian tradition. And for a few others, it simply means that they were ordained as PC(USA) ministers and have made a historic commitment to the denomination.

In the next largest category, 17 percent said they appreciate that the church helps others and/or provides opportunities for participants to help others, through advocacy, mission work, evangelism, and/or disaster relief/assistance.

These comments suggest that respondents, intellectually and emotionally, place a high value on our Reformed identity. Being part of a community that wrestles together to make decisions ranging from the essentials of our faith to the structure of a youth program is a tie that binds respondents to our denomination. Indeed, often the attachment is one that words cannot capture, but that is a defining part of the identity of those who responded.

What PC(USA) Does Well

We also asked participants to imagine the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in its ideal form, and then asked, "What does the church already have/do that fits your ideal?" as another way to understand what they value about the denomination (Figure 11).

Figure 11: What the Church Already Has/Does That Fits My Ideal

This way of thinking of the PC(USA) influenced participants to think more about actions than about heritage, polity, or theology (except when they mentioned how theology motivates action).

The number one theme, coming from responses provided by 36 percent of the participants, was helping others, and includes: mission, advocacy, disaster, evangelism, and having a strong national voice on issues important to the public. So, while helping others was only the fifth-highest value in the previous two questions (refer back to Figure 9), it receives the highest mention here.

The second most frequently appearing theme is polity, mentioned by 24 percent of the participants.

This is followed by two themes that are tied in importance, with 21 percent of the participants making a comment about either of these:

The first theme is the way we are able to help ourselves and each other as a denomination. Participants outline four key ways they believe we help the denomination:

- 43 percent of the comments about helping the congregation were regarding how we provide worshiping community support and resources (9 percent of the comments overall);
- 35 percent of the comments about how we help the overall church; (7 percent overall) were about how we support and develop seminaries, pastors and church workers;
- This tied closely with training, leadership development, and spiritual formation of members (34 percent of “helping the denomination” and 7 percent of overall comments);
- Finally, 15 percent of the comments about how we help the church’s members and teaching elders (3 percent overall) regard providing denominational leadership and direction.

The second theme, tied in importance with the way we help the church (21 percent) is the fact that we are a thinking church (i.e., intentional about dialogue and debate, collective discernment, and valuing education and educated pastors).

The belief that we are an inclusive, welcoming church that supports diversity in the church is mentioned by 19 percent of participants.

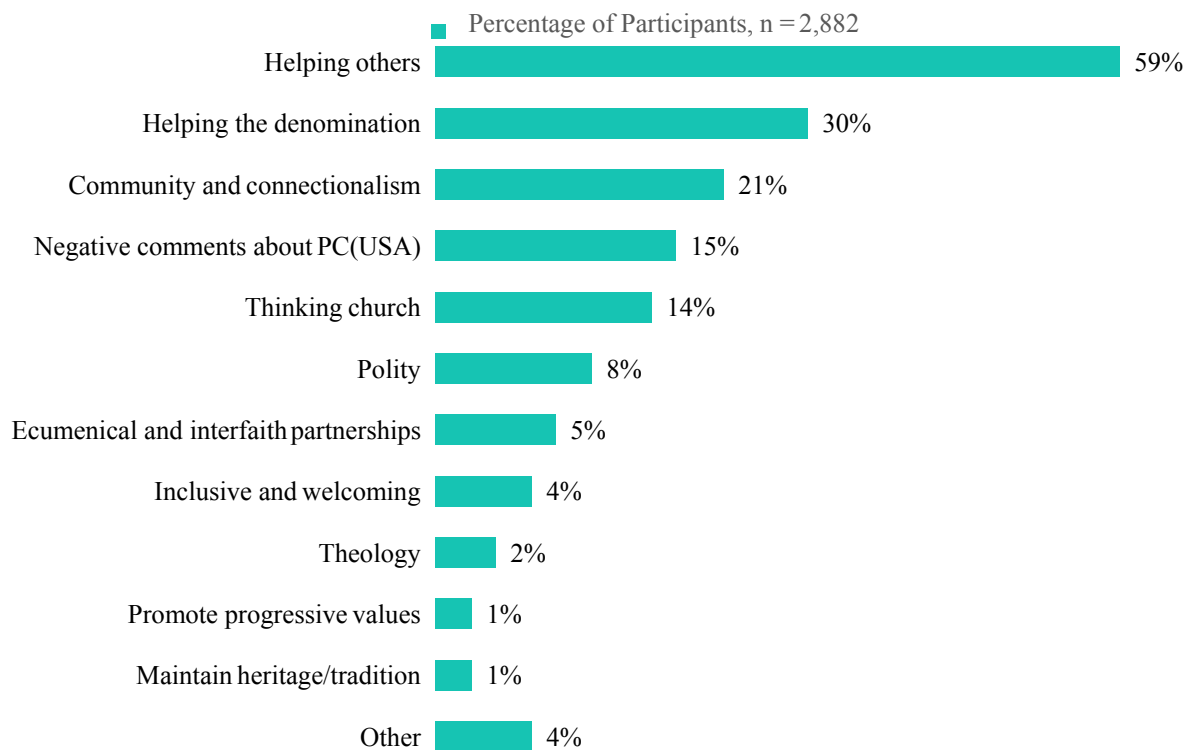
About 16 percent mention theology as something they value about being PC(USA). Many made mention specifically of the Reformed faith, the Confessions, or aspects of theology that were clearly Reformed; others did not, but gave vague references to theology or shared beliefs.

About Structure: What We Are Better Equipped to Do as a National Denomination than as Individual Congregations, Mid Councils, or Networks

We then asked participants, “What are we better equipped to do as a national denomination that we could not do (or do as well) on our own as congregations, mid councils, or networks?”

The themes that emerged from these responses also closely mirrored those from the previous questions that asked why participants would say they are Presbyterian, and what the church already has/does that fits their ideal, though they appear in a different order once again (Figure 12).

Figure 12: What We Are Better Equipped to Do as a National Denomination



By far, the most frequently occurring theme is “helping others” (59 percent of the participants mentioned this). Many of these responses were generically stated as helping others, helping people, helping a hurting world, and similar statements. We also included in this theme mentions of mission, both local and worldwide, as well as advocacy, being a strong voice for our society, disaster relief and assistance, outreach, and evangelism.

After helping others, the next most frequently occurring theme is “helping the denomination,” with 30 percent of the participants mentioning either denominational leadership, spiritual formation, leadership development, or pastor or worshiping community support.

Community was the third most-mentioned thing that we are better equipped to do as a national denomination, with 21 percent of the participants mentioning either its connectional nature, the people, or the fact that we can accomplish more by pooling resources.

Of course, as suggested earlier, not everyone feels that the national church model is the best way to accomplish the work of the church; 15 percent of participants gave answers that can best be summed up as “little or nothing.” The primary reasons appear to be a belief that the denomination has turned away from scripture/God; that denominational leaders present only the liberal views to the American public, while ignoring the conservative voices; that the organization is too bureaucratic/top down; or too political/involved in politics; and that our consciences are informed by public sentiment/worldly values, rather than by God’s Word.

For the next most-frequent theme: 14 percent of participants say that what we are better equipped to do at the national level is be a “thinking church”: engage in intentional dialogue, share expertise, and discern God’s will together; having these conversations at the national, not just congregational, level. One participant summed up the comments about this theme nicely:

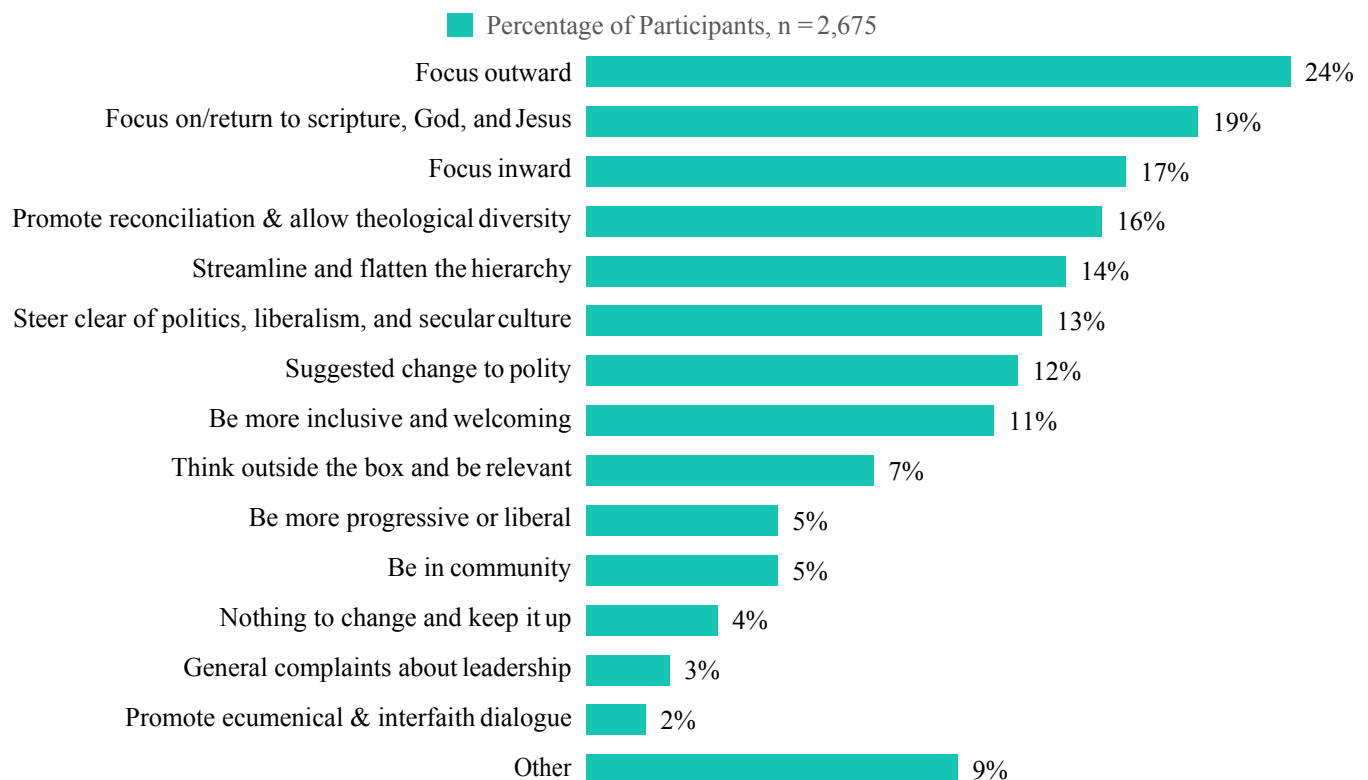
I think how we make decisions as a national denomination is important. Although we don’t always agree, I do always feel the spirit while watching General Assembly meetings moving us forward. I feel if these decisions were each made on [a] congregational level, [it] would leave the motion of the spirit leading the church based off of individual interpretation instead of interpreting as a larger community.

What Changes Are Recommended by Participants?

What the Church Needs to Change

After we asked, “What does the denomination already have/do that fits your ideal?” (results reported above), we followed it with this question: “What does the church need to change in order to reach this ideal?” (See Figure 13.)

Figure 13: What Participants Think the Church Needs to Change



Of the themes that emerged from comments on this question, an outward focus is the one that stood out the most, with 24 percent of participants mentioning mission, advocacy, disaster relief/assistance, evangelism, and/or being a strong voice to the public as things they’d like to see happening more in the church.

The second most common theme focuses on faithfulness: to God, to scripture, to Jesus, with 19 percent of the participants mentioning this as a needed change.

This is followed closely by a theme that is more inward in its focus, with 17 percent of participants saying that the church should focus more on spiritual formation, leadership development, pastor support, and worshipping community support.

The next most frequently occurring theme is about reconciliation, with 16 percent of participants asking the church to promote reconciliation within its walls, be more tolerant of theological diversity, discern together what the future should looklike, and/or educate one another about different views.

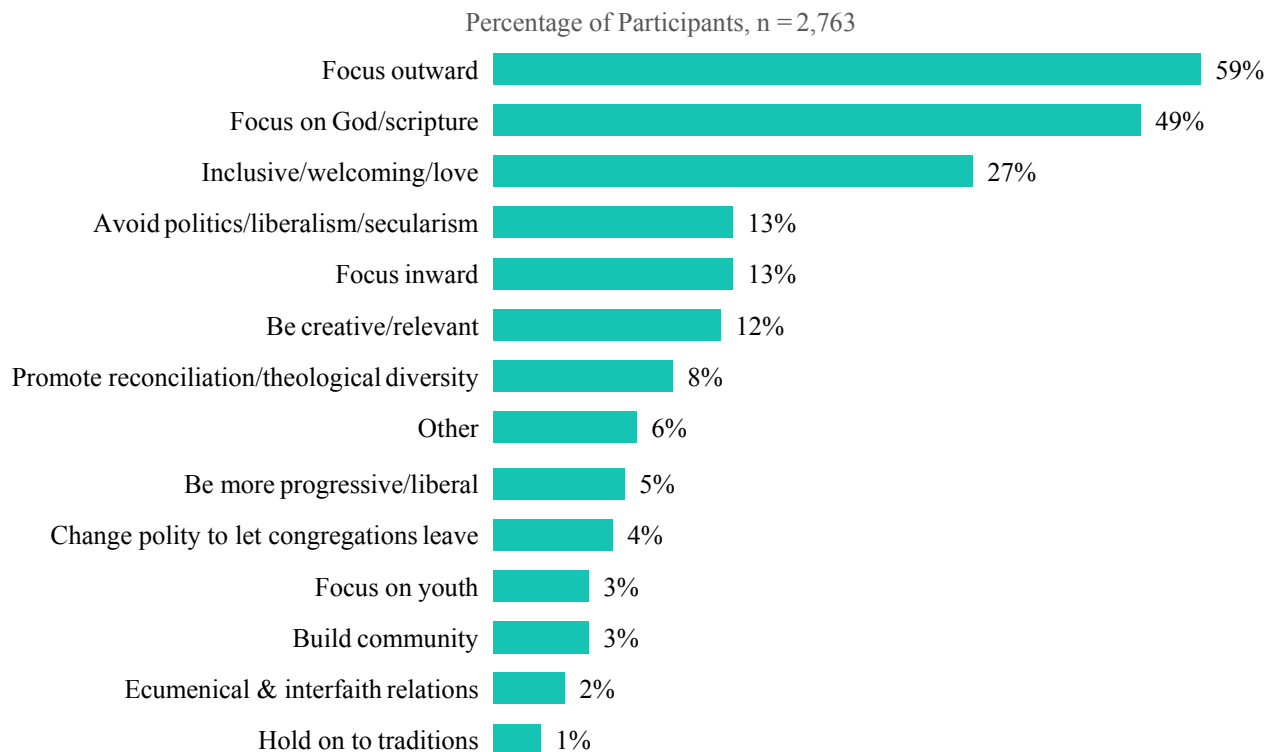
Some of the suggestions (14 percent of participants) concern streamlining what the national church was trying to accomplish, flattening the hierarchal structure, and listening more to congregations, who feel disconnected from the national offices and/or mid councils.

There is also a sizeable number of participants (13 percent) who wish that the PC(USA) would steer clear of politics, liberalism, and secular culture.

What the Church Is Called to Be and Do

We also asked, “What is the church called to be and do in the context of 21st-century American culture?” Although we had hoped that this question would give us some sense of our shared identity as a denomination, many of the 2,763 responses seem to be more prescriptive, somewhat reflecting the responses people gave to the previous question, above, about changes that they would recommend (Figure 14).

Figure 14: What Participants Think the Church Is Called to Be and Do in the 21st Century



Consequently, the two most frequently appearing themes are once again an outward focus, with 59 percent of the participants mentioning mission, advocacy, disaster, evangelism, and/or being a strong voice to the public as things they’d like to see happening more in the church (and with stronger resolve this time, as only 24 percent had mentioned it in the previous question), and a focus on God/scripture. This featured more prominently too: whereas 19 percent mentioned a focus on God and scripture in the previous question, 49 percent mentioned it here.

Of those who mention this theme, three-quarters (37 percent of all participants) emphasize the need to be biblical (without mentioning anything about the denomination having strayed from the Bible), while one in five contend that we need to get back to the Bible and one in ten say that we need to live Christ-like lives.

Likewise, loving others and being more inclusive and welcoming was lifted as being very important for the church to be and do; 27 percent of the participants mentioned one of these.

Once again, avoiding politics, liberalism, and bowing to the secular culture was mentioned (by 12 percent this time, which is about the same as the 13 percent who mentioned these themes in the previous question).

Mentioned by an equal number of participants is an inward focus, with 13 percent mentioning spiritual formation, leadership development, pastor support, and worshiping community support (though 17 percent had listed these as things to do more of in the previous question).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly notes that when the instrument transitioned from asking about change to asking respondents about call (what is the church called to be and do), the respondents spoke significantly about the place of scripture. Our identity as a scriptural church, called by scripture in this case to ministry outside the church and to welcoming love, is a significant affirmation about who we are and who we are summoned to be. The reliance and centrality of scripture is seen not only as a legacy from our past but an expressed hope for our future.

Our Shared Identity: Suggestions for a Guiding Statement

We asked participants the following question, hoping that we would get a long list of potential guiding statements for the denomination:

Some denominations have short guiding statements. For example, the United Church of Christ is guided by the statement: “God is still speaking.” The United Methodist Church also has a statement: “Open hearts, open minds, open doors.” Additionally the Church of the Brethren has “For the glory of God and my neighbors’ good.” More than a motto, these are their mantras. If you could imagine a mantra for the PC(USA) that could be used in a similar way to tell the world what sets us apart as a denomination, what might that look like?

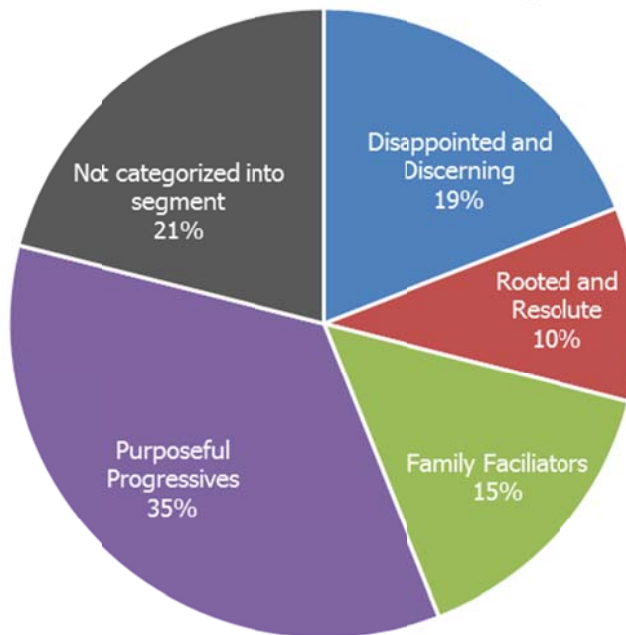
We were not disappointed; after cleaning out the explanations of why people didn’t want to answer the question, whether they thought the word “mantra” was a good word choice, how difficult an exercise this was, or why they made the choices they gave; and after removing the ones that were clearly intended to be funny or snarky, or hurtful (which we saved and included as a separate document), there were still about 2,000 mottos! Some people offered two or three.

The response to the question about a phrase or mantra that might express our Presbyterian identity drew many creative and thoughtful responses—more than a thousand of them. These brief phrases variously capture the passion, energy, and outlooks among us. Many were similar. Throughout the General Assembly a number of the suggestions will be projected on the screen as a way of informally sharing our perspectives on how we wish to be known and understood.

Segments within the PC(USA) and What They Want

As we worked through the analyses of the participants’ comments, looking for the common threads that unite us as a denomination, we became aware of various clusters of individuals who share particular values distinct from other clusters of Presbyterians. While these “clusters” are informal and fluid, their identification may aid us in viewing the diversity within the PC(USA). We refer to them as the four segments within the PC(USA), and ran statistical analyses to identify the relative size of each of these segments (Figure 15).

Fully 79 percent of the participants clearly fit into one of these four segments, based on a combination of their comments on the open-ended questions, and their responses to the demographic questions; 21 percent did not give us enough information to be categorized. Keep in mind that, while these participants are somewhat representative of Presbyterians overall, exceptions are noted in the demographics section of this report, and caution should be exercised when making broad comparisons of the sizes of each of these segments to the overall Presbyterian membership.

Figure 15. Segments within the PC(USA)

Purposeful Progressives (35 percent)

The largest segment among the participants consists of those who are mostly pleased with the denomination and would prefer that we narrow our focus to claim a more progressive identity both for theological reasons and to gain cultural relevance and our own societal niche. Many in this group feel we need to get more involved in politics and in social action. They are less tolerant of conservative theologies within the denomination. Some remain hopeful that conservatives who are upset with the 221st General Assembly (2014) decisions on marriage will see that there are different ways to interpret scripture, and will choose to stay and accept the changes, over time. Others would simply be happy if the conservatives left the PC(USA), and a few offered suggestions for helping dissenting congregations to leave the denomination with grace and dignity. About a third of this segment are teaching elders (32 percent); most of this segment are female (63 percent).

I would like to see PC(USA) be more clear and strong in what it believes. Sometimes I feel it makes decisions almost apologetically. I don't want to have a schism but I think having a clear identity (even if it will change again sometime in the future), own that identity, and be proud of that identity. Name it and claim it!

Disappointed and Discerning (19 Percent)

Though the name given to this segment might appear to be strong, it truly reflects how they feel: forsaken, abandoned, and for some, held hostage by their denomination. They are the most displeased. This group includes those who either (1) do not like their PC(USA) affiliation but are stuck in the denomination for various reasons, or (2) are conflicted and thinking about leaving the denomination. This segment is mostly conservative, and feels betrayed by recent decisions made at General Assembly, by stands taken by the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) on social issues, and by their perception that the denomination is hostile toward conservatives in general. They tend to feel that there is little room left for them at the table; that the liberals in the denomination treat them disparagingly. They argue that the denomination is too involved in politics. About one-fifth of this segment are teaching elders (17 percent); most of this segment are male (64 percent).

Family Facilitators (15 Percent)

These are peacemakers; those who value our theological diversity and would prefer reconciliation between liberals and conservatives. They are generally pleased with the denomination but worry about their brothers and sisters in Christ who are distressed by recent changes. They look to national staff for leadership in resourcing an ongoing dialogue that would help everyone stay in the "family," while also promoting theological diversity and

unity within the denomination. Some are frustrated or angry with their sister and brother congregations who have chosen to leave, seeing it as an “easy way out” or placing undue importance on what they perceive to be secondary issues. This group consists mostly of those who are liberal/progressive. A little fewer than half (42 percent) of this segment are teaching elders; many of this segment are female (53 percent).

Rooted and Resolute (10 Percent)

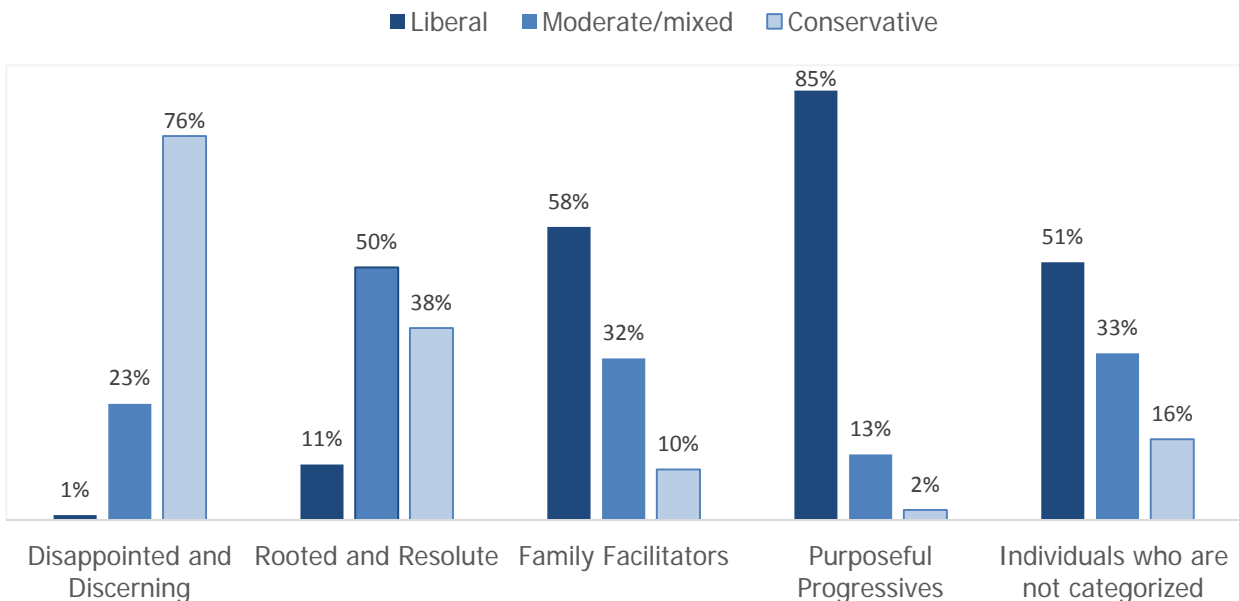
This group considers their PC(USA) identity to be very important, but feel the denomination has strayed from the Bible and/or gotten too involved in liberal politics. Though unhappy with recent trends, they appear to have no current plans to leave the denomination, preferring to stay and fight for the denomination they believe in. Some believe liberals are merely a vocal minority with disproportionate control of the denomination, and believe that they can convince the denomination to repent and return to the Bible. They tend to prefer a literal reading of scripture and feel that liberals/progressive Presbyterians will see their error and repent, when they are reminded that they’ve turned their backs on God. They tend to think that the denomination should not have diverse theologies, though this group is theologically conservative but socially moderate/mixed. They tend to want to return to an earlier time in which they felt that things were better. About a third of this segment (30 percent) are teaching elders; most of this segment are male (60 percent).

The Unsegmented (21 Percent)

These are the people who do not easily fit in any of the above categories, based on the answers they gave. A little under a third (29 percent) of this segment are teaching elders; most of this segment are female (59 percent).

Figure 16 shows the analyses of the four segments and those we could not fit into one of the four segments, comparing three groups: (1) those who are both socially and theologically liberal, (2) those who are both socially and theologically conservative, and those who are both socially and theologically moderate or are mixed on the social and theological scales. Those who did not provide information on their orientation are omitted from this analysis.

Figure 16: Segment by Combined Social and Theological Orientations



It is clear here that when combining the social and theological orientation scales, the Disappointed and Discerning segment is the most prominently conservative (76 percent), and the Energized and Hopeful seekers of the Common Good segment is the most prominently liberal (85 percent). The Rooted and Resolute segment is more moderate/mixed and conservative (50 percent and 38 percent, respectively), though they are more theologically conservative than socially conservative. The Seekers of the Common Good and Unsegmented are mostly liberal (58 percent and 52 percent, respectively) and moderate/mixed (32 percent and 33 percent, respectively). There does not appear to be much difference between the Unsegmented and the Reconcilers when

combining social and theological orientation; both are a little over one-half liberal, but with large minorities of moderate/mixed members as well.

Both are more liberal socially than theologically, though they are still more liberal theologically than neutral or conservative theologically.

The Common Denominator: On What We *DO* Agree

Though the four segments identified among the study participants don't seem to agree on much, we did some additional analyses to determine where they do come to some agreement. We also did some additional analysis to see if answers to each of the questions differ based on liberal/conservative orientation. These analyses compare three groups: (1) those who are both socially and theologically liberal, (2) those who are both socially and theologically conservative, and (3) those who are both socially and theologically moderate OR who are mixed.

Liberals, conservatives, and moderates all agree that community, theology, and polity are key reasons why they are Presbyterian, and why they specifically value their PC(USA) affiliation. However, there is a difference among those for whom belonging to PC(USA) is *not* important. Liberals are more likely to say that denominational affiliation in general is simply not important to them, whereas conservatives are more likely to say that they have specific issues with the PC(USA).

There was a general agreement that "helping our neighbor" is something that we as a denomination do well, and that this outward focus is what we should be focusing on as a church, along with being biblical, nurturing and supporting the church and its leaders, and being a beacon of light and love in the world.

The disagreement tends to lie in what these goals and actions actually mean. Whereas liberals tend to think of "helping our neighbor" in terms of social action and advocacy, conservatives tend to think of it in terms of mission and evangelism. Also, whereas when liberals talk of being a beacon of light and love, they tend to frame it as a form of radical welcome and inclusion (and are more likely to specify certain marginalized groups such as LGBTQ), conservatives tend to focus on more general welcome, or a more specific goal of welcoming conservative theologies.

These four "clusters" are not meant to divide us into theological or ecclesiological camps. Instead, they are meant to give us a deeper understanding idea of what our PC(USA) family portrait looks like. It is COGA's hope that the identification of these groups will assist us in seeing anew the breadth of our diversity and the unique witness we share in our denomination.

Summary Comments

This project sought to provide information for use by commissioners at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to consider as they weigh matters of purpose, function, mission and ministry, and to provide opportunities for individuals and groups within the PC(USA) to discern some consensus on what we are called to be and do as a denomination in the 21st century. It is our hope that we have accomplished both of these tasks. We were very pleased at the overwhelming number of responses to a call for a churchwide conversation: about 3,427 people responded to this instrument, and many thanked us for opening the conversation to the whole church. After analyzing more than 18,000 comments, we believe that voices of Presbyterians from nearly every state and region were heard; voices of the contented and the discontented; voices of new Presbyterians and lifelong Presbyterians. And we want them to know that we appreciate their honesty, their creativity, and their willingness to share their wonderful ideas and even their frustrations.

Although we didn't enter into this project intending to categorize Presbyterians into segments, it seemed a natural path to follow when we were coding the data and began to realize that people meant different things when they talked about what it means to be biblical, to be inclusive, or to follow Jesus. We began to see patterns and came to understand that these different groups within the church have very different worldviews, different understandings of scriptural interpretation, and different sets of values.

The General Assembly has before itself a monumental task: not only to think about the structure for a national church that best suits us moving forward, but also what our identity should be going forward.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly wants to thank everyone who gave thought, prayer, and insight to Research Services. It was clear in all responses that all people care about their Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). If our church was only fueled by passion there is enough to carry us well into the future.

We are a blessed and fortunate people who have a heritage that still inspires us to be hearers and doers of the Word; to treasure the role of laity and clergy together; that privileges thoughtful discernment and compels us to act for justice. There is a widespread appreciation for Reformed Theology and how it has shaped us a church.

There is an urgent sense that our efforts must now address the needs of congregations, mid councils, and agencies of the church—venerable and emerging, as an expression of faithfulness to the Lordship of Christ. COGA notes a healthy restiveness to reform our structures and perhaps even our Presbyterian culture in service to a renewed vitality of witness in our nation and around the world. There is a common desire to find ways to support healthy congregations and our commitment to helping others.

We are not satisfied with our hospitality to all God's children both inside and outside the church and recognize the need of the Spirit's work that we may become a more diverse people who feel empowered and treasured.

We know the limits of this self-portrait and know, too, the ever-changing nature of our church and the world. Though we know that we presently "see dimly," we find contained within the responses the hope and conviction that we have a future that can grow out of the strengths of the past and be chastened by its errors. We hold a high and confident view of God's abiding Grace toward the PC(USA).

COGA again wants to express its thanks for partnership with Dr. Deborah Coe, Dr. Angie Andriot, and Dr. Perry Chang from PMA Research Services and for additional insights from Dr. John Brueggemann.

Item 05-01

[The assembly approved Item 05-01 with comment. See p. 33.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) would like to recommend to synods that they continue conversation and collaboration of ministry and mission between and among synods. This includes encouraging synods to offer assistance to struggling synods, including the possibility of changing boundaries to increase the vitality and viability of synods. Further, the assembly urges synods to undertake an intentional system of review and self-study and to report to General Assembly on a biannual basis.]

On Rescinding the Actions of the 221st General Assembly (2014) That Directed the Establishment of a New Configuration of Synod Boundaries (Item 05-04)—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

The Presbytery of Santa Fe respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to rescind the action taken by the 221st General Assembly (2014) regarding Item 05-04 (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 319ff), the report of the Mid Council Commission, directing the establishment of a new configuration of synod boundaries.

Rationale

The ability to form and re-form synod boundaries already exists in the current Form of Government (*Book of Order*, G-3.0502a-e).

The requirement to reduce the number of existing synods to “10–12” is an onerous burden upon the synods in the western half of the United States because of our vast geographic reality. It is impossible to conceive how the mission and ministry of any one presbytery could be enhanced by enlarging synod boundaries to encompass a span (for example) from Canada to Mexico, Hawaii to New Mexico, or Alaska to the Dakotas to New Mexico to Hawaii.

Some plans posited to meet the requirements of this report fulfill only the letter of the requirements and change nothing else. For example, the “Synod of the West” idea seeks to combine the five westernmost synods into one, while retaining a permanent judicial commission and establishing geographic administrative commissions within the existing bounds of each synod or presbytery. Each would continue to oversee its own assets, and likely continue its own ministry, without any real change. Such an exercise would be shallow at best and hypocritical at worst.

The Synod of the Southwest, in consultation and collaboration with its four presbyteries, has embarked upon a project to enhance the leadership of its historic racial ethnic populations that would be placed on hold, if not in fact halted, as a result of the attention that is required to effect a change in boundaries. This diminishes our joint emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call.

The establishment of new synod boundaries, as previously noted, does not serve to enhance our ministries or our ability to work across current synod boundaries. Already the Synod of the Southwest, in consultation with and at the encouragement of its presbyteries, has reached out to the Synods of Mid America, Lakes & Prairies, and Lincoln Trails in establishing the Theocademy, for use not only with the dominant culture but also with the Native American people, and is in the process of establishing Teocademia for people of Hispanic descent.

The Synod of the Southwest and its constituent presbyteries, at the direction of the assembly, have earnestly entered into the requested collaborative process with three other synods. While those conversations have proved meaningful and fruitful, the presbyteries represented were able to find common ground for mission that could be accomplished within the present alignment of synod boundaries. None of the presbyteries, or the synod, of the Southwest was able to conceive of ministry that could only, or even best, be accomplished by the realignment of synod boundaries.

The Synod of the Southwest, in consultation and collaboration with its four presbyteries, has established a common understanding of, and relationship based upon, their mission and ministry and an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call.

If the report seeks to combine synods in order to save money, it is not evident that any study has been done to show actual costs and savings. In fact, in addition to other unidentified expenses, the realignment of synods is certain to create expenses associated with partitioning of restricted funds.

Concurrence to Item 05-01 from the Presbyteries of Boise, Cascades, Cimarron, de Cristo, East Oregon, Nevada, Plains and Peaks, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Jose, Seattle, Sierra Blanca, Stockton, and the Synod of the Covenant.

Concurrence to Item 05-01 from the Presbyteries of Central Washington and the Northwest Coast (with Additional Rationale).

The assembly's action to reduce the number of synods to "10–12" has proved to be impractical, costly, and unnecessary. Several synods have already or are in the process of reducing their functions as provided by G-3.0404, which has, or will, effectively reduce the number of active synods.

These synods have discussed combining into a single synod, which would achieve the "letter" of the requirement of reducing the number of synods to "10–12," but it would defeat the intention and spirit of the idea of actually reducing the number of synods. Furthermore, we have discovered that untangling the assets and legal entities of these reduced functioned synods in order to combine them would be time consuming and costly, with nothing effectively achieved, while diverting the time, energy, and resources away from meaningful mission and ministry.

Reduced function in the Synod of Alaska-Northwest occurred at the request of its presbyteries, and it is serving them well. The perception within this synod is that in other regions, presbyteries may be dissatisfied with the actions or functions of their synods, and that a General Assembly mandated reduction in the number of synods would somehow solve this problem. Instead, the mandate is creating more tension and issues between and among mid councils.

The *Book of Order*, at G-3.0404, provides an adequate solution for the "problem" of synods. Synods that function at a high level, providing services and support for their constituent presbyteries, should be able to continue meaningful ministry. Synods that were unable, for whatever reason, to provide this kind of support, that have moved or are moving to reduced function, should be allowed to continue without the burden of forced consolidation and restructuring, which will increase the need for more staff and legal fees.

Where synods and their constituent presbyteries disagree on their functions and mutual support, these bodies should do the good and challenging work of finding mutual purpose, ministries, and support, instead of foisting their issues on synods who are healthy and fulfilling their "emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call."

Concurrence to Item 05-01 from the Presbytery of Kendall (with additional rationale)

The geographic area that would be covered if all or some of the Western synods were combined is vast. Physical distance would be a barrier to the effective participation in conducting synod business and could result in gaps in representation at and participation in synod meetings and decision making.

The burden of expense in changing boundaries would result in little administrative savings due to the costs associated with the administrative changes and the likely increased cost in travel over an even greater area.

The Synod of the Pacific generously supports, through its Mission Partnership Funding Program, the mission and witness of churches that make up the Presbytery of Kendall. Some of the churches are small and have limited financial resources. Yet, they also are the sole Christian witness in large geographic areas where the LDS faith is the dominate religion. Adding presbyteries to our synod would reduce the portion of synod mission distributions based on investments and the savings and loan program.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 05-01.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Item 05-01 based on the following rationale:

The overture affirms that the authority and ability "to form and re-form synod boundaries already exists in the current Form of Government (*Book of Order*, G-3.0502a–e)." This ability should be executed as a result of a concrete and detailed plan to enhance the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on each geographical area where our church is present.

In 2006 the PC(USA) published a booklet about church growth strategy, "Racial Ethnic Immigrant Evangelism Church Growth Strategy," which affirmed that "racial ethnic membership in this denomination is only 4.7 percent when racial ethnics are more than 20 percent of the population of the United States." The document stated that "this is a testimony of the lack of emphasis the denomination has placed on racial ethnic evangelism ..." (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 378, paragraph 33.143). In making the above statement, the 208th General Assembly (1996) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledged the compelling need for an intentional churchwide strategy for racial ethnic church growth.

A plan to enhance the ministry and mission of the church in any particular geographic area has to be oriented to the strength of our racial ethnic groups if we want to reach out to the emergent population in the United States of America. It is

not clear how the survey and conversations developed in the different synods that resulted in the actual recommendation to reduce the numbers of synods addressed this particular topic of racial ethnic and immigrant growth.

The overture affirms “It is impossible to conceive how the mission and ministry of any one presbytery could be enhanced by enlarging synod boundaries to encompass a span (for example) from Canada to Mexico, Hawaii to New Mexico, or Alaska to the Dakotas to New Mexico to Hawaii.” Same argument is applicable to the racial ethnic ministries.

In particular ACREC feels that this reduction of synods will definitely affect the ministries to racial ethnic people who will be losing representation and financial resources. This also will put more difficulties to the interaction and relations among the racial ethnic groups across the new huge geographic area in which they will be located.

For these reason, ACREC strongly encourages the approval of this overture.

Item 05-02

[The assembly approved Item 05-02 with amendment. See pp. 13, 33]

On Restoring the Boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific to Its Status Prior to the 2012 Revisions—from the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii.

The Synod of Southern California and Hawaii overtures the General Assembly to restore the boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific to their status prior to the 2012 revisions, which allowed Malibu Presbyterian Church to become a part of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara and allowed the First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu to become a part of the Presbytery of San Diego.

The description of the Presbytery of the Pacific would return to the following:

“The Presbytery of the Pacific is the corporate expression of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consisting of all the churches and ~~[ministers of the Word and Sacrament]~~ [teaching elders] within the County of Los Angeles in the State of California lying southerly and westerly of the following described line: commencing at the intersection of the Pacific Ocean and Mulholland Highway; thence northerly and easterly along Mulholland Highway to its intersection with Mulholland Drive; thence easterly along Mulholland Drive (including the Bel Air Presbyterian Church) to the Hollywood Freeway; thence southeasterly along the Hollywood Freeway to Franklin Avenue; thence easterly along Franklin Avenue to Western Avenue; thence southerly along Western Avenue to Sunset Boulevard; thence easterly along Sunset Boulevard to Fountain Avenue; thence easterly along Fountain Avenue to Hyperion Avenue; thence northerly along Hyperion Avenue to Rowena Avenue; thence southeasterly along Rowena Avenue to Fletcher Drive; thence northeasterly along Fletcher Drive to the Southern Pacific Railroad; thence southerly along the Southern Pacific Railroad to its intersection with Alhambra Avenue; thence easterly along Alhambra Avenue to the Los Angeles River; thence southerly along the Los Angeles River to the city limits of Vernon; thence along the westerly city limits of Vernon, Huntington Park, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, and Long Beach to the Pacific Ocean; also all the churches and ~~[ministers of the Word and Sacrament]~~ [teaching elders] within the State of Hawaii and the Midway Island Group. Churches and ~~[ministers of the Word and Sacrament]~~ [teaching elders] who are members of the Hanmi Presbytery are excepted.¹

Rationale

The boundaries of the Presbytery of the Pacific were changed to allow two churches to become members of neighboring presbyteries. Both churches subsequently left the denomination and are, therefore, no longer members of those neighboring presbyteries. There is no longer a reason to maintain the somewhat unusual boundary adjustments made to accommodate the desires of these two churches to become members of the neighboring presbyteries.

Concurrence to Item 05-02 from the Presbyteries of Huntingdon and Santa Barbara.

Item 05-03

Item 05-03 not referred for lack of concurrence.

¹ Since Hanmi Presbytery no longer exists, this sentence will be removed as an editorial change rather than a boundary change.

Item 05-04

Item 05-04 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 05-05

[In response to Item 05-05, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 30, 33.]

On Amending G-3.0106 Requiring All Councils to Adopt a Dependent Care Policy—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

The Presbytery of Great Rivers overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 by adding a new sentence to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“All councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child protection policy. *All councils shall adopt and implement a dependent care policy.*”

Alternate Resolution:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop resources for councils of all levels to provide for dependent-care policies.

Rationale

The 205th General Assembly (1993) approved “*A Vision for Children and the Church.*”

... Because Jesus welcomed children and encouraged us to welcome them in his name; Jesus lifted up a child as an example of what the realm of God is like.

Therefore we hope for a church where we take seriously our baptismal vow to nurture all children committed to our care; where we bring good news to all those places where children are in need; where adults and children alike share in ministry. We covenant to act so that this vision may be made real for all children, now and in times to come. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p.644)

In 1995, the church published “*Guidelines for Child Care at Church-Sponsored Meetings.*” This resource was recommended by the 207th General Assembly (1995) to offer extensive support for governing bodies, congregations, providers, and families as they worked together to provide high-quality childcare for the ministry and mission of church councils.

The 211th General Assembly (1999) fortified the PC(USA)’s pastoral care for elderly, disabled, and homebound members. When the church adopted W-3.3616e, we expanded opportunities for “... pastoral ministry to persons in a variety of isolating circumstances.” Extended serving of communion was envisioned as a means to embody our pastoral and spiritual obligation to *all* the members of the church’s fellowship.

Presbyterians for Disability Concerns of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association has distributed a *Congregational Audit of Disability Accessibility & Inclusion*. This inventory can “... assist a congregation in taking seriously the call for the church to be the full embodiment of the household of God and a “house of prayer” for all peoples (in this instance persons who have a disability) [a]s approximately 19 percent of any given population has some type of disabling condition.”

And yet:

In the September 2011 edition of *Presbyterians Today*, Jack Marcum, coordinator of Research Services, General Assembly Mission Council, reported that while both membership and child baptisms had been dropping for decades, the rate of child baptisms had dropped at nearly twice the rate of membership.

... the declining numbers of child baptisms and professions of faith are troubling. These trends strongly suggest that membership drops will accelerate in coming years, even as they have already recently accelerated. Having endured 45 straight years of net membership losses, perhaps Presbyterians have grown inured to the steady drip, drip, drip of declines. If so, it’s time to take notice. The findings presented here are the most sobering I’ve seen in more than two decades studying the PC(USA). (<http://pt.epubxp.com/i/39651-sep-2011/8>)

In 2014, Sue S. Montgomery, team leader for the PC(USA) Disability Concerns Consultants, wrote “A Story in Anywhere USA That Didn’t Have to Happen” for *The Seasons of Life in the Family of Faith: Resources for Worship and Inclusion* published by Presbyterians for Disability Concerns of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association. Rev. Montgomery wrote:

... The story included here reflects what people with disabilities experience when the people around them have no awareness training or sensitivity to the ministry needs of the brother or sister with a disability who sits in their midst,” in but still out. ...

05 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MID COUNCILS

Simple things would have made a difference. The lack of awareness, training, and sensitivity to what happens to our brothers and sisters in faith in the presence of disabling conditions created unnecessary exclusion and its subsequent pain that day. For the teaching elder it was an eye-opening experience, one that was never imagined until that day. The disbelief, the raw and painful rejection of all that had once been in the person who once served, being replaced by the person in the wheelchair who could no longer do anything, was worse than all the disability the disease created.

It didn't have to happen. But it did. Now is the time to prevent it from ever happening again in any place, at any time, and to anyone. This is what it means to be the family of God—different gifts, different members, one body, the Body of Christ. (<http://www.phewacomcommunity.org/images/PDC2014fullreduced.pdf>)

A commissioners' resolution to the 221st General Assembly (2014) asked for the "... Office of the General Assembly to ensure that childcare and child-friendly spaces are provided at all General Assembly meetings, following models used for other Presbyterian meetings, such as Presbyterian Women's Gatherings and Big Tent" (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 23, 203). The commissioners' resolution was referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), which approved a policy to reimburse commissioners and advisory delegates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for caregiving costs for their dependents.

This new policy is a sign of hope. However, as sincere as our faith community might be about dependent care, as deeply as we hold our responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the vulnerable among us, after decades of advocacy, we are still waiting. The time is ripe for significant *churchwide* progress in our efforts to create settings of full inclusion that honor the humanity and dignity of *all* God's children.

Concurrence to Item 05-05 from the Presbyteries of New Castle and Santa Fe.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-05

Advice on Item 05-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 05-05.

The item seeks to add the requirement of a dependent care policy to the list of policies councils are to adopt and implement. The item would provide a constitutional remedy for actions that all councils should be both cognizant of and sensitive to in the life of the council. Policies are clearly the responsibility of the councils of the church, and councils already have the authority to implement policies in their standing rules and manuals of operations. The *Book of Order* is a constitutional document, not a manual of operations.

The intent of the policy is unclear—who is the policy intended to protect? Councils are to protect and provide care (sexual misconduct policy, child protection policy) for both participants and caregivers.

If approved, councils would be required to adopt and implement another policy. The ACC recommends disapproval of this item; this does not mean that this issue is not important. Constitutionally mandating a policy is not the only way to express its importance in the life of the church.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

In concurrence with the intent of the overture, nonetheless the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 05-05 be disapproved.

In addition to our own policy statements, the PC(USA) must also adhere to federal and state laws, most notably Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). While FMLA does not usually apply to local congregations, it can come into effect at the presbytery, synod, or national level depending on the number of employees within a seventy-five-mile radius, including those who telecommute.¹ It is the responsibility of each council to consult with a lawyer knowledgeable about local, state, and national laws regarding their leave policies. By establishing policies that comply with all applicable laws, councils can be assured that they are in compliance with the laws that protect those who care for dependents. Because of this legal reality, ACSWP advises this overture be disapproved. However, each council, whether the local congregation, presbytery, synod, or at the national level, should create a dependent care policy that complies with local and current laws. Commissioners may wish to indicate this in a comment or alternate resolution along these lines.

For several decades, including before reunion, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has called for men and women to be equal partners in the work of the church. In the American context, however, the care for dependents, including but not limited to children, often but not exclusively falls to the oversight of women. For many who care for dependents, the cost and logistics can be prohibitive to a full participation in the life of the church and a barrier to living into their call from God to participate in the life of the church, which results in caretakers self-selecting out of participation in the life of the church.

Requiring councils at all levels from the local congregation, mid councils, and at the national level to have a dependent care policy will be an important step towards helping those caring for dependents more fully participate in the life of the church.

A 1965 Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) statement reminded the church that women should be considered eligible for all elected officer positions. The statement also requires that the election process “shall be designed to provide for women on the same basis as men.”²

In a 1971 United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) statement, “men and women must act as equal partners and contribute to the ministry of the Church all the talent God has given them ...” and “they [women] must accept all forms of service in the Church including leadership positions” In addition, the church is called to “challenge and change anything which interferes with a person’s full development and wholeness.”³

A 1972 UPCUSA statement demonstrated the church’s awareness on the limited availability of quality childcare.⁴ This care for mothers with young children is not a new concern, but in the last four or more decades, the Presbyterian church failed to live into its own call to support parents, traditionally viewed through the lens of motherhood, as an integral part of the life of the church. Both predecessors of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns have sought to equalize these burdens of responsibilities at home and at work, especially as stagnant wages have put more and more parents into the labor market, sometimes cobbling together part-time jobs.

In two 1999 PC(USA) statements, the church called the ordination of women to all offices in the church is reflected in “our belief that God works through all persons in a variety of ways without regard for a hierarchy based on gender.”⁵ In a second statement that year, the PC(USA) reaffirmed need for the full participation of women in the church so that “the image of God in women be fully recognized and valued.”⁶ Both, of course, reflect A Brief Statement of Faith’s line 64: the Holy Spirit “... calls women and men to all ministries of the Church” (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4).

The 2001 “Resolution on the Ministry of Caregiving in Relation to Older Adults” approved at the 213th General Assembly (2001) affirms the corporate responsibility to care for older persons in need. Out of our vision of the church as a family and a recognition of changing social structures that has resulted in the kinship connectedness being stretched thin, the church is called to support through education and support of caregivers. However, this resolution stopped short of calling for councils to develop dependent care policies so that caregivers can participate in the church beyond the role of providing care for dependents.

The 2004 Statement “Transforming Families” reminds the church what their duties to all people is “to provide for them, to keep them safe, to ensure that they will not be hungry or homeless, to prepare them for life, and to encourage their participation in the mission of the Triune God. In this way, families, individuals, and the entire church learn to live lives of service and love for the whole world.”⁷ In living into this vision, sessions were to review their programs and policies to ensure that they are family-friendly [Recommendation 3.b.(1)]. Part of making your church family-friendly is to ensure that dependent care is available for any church event where caregivers are invited to participate. In Recommendation 3.h., all councils were to find flexible solutions and paid leave for those caring for dependents within their communities. This recommendation again does not extend to providing care for council activities so that caregivers can attend and fully participate in the life of the church.

Endnotes for ACSWP Advice and Counsel

1. <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/>.
2. 1965 PCUS Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 326.
3. 1971 UPCUSA Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 323–4.
4. 1972 UPCUSA Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 332.
5. 1999 PC (USA) Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 327.
6. 1999 PC (USA) Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 330.
7. “Transforming Families” Louisville: Presbyterian Church (USA), 2005. 8.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 05-05.

Our relational nature is one of the defining aspects of who we know ourselves to be as Presbyterians. We express this in the ways that we worship, learn, and make decisions. We also express it by how we care for those we love, and especially those who are dependent upon us for support with their daily tasks.

Mandating that councils create and implement a dependent care policy is a way of reaffirming the value we as Presbyterians place on our relationships, especially for the most vulnerable among us. This policy does not mandate the content for the policy and therefore will allow each council to determine how to best implement this aspect into their contexts. We believe it is important for these conversations to occur so that policies that reflect our values as Presbyterians can be explicitly stated and consistently implemented.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-05

Comment on Item 05-05—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) concerning Item 05-05, on amending G-3.0106 requiring all councils to adopt a dependent care policy, with the following comment.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly. As the assembly considers Item 05-05, COGA suggests that it consider the follow concerns regarding the proposal. First, the proposed constitutional amendment does not contain any guidance as to what a “dependent care policy” is or needs to contain. COGA has adopted a dependent care policy as part of a referral from the 221st General Assembly (2014). However, such a policy would not be suitable to the needs or resources of other councils. It is unclear what a dependent care policy at the level of a session would contain. Presbyteries and synods may struggle to find the resources to fund this mandate if this item is interpreted to require them to cover the full cost of care for all commissioners at all of their meetings. Moreover, imposing this specific mandate through the Form of Government on all councils, as opposed to urging their consideration of such policies, appears to have the effect of returning the Form of Government to a manual of operations, rather than a constitutional document. Accordingly, COGA urges clarity and caution in the consideration of this item.

Item 05-06

[The assembly disapproved Item 05-06. See pp. 32, 34.]

On Developing a National Child Protection Policy Model—From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to develop a national child protection policy model and provide training resources and materials for presbyteries and congregations.

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014), by approving an amendment to G-3.0106 of the *Book of Order*, required all PC(USA) church councils to adopt and implement a child protection policy. The General Assembly did not supply models, templates, or an overarching policy on child protection. Many congregations in the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley do not have the resources or expertise on their own to develop a policy on child protection. It would be beneficial to have consistent policies throughout the PC(USA). Other organizations that work with children have model policies and training materials for their subsidiaries to follow, for example, the United Methodist Safe Sanctuaries and the Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection program.

Concurrence to Item 05-06 from the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 05-06 not be approved.

The main reason why ACSWP advises not approving this overture is that the PC(USA) has already created resources on creating a policy to train those working with vulnerable populations in the local congregation, presbytery, or synod levels. This free pdf document is available at this link: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/presbyterian-church-us-sexual-misconduct-policy-an/>.

In addition, many states and local levels of government pass and update their laws to reflect changing statewide or local realities. This may create situations where a congregation or presbytery would not be in compliance with local laws. In order to prevent this, the presbyteries and local congregations should consult their insurance company and a licensed legal professional to ensure they are properly covered.

The 216th General Assembly (2004) approved “Resolution on Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Against Educators,” which includes a study guide (<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/resolution-allegations-child-sexual-abuse-against-/>). This resolution and accompanying study guide are available on the denomination website for free. This material can help councils shape their own policies as well as guide the training of those who work with vulnerable populations.

Certainly, in the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s understanding of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s commitment to children and responsible regulation to protect them, the intent of Item 05-06 is commendable. The current education initiative also includes material from earlier child advocacy efforts to improve the lives of children in all states of the Union.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 05-06.

The ACWC fully supports the further development of child/youth protection policy training resources and materials for presbyteries and congregations. The recommendation and rationale for the original resolution passed at the 221st General Assembly (2014) (Item 08-14: <https://pc-biz.org/#/search/4763>), asked directly for new/updated resources to be created and be readily available for councils. To our knowledge, this has yet to be done. The online resources we do have, such as *We Won’t Let It Happen Here: Creating a Child Safe Church* is very helpful and well-done, but also needs updating to include new and evolving issues such as technology use and children/youth, social media boundaries, rules for transportation, and possibly general outlines of sample policies (with the indicator that each policy’s specifics would vary according to state and insurance company regulations) (*We Won’t Let It Happen Here: Creating a Child Safe Church*, A Project of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network (PCAN), a Network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), https://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/compassion-peace-justice/pcan-we_won't_let_it_happen_here-052214.pdf, April 7, 2016). Resources that we do have, such as the aforementioned, are also widely unknown in the PC(USA). Councils are not aware that these resources exist or where to find them. The ACWC has received feedback from various presbyteries that more materials and training resources are needed and would be highly useful for the writing and implementation of child/youth protection policies. We fully support this measure.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-06

Comment on Item 05-06—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has been working with the Office of the General Assembly to respond to requests for the development of model policies for Child Protection.

There is not a “one size fits all” policy model or training process as the laws regarding child protection vary from state to state. The Department of Health and Human Services has resources available on their site that can be used to develop policy and provide training and technical assistance: <https://www.childwelfare.gov>.

Additionally, the Office of the General Assembly has developed a partnership with the Insurance Board and Praesidium, an abuse prevention organization <http://www.praesidiuminc.com>, to develop resources, training materials, and guidance that will equip presbyteries and congregations to develop policies, training, and other materials appropriate to their jurisdiction. A brochure outlining these resources is being developed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 05-07

[The assembly answered Item 05-07 by the action taken on Item 05-08. See pp. 32, 34.]

On Amending the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c Concerning Nongeographic Presbyteries—From the Eastern Korean Presbytery.

The Eastern Korean Presbytery overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to amend the current authoritative interpretation of G-3.0403c as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“If there is no nongeographic presbytery within their synod, then a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation can apply for transfer to a nongeographic presbytery in a synod that has contiguous boundaries with their current synod. *In cases where the racial ethnic or immigrant congregation is in a synod that does not share a contiguous boundary with a synod having a nongeographic presbytery, then transfer to a nongeographic presbytery in another synod may be considered.* The transfer must be shown to meet the ‘mission needs’ of the racial ethnic or immigrant congregation. This transfer requires the approval of both the sending and receiving presbyteries, as well as the synods and the General Assembly.

“A nongeographic presbytery shall only accept fellowships, new church developments, Bible studies, worshipping communities, or other forms of corporate witness into its presbytery from within its own synod. Only an organized congregation may be transferred to a nongeographic presbytery in another synod, by obtaining approval from the geographic and nongeographic presbyteries, as well as the synods and the General Assembly.

“Nongeographic presbyteries shall not unilaterally start ministries in other presbyteries and synods without the approval of those councils.”

Rationale

The 221st General Assembly (2014)'s approval of the current authoritative interpretation of G-3.0403c created the situation where presbyteries within the bounds of Synods of the Sun, Southern California and Hawaii, the Rocky Mountains, the Southwest, the Pacific, and Alaska-Northwest have no option for transferring a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to a nongeographic presbytery, even when the mission needs of the congregation and presbytery would warrant doing so since their synods do not share a contiguous boundary with any synod having a nongeographic presbytery. This addition to the authoritative interpretation would allow for all congregations and presbyteries to have an option for the transfer of racial ethnic or immigrant congregations to a nongeographic presbytery as mission needs would determine.

Concurrence to Item 05-07 from Midwest Hanmi Presbytery.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-07

Advice on Item 05-07—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 05-07.

The current authoritative interpretation (AI) of G-3.0403c, which was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014), makes it possible for a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation in a synod that has no nongeographic presbytery to apply to be dismissed to a nongeographic presbytery in a different synod with contiguous boundaries with their current synod. This overture would amend the current AI so that where there is no such synod, membership in a nongeographic presbytery in some other synod may be considered. The transfer of a congregation must be supported by clearly demonstrable mission needs, and the required approvals must be sought and granted. This overture presents the same issues inherent in Item 05-08 regarding the possible distances between the location of a congregation and the location of the nongeographic presbytery of which it is a member. (For a fuller analysis of those issues, see the ACC advice on Item 05-08.

This is not the first time the assembly has considered overtures that would change the bond between congregations and the geography in which they are located. In 2012, the ACC advised the assembly on Item 05-05, noting that “The geographic nature of a presbytery, as it corporately expresses the mission and ministry of at least ten duly constituted sessions and ten teaching elders (G-3.0301), facilitates and significantly informs its capacity for participating in its mandated relationships of accountability and review with its member congregations and its teaching elders, as well as with its synod” (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 264).

The intent of the current authoritative interpretation in limiting the transfer of a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to a presbytery in a synod with contiguous boundaries was to limit the distance between a congregation and the presbytery in which relationships “nurturing the covenant community of disciples of Christ” and “mandated relationships of accountability and review” take place.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution also advised the 218th General Assembly (2008) in its advice on Item 03-07, noting “When a congregation that is located within the bounds of one synod joins a presbytery that is within the bounds of another synod, there are serious implications for each synod and for the geographic presbytery involved. ... The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has concerns about the potential for conflicts across multiple boundaries ...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 148)

One of the core commitments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to find unity in diversity. “The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership” (F-1.0403). While nongeographic presbyteries may address the particular “mission needs” of a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation, in the larger view it may diminish the whole church by limiting diversity in the body of a particular presbytery.

However, if the assembly believes that the intent of this overture is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that it is better accomplished through the approval of Item 05-08.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 05-07.

Nongeographic presbyteries exist because of the church’s failure to fully welcome immigrant and racial ethnic congregations. While we understand the need for safe spaces for congregations to gather and be in ministry together, nongeographic presbyteries have, in the past, raised concerns for women in the church.

Nongeographic presbyteries have a checkered history when it comes to supporting women in ministry and church leadership. A motion to form a new, nongeographic presbytery was defeated at the 219th General Assembly (2010) due to the testimony of 1.5 and 2nd generation Korean American clergywomen.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency documents the motion on Korean language presbyteries from 2010 in this way:

The GA Assembly Committee on Middle Governing Body Issues proposed a motion for a formation of a fifth Korean Language Presbytery as requested by ten Korean PC(USA) churches in the Synod of the South Atlantic. The motion was supposed to pass without much controversy especially because the details had been discussed in the Committee on Middle Governing Body Issues and the Committee overwhelmingly supported the motion. But three young Korean American 1.5 and 2nd generation women clergy delegates spoke against the motion and the motion was overwhelmingly defeated. ...

The three minister delegates articulated at least three reasons against the motion. First, Korean language presbyteries traditionally do not value the leadership of women, especially second generation women pastoral leadership. Second, Korean language presbyteries do not include second generation pastor leaders, both male and female, especially those who do not speak Korean. And third, Korean language presbyteries are not sufficiently accountable to the larger church. The presentations were clear, compelling, and powerful. ... <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theologyandworship/korean-language-presbyteries-219th-general-assembly/>

The three reasons raised at the 219th General Assembly (2010) are a concern still today. While some changes and steps have most likely been made in these nongeographic presbyteries, their history should give us pause before allowing even more congregations to join these presbyteries. Our concerns are particularly for those at the intersections of race and gender, namely women of color who may be further marginalized through this action.

While we understand that racial ethnic or immigrant congregations may find their particular needs more easily met through a nongeographic presbytery, we encourage and challenge geographic presbyteries to be more welcoming spaces for these congregations, living more fully into the church’s commitment to unity in diversity rather than creating more ways for division and separation.

Item 05-08

[The assembly approved Item 05-08 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 32, 34.]

[Comment: The General Assembly invites and encourages all Korean-speaking congregations located in the six western synods (Alaska-Northwest, the Pacific, Southern California and Hawaii, the Southwest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sun) to remain in contact with the synod in which they are physically located in order to have voice in the intentional consideration of a Korean-language presbytery in the western United States called for in Item 05-11, Recommendation 3.]

On Replacing the Current Authoritative Interpretation of G-3.0403c with New Text—From the Eastern Korean Presbytery.

Eastern Korean Presbytery overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to replace the current authoritative interpretation of G-3.0403c., approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014), with the following authoritative interpretations:

1. Authoritative interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c:

“A presbytery may transfer an organized racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to a nongeographic presbytery that can meet the congregation’s particular mission needs. Ordinarily, this nongeographic presbytery would be within the bounds of the same synod. Such transfers require approval of both the sending and receiving presbyteries, as well as the synods and the General Assembly.”

Rationale for Recommendation 1

“The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church.” (F-1.01). It is mission that leads a synod to create a nongeographic presbytery (G-3.0403c.), a presbytery to dismiss a congregation to a non-geographic presbytery (G-3.0301a.), and a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to seek “relationships of accountability and responsibility” (G-1.0101) with a presbytery best able to support their unique mission. In determining whether a particular congregation should be transferred to a nongeographic presbytery, the councils of the church are to give consideration to the

unique mission needs of the congregation and the ability of a specific nongeographic presbytery to meet those needs. While it would be ideal for that nongeographic presbytery to be within the same synod or neighboring synod where the congregation is located, this is not always possible. There may not be a nongeographic presbytery nearby or the closest presbytery may not be best able to meet the mission needs of that congregation. Currently, presbyteries within the bounds of Synods of the Sun, Southern California and Hawaii, the Rocky Mountains, the Southwest, the Pacific, and Alaska-Northwest have no option for transferring a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to a nongeographic presbytery, even when the mission needs of the congregation and presbytery would warrant doing so since their synods do not share a contiguous boundary with any synod having a nongeographic presbytery. Replacing the current authoritative interpretation gives councils the flexibility to make the best possible mission decision for a particular racial ethnic or immigrant congregation.

2. Authoritative interpretation of G-3.0301:

“~~[Presbyteries, including nongeographic presbyteries,]~~ [No presbytery] shall ~~[not]~~ start ministries within the geographic bounds of other presbyteries and synods without the approval of those councils.”

Rationale for Recommendation 2

The presbytery and synod are the councils serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district (G-3.0301 and G-3.0401). As such, a presbytery desiring to start ministries or engage in ministries within the geographic bounds of another presbytery are to seek approval of the geographic presbytery and synod, thus demonstrating the “mutual interconnection of the church” we have through the councils of the church (G-3.0101).

Concurrence to Item 05-08 from the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-08

Advice on Item 05-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 05-08, Recommendation 1, and approve Item 05-08 Recommendation 2 with amendment.

This overture seeks to change the substance of the current authoritative interpretation of G-3.0403c that was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) and to add an authoritative interpretation of G-3.0301.

Recommendation 1, Proposed Replacement of Current Authoritative Interpretation

The current authoritative interpretation of G-3.0403c was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). This makes it possible for a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation in a synod that has no nongeographic presbytery to request dismissal to a nongeographic presbytery in another synod. Both synods must share contiguous boundaries. Recommendation 1 of Item 05-08 would remove the restriction that the receiving presbytery be in the same synod or a synod with “contiguous boundaries.”

This overture contains the weaknesses inherent in Item 05-07 regarding the possible distances between the location of a congregation and the location of the nongeographic presbytery of which it is a member.

This is not the first time the assembly has considered overtures that would change the bond between congregations and the geography in which they are located. In 2012, the ACC advised the assembly on Item 05-05,

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the Constitution defines a presbytery as “the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that district” (G-3.0301). The geographic nature of a presbytery, as it corporately expresses the mission and ministry of at least ten duly constituted sessions and ten teaching elders (G-3.0301), facilitates and significantly informs its capacity for participating in its mandated relationships of accountability and review with its member congregations and its teaching elders, as well as with its synod. The geographic nature of a presbytery is not solely related to the G-3.0403c restriction on synod creation and General Assembly approval of non-geographic presbyteries. (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 264)

The intent of the current authoritative interpretation in limiting the transfer of a racial ethnic or immigrant congregation to a presbytery in a synod with contiguous boundaries was to limit the distance between a congregation and the presbytery in which relationships “nurturing the covenant community of disciples of Christ” and “mandated relationships of accountability and review” take place.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution also advised the 218th General Assembly (2008) in its advice on Item 03-07:

When a congregation that is located within the bounds of one synod joins a presbytery that is within the bounds of another synod, there are serious implications for each synod and for the geographic presbytery involved. Such a transfer would enlarge the district of the nongeographic presbytery, increasing the overlap with the districts of the geographic presbyteries. Because presbyteries are responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout their geographical districts, the overlapping of districts raises the potential for

conflict. ... The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has concerns about the potential for conflicts across multiple boundaries ...
(*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 148)

Widening the distances increases that potential.

The word “ordinarily” used in the proposed authoritative interpretation expresses normative practice, but does not effectively limit such transfers to any particular circumstances, such as when there are no nongeographic presbyteries within the boundaries of the current synod. Wider distances between congregations and the presbyteries of which they are members increase the potential for isolation of the congregation. It makes more difficult development and maintenance of relationships of accountability and nurture.

One of the core commitments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to find unity in diversity. “The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction” (F-1.0403). The goal of all councils is to include believers of all backgrounds in worship and ministry. When it is necessary for racial ethnic or immigrant congregations to find their relationships of nurture and accountability in nongeographic presbyteries, there should always be a plan for education and preparation that will lead to participation and membership in the geographic presbytery in which they are located. Likewise, those geographic presbyteries should be preparing to welcome racial ethnic and immigrant congregations back into their membership and fellowship in the fullness of time.

This proposed replacement authoritative interpretation deletes the specificity of the second paragraph of the current AI concerning “fellowships, new church developments, Bible studies, worshipping communities, or other forms of corporate witness” altogether. It does make clear that only “organized” racial ethnic or immigrant congregations are eligible to be transferred.

If the assembly believes that the intent of this overture is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the language of the proposed amendment, Recommendation 1, is clear and would accomplish the stated intent of the overture.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution Advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to Approve Item 05-08, Recommendation 2, with Amendment.

Recommendation 2 of this overture proposes enlarging the scope of the current AI in another way. The current AI prohibits *nongeographic* presbyteries from “unilaterally start[ing] ministries in other presbyteries and synods without the approval of those councils.” The proposed AI extends this restriction to all presbyteries. This clarifies the current AI. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the text in Recommendation 2 of Item 05-08 be amended by striking the phrase “Presbyteries, including nongeographic presbyteries,”; inserting the phrase, “[No presbytery]”; and striking the word “not”; and that this sentence replace the final paragraph of the current AI to G-3.0403c and a new AI of.

“~~[Presbyteries, including nongeographic presbyteries]~~ [No presbytery], shall ~~[not]~~ start ministries within the geographic bounds of other presbyteries and synods without the approval of those councils.”

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 05-08.

See Advice and Counsel for Item 05-07.

Item 05-09

[The assembly approved Item 05-09 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 32, 34.]

[Comment: The General Assembly notes that two separate policies are intended by this sentence, with different intents. The child and youth protection policy is intended to address interactions involving children and youth within the church or in church-sponsored activities. The sexual misconduct policy is directed toward proactively preventing and responding to sexual misconduct involving all people of all ages within the church and in church-sponsored activities.]

A Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA)—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Amend the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“All councils shall adopt and implement a ~~[sexual misconduct policy and a]~~ *child and youth protection policy.* ~~[In addition, all councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy. These two policies shall be two different policies with differentiated intents. The child and youth protection policy is directed specifically for working with and interactions involving children and youth within the church or in church-sponsored activities, while the sexual misconduct policy is directed toward proactively preventing and responding to sexual misconduct involving all people of all ages within the church and in church-sponsored activities.]”~~

Rationale

Since the child protection policy amendment went into effect after the 221st General Assembly (2014), issues have arisen regarding the interpretation of the text. Some councils have interpreted the amendment to mean that the sexual misconduct policy and child protection policy are one policy with one intent and purpose. However, the intent of the original amendment, when further reading the rationale, is that these would be two separate policies with two separate purposes.

The original rationale of the amendment states:

It is important to understand in developing these policies that these policies and procedures are completely separate from sexual misconduct policies, and there is a need to differentiate between these resources and policies. That is why we request an amendment in the *Book of Order* to require all councils of the PC(USA) to make this differentiation and adopt and implement a child/youth protection policy alongside a separate sexual harassment policy. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 532, Item 08-14, see also <http://pc-biz.org/%28S%28jhy0qnlj2nsbl1du0zoy3nwr1%29%29/Explorer.aspx?id=4763>)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns is also requesting we expand the language of this amendment to include “youth” as well as “child” so as to clarify the intended scope of the policy.

The overture presented at the 221st General Assembly (2014) also requested that resources be created for councils to use in the process of creating their own youth and child protection policies. New resources have yet to be created, and we still ask that these resources be created and be made readily available for council use.

It is the church’s responsibility to provide a safe and sacred space for children and youth to discover their God-given potential, “and we must take seriously how our faith informs this responsibility. Our theology of the child is reflected in how we care for and nurture children and youth who are under the care of the church. This theology must reflect the love, care, and high regard for the humanity and dignity of the child reflected in the Gospels” (Proposed Amendments to the Constitution, approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014), 14-C. Child Protection Policy, p. 11: [http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2014-proposed-boa-electronic-version\[1\].pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2014-proposed-boa-electronic-version[1].pdf)).

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 05-09

Advice on Item 05-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that Item 05-09 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recognizes the importance of the purposes of the policies listed or proposed for G-3.0106. The ACC directs the attention of the General Assembly to its advice on Item 05-05 regarding the practice of listing required policies in the Constitution; and thus moving its function from a constitutional document towards a manual of operations.

If the General Assembly decides to proceed with Item 05-09, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that, while the text of the recommended amendment is clear as to its intent, much of the amendment includes language that is interpretation of the two policies in G-3.0106. The result is a section that is unnecessarily long and not in keeping with the direction of the Form of Government, by including language better provided by a manual of operations or advisory handbook.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that these issues are best addressed as follows:

1. Approve an amendment to insert “and youth” after “child” in G-3.0106.
2. Approve the following comment:

Two separate policies are intended by this sentence, with different intents. The child and youth protection policy is intended to address interactions involving children and youth within the church or in church-sponsored activities. The sexual misconduct policy is directed toward proactively preventing and responding to sexual misconduct involving all people of all ages within the church and in church-sponsored activities.

The ACC endorses the call of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns for resources to be created for councils to use in the process of creating the child and youth protection policy. These resources can include the comment, clarifying that this policy has a different intent from the sexual misconduct policy and is to be a separate document.

Item 05-10

[The assembly approved Item 05-10 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 32, 34.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) urges the six agencies of the General Assembly to evaluate leaves of absence, considering at least six weeks paid leave as a minimum for new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.]

A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

~~[1. Urge all presbyteries and congregations to create a family leave policy that each member congregation can adopt, which includes at a minimum six weeks paid leave and an additional six weeks unpaid leave during a twelve-month period for new mothers and fathers for the birth or adoption of or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.~~

~~[2. Direct the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their family leave policies by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to include at a minimum six weeks paid leave and an additional six weeks unpaid leave during a twelve-month period for eligible (individuals employed full-time for twelve months before taking the leave) new parents for the birth or adoption of, or to care for a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.]~~

[Urge all presbyteries, synods, and sessions to evaluate their leave policies for new mothers and fathers for the birth or adoption of, or to care for, a child or other family member, such as seniors or those who require health assistance.]

Rationale

Quality family leave policies are clearly a gender justice concern, as childcare still falls heavily on mothers; but it also encourages fathers to participate as directly as mothers by offering benefits to them as well.

Work normally occurs in community and expresses our social being. Therefore, work must be sustaining of the fabric of social life: sustaining of the individual, of the family, of the community. Yet the community, and the shape of the families that comprise that community, is changing also. ... These changes mean that a greater economic burden falls upon women. (207th General Assembly (1995), *God's Work in Our Hands*: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/gods-work-in-our-hands-1995.pdf, 2)

The church's present emphasis on inclusion of young adults in the life of the church requires policies that allow them to serve the church and to care for members of their families as well. While the 221st General Assembly (2014) approved a commissioners' resolution that addressed birth and adoption in family leave policies, ACWC would like to expand the coverage to those caring for seniors or sick family members and ensure that our denominational agencies have robust policies (221st General Assembly (2014), Item 09-22: On Encouraging Parental Leave Policy, <http://pc-biz.org/%28S%28kggig3xmvpcphnfh2ivolab%29%29/Explorer.aspx?id=5121>).

In 2012, ACWC received feedback from Women's Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as a result of listening visits done with women in leadership in the PC(USA) around the country. The first issue listed in the report was related to Family Leave policies:

There is no consistency in regards to family leave policies. Some presbyteries have them for presbytery staff but not for congregations, for instance. Women have taken calls as single women, gotten married, become pregnant, and been told they have two weeks of sick leave. Some congregations rejoice with their pastor and are incredibly supportive, providing paid leave and a willingness to accommodate flexible schedules. However, this is not simply about maternity leave. There is a need for family leave policies for all church workers, as any illness of a family member may require leave time. (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 1087, Item 11-12, A Resolution to Continue the Work of Deborah's Daughters)

The PC(USA) should model justice through Family Leave policies that encourage balance in life between work and family and are consistent with our theology and policies on work and workers:

"The church must seek to become a model employer by providing workers with adequate compensation, meaningful opportunities for participation in decision making, leisure time in which to participate in family and community life. ... (207th General Assembly (1995), *God's Work in Our Hands*: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/gods-work-in-our-hands-1995.pdf, 18).

05 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MID COUNCILS

The foundation upon which all just employment policies are built is access to employment at a level of compensation that allows people to live in dignity and security. ... All conditions of paid employment, including compensation and working conditions, should sustain and nurture the dignity of individuals, the well-being of households and families. ... (Ibid., 19)

Beyond the church’s call to model just policies for employees, paid leave increases worker productivity, improves loyalty and morale, and may improve worker retention, which saves money through reduced turnover costs (National Partnership for Women and Families: <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/paid-leave-fact-sheets.html>).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-10, RECOMMENDATION 2

Comment on Item 05-10, Recommendation 2—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The recommendation from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns seeks, at a minimum, thirty days (6 weeks) of paid time off for employees with specific qualifying family leave events: parental (for the care of new child) and non-parental (for the care of other family members). These benefits would be in addition to the existing benefits offered by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency offers its employees a generous benefits package, including several forms of leave. The benefits program of the Presbyterian Mission Agency is comparable to that offered by other Christian and nonprofit organizations. The program is less attractive than what is often provided to employees of successful for-profit organizations, since many of these organizations use their revenues to provide incentive programs for prospective employees.

Types of Leave (annual average days)	Presbyterian Mission Agency	Christian organizations*	Non-profit sector **
Vacation Leave	22	22	15–24
Sick Leave (unused accumulate)	10	12	12 (Note: 1/3 offer no designated sick days, but may have leave pools)
Emergency Leave	3	No data	No data
Short-term disability	Yes (60% pay)	No data	Yes (generally at 60%–67% pay) (Note: 25% offer no short-term disability)
Family Leave	Complies with Family Medical Leave Act—12 weeks, unpaid, unless employee has other leave available or qualifies for short-term disability (parental leaves qualify for short-term disability pay, non-parental leaves do not qualify)	No data	No data

* Christian Leadership Alliance—an alliance of more than 6,000 mission-focused Christians who lead in today’s high-impact Christian nonprofit ministries, churches, educational institutions, and businesses (<http://www.christianleadershipalliance.org>).

** PRM Consulting Group study of nonprofit organizations.

The proposal from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns would provide an additional six weeks of pay for either form of parental leave, so that the employee would not need to use other benefit time to receive pay during this period. The ACWC proposal provides no compensation during the second six weeks of the twelve week leave.

During 2015, the Presbyterian Mission Agency had fourteen instances of family leave, covering 420 days. If the ACWC proposal had been in effect, there would have been a cost of \$129,078. The Presbyterian Mission Agency estimates that perhaps twice as many employees would make use of this additional leave if the ACWC proposal were to be approved. Therefore, our estimate is that approval of the proposal would cost roughly \$260,000 a year.

Beyond financial considerations are the impact on working conditions, morale, and lost productivity for other employees, which would be made more difficult by providing an additional six weeks of paid leave in these instances.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board believes its leave policies and supervisory practices are both reasonable and compassionate. If the General Assembly believes that the leave benefits of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are not adequate, it would be helpful to direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to conduct a study of the cost/benefit analysis for enlarging the its benefits policies as part of its next annual review of employee leave benefits, and to bring a report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Item 05-11

[The assembly approved Item 05-11 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 32, 35.]

[Comment (Comment to Overture): The 216th General Assembly (2016) strongly advises that the western synods consider forming a nongeographic Korean presbytery.]

[Comment on Rationale to Overture: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000089> The rationale that accompanies this report implies that the only issues for ministry to LGBTQ persons in Korean-speaking congregations are related to ordination and marriage. This implication is incorrect. The General Assembly reminds all Presbyterians and congregations of the long-standing advocacy of the PC(USA) for the civil rights and personal safety of LGBTQ persons.]

The Task Force for Korean-Speaking Congregations recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

1. Direct the [~~Presbyterian Mission Agency or the~~] Office of the General Assembly to create a [~~permanent~~] staff position, working in coordination with the Office of Mid Council Ministries [~~and the Presbyterian Mission Agency~~], for the purposes of supporting and nurturing healthy, connectional Korean-language congregations and presbyteries and second-generation Korean congregations, and request that any committee or task force created by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to study the structure of the General Assembly agencies consider continuing such a position in any recommendations it makes.

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, and urge all synods, to support and strengthen the existing system (the Coordinating Committee for Korean American Presbyteries) between geographic and Korean-language presbyteries in which partners are assigned to educate each other as to the nuances and customs of both presbyteries, as well simply to engage in fellowship with one another.

3. [~~Direct any administrative commission, committee, or task force created by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to consider reorganization of synod boundaries to include in its work consideration of whether a nongeographic, Korean language presbytery can be created in the western United States,~~] [Ask synods of the west (Alaska-Northwest, the Pacific, Southern California and Hawaii, the Southwest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sun) to intentionally consider the viability of creating a new Korean, nongeographic presbytery in the western United States,] consistent with the concerns addressed in this report regarding healthy relationships between Korean-language and geographic presbyteries and the constitutional protection of full representation of men and women in the leadership of such a presbytery and the congregations therein.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to seek to lift up the heritage and history of Korean Americans through events such as retreats or joint worship services.

5. Urge all councils of the church to actively seek to include diverse voices of the Korean community in their work.

6. Request that the 224th General Assembly (2020) conduct a review of the progress being made in implementing Recommendations 1–5, the health of Korean-language congregations and presbyteries in the PC(USA), and the effectiveness of the recommended staff position in carrying out this work.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2014 Referral: Item 05-06. On Forming a Task Force to Study How Korean-Speaking Churches Can Develop into Healthy Members of the PC(USA)—From Midwest Hanmi Presbytery.* (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 349–50 of the electronic copy).

The Task Force for Korean-Speaking Congregations was created by the 221st General Assembly (2014) for the purpose of studying how Korean-speaking churches can grow and develop into whole and healthy members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The recommendations in this report are intended to further that work by seeking to put words to two crucial issues the task force has identified: (1) the need to communicate with clarity as to actions taken by the PC(USA) regarding ordination and marriage, and the freedom of conscience that all Presbyterians retain in light of those actions; and (2) the need to create space within Korean-speaking congregations and the PC(USA) to allow full participation by all Korean Presbyterians in the life of their own congregations and the larger church.

The task force recognizes that these recommendations require resources from the denomination to be successfully implemented. However, Korean-language congregations and second-generation Korean Presbyterians are a vital part of the PC(USA). The number of Korean congregations in the PC(USA) has increased from 180 to 400 in the last two decades. Moreover, twenty-three Korean new worshiping communities have been created in the last three years in partnership with both Korean-language and geographical presbyteries. More than 500 Korean pastors are now engaged in Korean congregational ministries. Korean congregations have contributed more than \$1.5 million annually to the denomination as per capita and mission giving. Per capita sent from Korean congregations to PC(USA) itself is more than \$200,000.

The Korean Congregational Support Office in the Presbyterian Mission Agency has been the focal point of Korean American ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The associate for Korean Congregational Support serves as the coordinator for the Coordinating Committee for Korean American Presbyteries (CCKAP), which has been instrumental in networking, leadership training, and development of mission and polity strategies of Korean American presbyteries. The office also works in partnership with the National Council of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC) in seeking to develop 100 new congregations by 2025.

The denomination, particularly in this time of transition in the national agencies and stress within the Korean Presbyterian community, needs to make a long-term commitment to a structure supporting Korean language and second generation congregations at the General Assembly level. This effort should be coordinated with the work of the associate for Mid Council Relations. Efforts should also be made to ensure the position is not lost in any reorganization of the denomination's national agencies.

The Right of Conscience of Presbyterians in the Face of Changes in Polity and Theology Regarding Ordination and Marriage

The task force believes that a significant source of concern in Korean-speaking congregations is that recent changes in the PC(USA)'s polity and theology regarding ordination and marriage will lead to a loss of freedom of conscience with respect to decisions as to whom to ordain or whether a teaching elder should participate in a marriage. While confusion as to these issues is very real, the task force finds that the concern that freedom of conscience will be lost is unfounded.

Freedom of conscience lies at the heart of the history of the PC(USA). As the Westminster Confession of Faith affirms:

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also. (*Book of Confessions*, 6.109)

In the PC(USA)'s polity, this means:

[W]e consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable: We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others. (*Book of Order*, F-3.0101b; *see also* G-2.0105).

While it has not always been clear from the rhetoric surrounding the discussion and reporting of the recent actions of the PC(USA) regarding ordination and marriage, those actions reaffirm that Presbyterians who believe that Scripture condemns homosexual behavior retain the freedom of conscience in ordination decisions and to decline to conduct a service of marriage between persons of the same gender, or to decline the use of their facilities for such a service. Specifically, the amended language of G-2.0104b regarding ordination of teaching and ruling elders, and deacons, make clear that each officer participating in the decision as to whether to ordain or install a candidate retains his or her freedom of conscience to determine whether the candidate meets the standards for service:

Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates. (*Book of Order*, G-2.0104b)

No Presbyterian is required to concur in the ordination or installation of any candidate he or she concludes is not suitable for the responsibilities of ordered ministry, whether because of the candidate's sexual conduct or otherwise.

Similarly, while the concern has been raised that now or in the future, teaching elders will be required to participate in services of marriage of individuals of the same gender, or that session will be required to allow the use of church buildings for such services, the changes made to the Directory for Worship specifically protect the freedom of conscience for those teaching elders and sessions. Specifically, the amended provision of the Directory for Worship provides:

Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder's or the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God. (*Book of Order*, W-4.9006)

Concern has also been raised that civil law might eventually be used to require ministers to participate in same-sex services or to require sessions to allow their property to be used for such services. The task force reminds those concerned that even the language of the Supreme Court decision allowing for same sex marriages took the contrary view: "Finally, it must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. *The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths*, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered" (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. (2015), emphasis added). This statement is entirely in accord with the long-standing affirmation of the PC(USA):

We believe that the free exercise clause protects religious exercise in all its manifestations. It protects religious belief and basic religious observance. It protects religious proselytizing, the religious teaching of moral values, and the churches' invocation of those values in the political process. It protects the right of churches and individual believers to exercise religious conscience in the face of laws that would force them to violate that conscience. It protects the right to build religious institutions and to manage those institutions autonomously with a minimum of interference from government regulation. Some of these rights may on occasion be overridden by a compelling government interest, but such interests must be truly compelling, involving intolerable threats to public health and safety or serious impositions on persons not affiliated with the church. (*God Alone Is the Lord of Conscience: A Policy Statement adopted by the 200th General Assembly* (1988) at p. 8.)

The task force affirms and calls for the whole of the PC(USA) to respect that protection of the freedom of conscience found in these provisions and the history of the PC(USA) is fundamental to our unity in a time of deep theological tension. The task force believes that the words of the Special Commission of 1925 to the General Assembly of 1926 speak for many Korean language churches:

Presbyterianism is a great body of belief, but it is more than a belief; it is also a tradition, a controlling sentiment. The ties which bind us to it are not of the mind only; they are ties of the heart as well. There are people who, despite variant opinions, can never be at home in any other communion. They were born into the Presbyterian Church. They love its name, its order and its great distinctive teachings. In its fellowship they have a precious inheritance from their forbears. Their hearts bow at its altars and cherish a just pride in its noble history. Attitudes and sentiments like these are treasures which should not be undervalued hastily nor cast aside lightly.

In times such as this, it is important that the PC(USA) affirm not only its welcome for Korean-language congregations, but also the vital part they play in our life as a denomination: the admonition that “the church protects its ... minority ... as if it were protecting its future” (*Historic Principles of Church, Conscience and Church Government*, PC(USA), 1983, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia adopted these principles as a Preface to the “Form of Government” in 1788) is of particular importance today, as the PC(USA) and Korean-language congregations seek God’s will together. Ensuring that a national level staff person has the responsibility to work with Korean-language presbyteries and congregations will improve communication and clarity of the positions of the denomination and reinforce understanding of the principles of Presbyterian polity in those presbyteries and congregations.

Creating Space within Korean-Speaking Congregations and the PC(USA) for Full Participation

The task force also recognizes the need to create space within Korean-speaking congregations and the PC(USA) to allow full participation by all Korean Presbyterians in the life of their own congregations and in the larger church. The task force believes that creating safe spaces has two components. First, within Korean-speaking congregations and Korean-language presbyteries, safe and healthy space must be provided for all members to grow in their faith and in their participation in the life of the church. Second, while the task force reaffirms the need for Korean language, nongeographic presbyteries, such presbyteries, and their congregations, must seek to participate fully, and must be invited to participate fully, in the life of the denomination.

The task force urges all Korean-speaking congregations and Korean-language presbyteries to work to intentionally create safe and healthy space for all members. Such space must include recognizing, affirming, and using all of our peoples’ gifts and beliefs.

The task force urges each Korean-speaking congregation and each Korean-language presbytery to work intentionally to ensure that such safe space exists for all in ordered ministry and for all members.

The task force reaffirms the continuing need for Korean-language, nongeographic presbyteries. This does not mean that every Korean-language church will join a nongeographic presbytery. Many participate in healthy relationship and ministry to their regional presbyteries. However, in our conversations with some teaching elders from Korean-language congregations we heard a particular concern that in the western United States, where a large number of Korean-language congregations are located, there is no longer a Korean-language presbytery. The task force recognizes the difficult decision the 221st General Assembly (2014) made to dissolve the Hanmi Presbytery. It does not wish to recreate a situation that needed to be addressed by that action. Rather, it urges consideration of whether a new beginning is possible, one in which a healthy presbytery can be created that fully respects and is committed to doing its work in a manner that respects our polity and commitment to full participation by all who God calls into ordered ministry.

Full participation by Korean teaching and ruling elders in geographic presbyteries is not yet realistically possible. Some of the barriers Korean teaching and ruling elders face in geographical presbyteries include:

1. The impression given by the leadership of geographic presbyteries that the English language and the presbytery’s practices are what is normal, and that any departure from English or those practices is not normal or an accommodation.
2. A discomfort at not being well-versed in Presbyterian polity.
3. Being overwhelmed by procedural processes, which leads to less willingness or comfort in participation because of the uncertainty as to what is appropriate.

4. Feeling uncomfortable and unsafe in addressing issues of theology, particularly due to the fear of being stereotyped or labeled.

The task force therefore believes that Korean-language presbyteries remain necessary in the PC(USA), but that new and existing Korean-language presbyteries must face the need to minister to both first- and second-generation Korean Presbyterians. Leadership among women and second-generation Korean Presbyterians must be nurtured and encouraged.

The task force urges both the denomination and Korean-language presbyteries and congregations to look for creative ways to move forward. Pastoral leadership by Korean-language and second-generation Korean teaching elders is particularly important to encouraging congregations and presbyteries to deepen their commitment to relationship within the Korean Presbyterian community and across the whole church.

Changing the status quo across the denomination will require effort both within the community of Korean-language Presbyterians and in the PC(USA) as a whole. Necessary steps on the part of Korean teaching and ruling elders include:

- Systematic, structured education of teaching and ruling elders, and congregation members, as to the particular Presbyterian identity of the PC(USA) and the necessity of modeling healthy relationships in congregations and presbyteries.
- Training as to the processes and rules followed in nongeographic presbytery meetings.
- Development of relations with non-Korean-speaking congregations to facilitate mutual understanding of our expressions of our Presbyterian faith and heritage.

The task force is firmly convinced that these goals can be met, but that to be met they require a commitment of support from the denomination. Specifically, in a time of denominational transformation, the task force urges the General Assembly to reaffirm the denomination's commitment to these goals by directing the Presbyterian Mission Agency or the Office of the General Assembly to create a permanent staff position, who would work in coordination with the Office of Mid Council Ministries for the purposes of supporting and nurturing healthy, connectional Korean-language congregations and presbyteries and second-generation Korean congregations. So that such a recommendation does not get lost in any restructuring of the denomination's agencies, the task force also asks that this recommendation be communicated to any committee or task force the General Assembly creates to study such restructuring.

Creating space within the PC(USA) for Korean-speaking congregations to thrive and to enter into fellowship with non-Korean-speaking congregations is not only necessary to the health of Korean-speaking congregations, it is necessary to the health of the whole PC(USA).

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 05-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 05-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 05-11 with comments.

The ACREC commends the Task Force for Korean Speaking Congregation that was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) for their role in facilitating this important conversation and engaging in strategic planning and reflection regarding the current trend and future status of the Korean-speaking congregations within the PC(USA). The ACREC affirms the belief that we are all “one body with many parts” and are all “individual members of the same body.” We value the many gifts, talents, and contributions that are being made among all racial ethnic constituents within the body of Christ, while we also acknowledge our diversities as a gift that enhances our unique identity and affirms our calling as Christ's ambassadors, as we bear witness to society and to one another within the church.

We value the vital importance of the various voices, theological convictions, and personal conscience expressed, which are to be mutually respected and valued as we discern God's calling in our lives. Christ has come to unite us rather than divide us and has called upon us to lead a life of reconciliation, missional engagement, and witness.

Consequently, we acknowledge the pivotal role of the congregational support staffs in connecting the various congregations with the denomination, not just for the Korean-speaking congregations, but for ALL other racial ethnic groups as well that have sustained vital ministry growth and new worshipping communities within the PC(USA). The various support staffs who serve the racial ethnic constituents of the PC(USA) would be vital resources and point-to persons to the local ministries during such time of organizational changes and restructuring for the PC(USA). The role of the congregational support staffs would not only bring stability but would serve as the critical links in affirming the relationship and commitment between the local congregations and the PC(USA) denomination.

The ACREC affirms the task force's recommendation to maintain the congregational support staff not only for the Korean-speaking congregations (Recommendation 1), but for the other fellow racial ethnic constituent groups as well that

have demonstrated growth and viability, in times when the general membership of the denomination has been on decline in recent years.

The ACREC affirms the task force’s recommendations to engage in a season of mutual learning and exploration of new ways of relating with one another, as the Spirit leads us, between those of the nongeographic and Korean-language presbyteries (Recommendations 2, 3, and 4). We recognize these efforts may at times be difficult and present many levels of challenges; however, they are necessary and vital in reestablishing mutual trust and building bridges that connect us rather than walls that separate us within the body of Christ.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 05-11

Comment on Item 05-11—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has an associate for Korean Emerging Ministries in the current Presbyterian Mission Agency budget and also in the proposed 2017–2018 budget. The Presbyterian Mission Agency welcomes and affirms Korean American congregations and leaders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is grateful for the witness that Korean American Presbyterians have exhibited for mission, evangelism, church growth, and faith formation.

The Office of Korean Emerging Ministries in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries within the Presbyterian Mission Agency equips Korean first generation congregations, as well as 1.5 and second generation Korean-language, English-language, and intercultural congregations, the National Council of Korean Presbyterian Churches (NCKPC), the Coordinating Committee for Korean American Presbyteries (CCKAP), the Consulting Committee for Korean American Ministries (CCKAM), National Korean Presbyterian Women (NKPW), National Korean Presbyterian Men (NKPM), young adult and English ministry networks, and other groups in the church.

The overture asks that the Presbyterian Mission Agency or the Office of the General Assembly “ensure that a national level staff person has the responsibility to work with Korean-language presbyteries and congregations.” The overture also asks that a “permanent staff position” be created to support Korean congregations, “coordinated with the work of the associate for Mid Council Relations” in the Office of the General Assembly.

It is not possible to guarantee that any office or position will be permanently located in the Presbyterian Mission Agency due to declining revenue sources in the church and limited funding. The office is currently working to connect and equip Korean Presbyterians, through partnering with mid councils, to support healthy and growing Korean American ministries in the church.

Item 05-12

[The assembly approved Item 05-12 with comment. See pp. 13, 35.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recognizes the value of making room for all people at the table of decision-making in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We urge councils, at all levels, to actively consider ways to involve, in the whole life of the church, those previously left out from the table. This includes, but is not limited to, young adults and those involved in new worshiping communities. We further recommend to the Synod of the Northeast to continue their productive conversations regarding this issue and bring to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a tangible recommendation.]

Request for Constitutional Interpretation of Resolving Tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

In response to the question from the Synod of the Northeast, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that no authoritative interpretation of F-1.0403, F-1.0404, and F-3.0202 be approved.

Rationale

Pursuant to G-3.0501c and G-6.02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following findings with respect to the questions presented:

1. With respect to the supposed tension between F-1.0403–F-1.0404 and F-3.0202, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution finds that the synod’s identification of a tension between these provisions overlooks an important sentence at the end of F-1.0403: “No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.”

Participation and representation in the governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is limited in several ways by the Constitution. Among these requirements are profession of faith in Jesus Christ and membership in a congregation (G-1.0301), election by a community of God's people (F-3.0106, G-2.0102), and the willingness, upon examination by a council, to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (G-2.0104b).

2. The synod requests the General Assembly to resolve its identified tension between constitutional provisions by one of three routes. The first two are not possible, according to the very authority the synod cites as the basis for the proposed resolutions, F-3.03. Both of these options have the effect of weakening, if not invalidating, other provisions of the Constitution.

Section F-3.03 establishes that the Constitution is to be read as a whole, and that if tensions and ambiguities are identified, they must be resolved in a manner that gives effect to all provisions. The language of F-3.03 was drafted in light of an authoritative interpretation established by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in 2001 in its decision in *Case 213-2: Session of Londonderry v. The Presbytery of Northern New England*:

It is not unusual for a document such as our Constitution, written at different periods of time and under different circumstances, to exhibit tensions and ambiguities in its provisions. Nevertheless, it is the task of governing bodies and judicial commissions to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions. It is not within the power of any governing body or judicial commission to declare a properly adopted provision of the Constitution to be invalid. The only appropriate avenue to change or remove a provision of the Constitution is through the process for amendment provided within the Constitution itself. (213-2 Decision, p. 4f.)

This authoritative interpretation, in part, was elevated to constitutional standing by the adoption of the current Form of Government, in F-3.03. Therefore, it is not permissible for any council to attempt to identify any section of the *Book of Order* as having a higher level of importance than other provisions. The *Book of Order* is to be read and interpreted in its entirety, and any perceived tensions and ambiguities must be resolved in a manner that gives effect to all provisions.

3. As to the proposed third option, the question arises, should the General Assembly consider an amendment to "mitigate the tension between these provisions?" It is difficult to see what amendment can be offered that will lessen the perceived tension identified by the synod. It is not likely that the General Assembly would be willing to lessen its commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403). Likewise, the provision that the church is to be governed by presbyters is long established. Section F-3.0202 was first articulated in the *Book of Order* by one of our antecedent denominations in 1797. Furthermore, the requirement that commissioners be presbyters assures their consent to the ordered ministries' constitutional questions.

The *Book of Order* already contains provisions designed to mitigate the tension felt by the synod. Congregations and sessions determine the persons who will serve in its ordered ministries, and can nominate and elect any active member it believes is qualified according to the standards necessary for service. The length of terms may be adjusted to make it possible for a younger member to serve. The regular review of a congregation through consultative visits by the presbytery or through session records reviews can be avenues for raising concerns of representation and inclusiveness, and developing strategies for addressing these concerns. Committees on representation in particular exist to keep issues of participation and inclusiveness at the forefront, including informing the work of nominating committees. There are avenues open for sessions and presbyteries within the synod to address the concern raised by this request. The inability to fulfill the ideals of inclusiveness in particular circumstances of the election of presbyters does not rise to the level where long-standing and essential Presbyterian polity should be altered.

Questions Presented to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution

This request from the Synod of the Northeast presents the following questions upon which it seeks constitutional interpretation:

1. There is tension between F-1.0403, "Unity in Diversity," and F-1.0404, "Openness," on the one hand, and F-3.0202, "Governed by Presbyters," on the other, as relates to the church's procedures for calling and ordaining presbyters, particularly young persons.
2. That the General Assembly resolve this tension by one of three routes:
 - a. If the GA determines that F-1.0403 and F-1.0404 are of higher importance than F-3.0202, that it issue an authoritative interpretation to that effect.
 - b. If the General Assembly finds that F-3.0202 takes precedence over F-1.0403 and F-1.0404, that the General Assembly provide advice and counsel on how to achieve age-diversity within its entities.
 - c. If the General Assembly finds that F-3.0202 is of equal importance to F-1.0403 and F-1.0404, that the General Assembly devise a constitutional amendment to mitigate the tension between these provisions.

Item 05-13

[The assembly answered Item 05-13 by the action taken on Item 05-01. See pp. 13, 35.]

In that our current Form of Government commends shared purpose, partnership, context, and call through the sharing of administrative functions and permanent judicial commissions, the synods of the PC(USA) recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

1. Act to rescind the recommendation of the 221st General Assembly (2014) with regard to reducing the total number of synods.
2. Retain the current boundaries and ecclesial responsibilities of the sixteen synods of the PC(USA).
3. Encourage synods to continue accelerating mission partnerships and exploring shared functions to the maximum extent practicable to effectively and efficiently meet the requirements of the *Book of Order* for synods.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:

2014 Referral: Item 05-04. Recommendation 1. Direct That a New Configuration of Synod Boundaries Be Established Based on an Emerging Sense of Purpose, Partnership, Context, and Call Through a Collaborative Process Between the Synods and Presbyteries Resulting in No More Than 10–12 Synods. The Synods Shall Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)—From the Mid Council Commission II (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 53, 54, 319–48).

Synopsis

In response to the mandate from the 221st General Assembly (2014), each synod of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) individually met to consider “an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call” with other synods (Ibid. p. 319). Those meetings included a wide representation from the presbyteries as well as people involved in the day-to-day activities of the synod. They also met with adjacent synods to discuss possibilities and partnership. Representatives from fifteen synods then met in late-2015 to discuss realigning synod boundaries; the discussion expanded to encompass ministry possibilities, decline of racial and ethnic diversity, sharing time and human resources, and potential financial complexities. Through this diligent and intentional approach, synods emerged with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to collaborative mission and ministry in their contexts.

After careful and faithful consideration and research, the synods of the PC(USA) concluded that larger structures will have little, if any, positive impact on mission, ministry, and partnership between presbyteries. It was also determined that the sheer enormity of such expansive synod boundaries as those being proposed would not facilitate the work of mid councils, and would further restrict and limit the involvement and voice of racial and ethnic Presbyterians working within the current synod structure. It therefore is being recommended that no changes be made to synod boundaries at this time.

Background of the Report

In its report to the 221st General Assembly (2014), the Mid Council Commission II (MCC II) recommended that the assembly “Direct a new configuration of synod boundaries ... resulting in no more than eight larger regional synods. ...” This was to be accomplished “through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries” resulting in “... an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call” [Ibid. p. 319]. The General Assembly, in response to the recommendation, approved multi-part Item 05-04 that, inter alia, directed the synods to report on their progress toward configuring no more than 10–12 synods at the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

The Stated Clerk has interpreted a report of the synod representatives gathered in Dallas, Texas, to be a kind of special committee report that falls under Standing Rule E.2. Accordingly, this written report is submitted as that special committee’s report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

History of Synods in the PC (USA)

The first presbytery in colonial America was formed in 1706. The Presbyterian presence grew over the next ten years and the “General Synod” was created in 1716, and later was named the Synod of Philadelphia. The General Assembly first met in 1798 and has, on many occasions, reconfigured the boundaries of synods and the presbyteries to meet the needs of the church. The current synod configuration was established in 1983 with the merger of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States to form the PC(USA).

A debate about the existence and role of synods has continued since before the 1983 merger; the debate picked up in earnest in 1993 as a reflection of denominational decline. A decade later, the Presbytery of Southern New England

recommended synods be completely eliminated so that synod property could be divided between presbyteries and the General Assembly. The 205th General Assembly (1993) disapproved the overture and opted instead to create a special committee, which later recommended to the 211th General Assembly (1999) that the PC(USA) move to a three-governing-body system. The rationale was that such a structure offered more opportunities for relationship-building between the General Assembly, presbyteries, and congregations. The 211th General Assembly (1999) chose not to be bound by this recommendation and commended the report for further study.

The Presbytery of Central Washington submitted an overture to the 218th General Assembly (2008) to streamline the current synod structure into fewer synods. This overture was also disapproved. In response to other coordinated “requests for action related to the form and function of synods ...” the 220th General Assembly (2012) commissioners created a Commission on Mid Council, which became known as MCC I. MCC I concluded that “the strengthening of presbyteries and the overall denominational structure was best accompanied by repurposing synods as Multi-Presbytery Missional Partnerships” (*Minutes*, 2012, Part 1, p. 279) which would, in effect, eliminate synods as ecclesial bodies from the constitutional structure. That General Assembly received the MCC I report and did not take substantive action; rather it created MCC II for further study. MCC II subsequently invited the 221st General Assembly (2014) commissioners to “envision a church with mid councils [composed of] fewer people at larger tables ... as they define their purpose and the best way to live out a new identity.”

Current Status

The current configuration of sixteen synods within the PC(USA) is shown by Exhibit A (p. 307) to this report. That exhibit shows the distribution of membership on December 31, 2013. Geographic boundaries of each presbytery are shown by Exhibit B (p. 308).

Each of the sixteen synods responded to the mandate of the 221st General Assembly (2014) in anticipation of presenting a response at the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Most synods held conversations with adjacent synods to discuss possible realignment options. No two synods used exactly the same process. However, there were a common number of features of those processes. Most synods started with meetings with representatives from each presbytery within the synod and involvement of representatives from multiple presbyteries when conversations were held with adjacent synods.

All synods did self-reflection on their status as well as their vision for the next several years. One consideration in almost all of the conversations was the diversity of people within presbyteries and cultural connections both within the synod and with presbyteries of adjacent synods (see Exhibit B., p. 308).

Each of the synods sincerely and fully engaged in the process mandated by the 221st General Assembly (2014). Participants in the various conversations took the direction for change seriously, seeking ways to achieve the number of 10–12 synods from among the 16 synods. Ideas included such concepts as merging with the Synod of Puerto Rico or dividing a synod into pieces and having the separated parts merge with separate, adjacent synods. Virtually no option that was considered was ruled unworkable without serious examination. In addition to the time and talents of all participants, synods have expended, up to \$48,000 each on meetings since the process began.

Each synod is a repository of grand gifts to the church over the past three centuries. Each has its own historic richness in programs and financial support for mission work within its geographic area. Part of the success of this work is having an understanding of the cultural traditions among the constituent cultures of a given synod. Synods historically have been adaptive to the financial, cultural, and mission needs of a variety of constituent presbyteries. All of the representatives gathered in Dallas agreed that a major consideration of realignment was the contextual significance it would have for diversity within specific presbyteries and synods, and all recognized how boundary changes would impact the synods’ ability to continue equipping the church to use these gifts.

Dallas Meeting

In further response to the 221st General Assembly (2014) mandate, thirty-six representatives of fifteen synods gathered in Dallas, Texas, on November 30 and December 1, 2015, for conversations around realignment. Fifteen ruling elder and twenty teaching elder moderators, vice-moderators, research team members, past officers, and others were present. The Synod of Puerto Rico chose not to send representatives. The conversation was facilitated by the Reverend Dr. Laurie Ferguson.

Synod executives, stated clerks, General Assembly staff, and a representative of MCC II were invited to attend as observers without voice or vote. Nevertheless, at the request of the special committee, individual observers were asked to answer direct questions in their field of expertise. The participants met in two closed sessions at which observers were not present.

Representatives shared their synod’s progress on and discoveries around the mandate from the 221st General Assembly (2014). In these conversations, a number of common themes arose.

As a result, synods emerged from the two-year process with a renewed sense of purpose and ministry in their contexts. The synods of the PC(USA) were able to strengthen their relationship and ministry with partner presbyteries, fortify existing partnerships between synods, and break new ground on emerging ministries together.



Participants

Observers

The continuation of these conversations is vital to the continued innovation, partnership, and relevance of the PC(USA)'s regional bodies. Those gathered in Dallas considered an annual gathering of synod leadership, like the one held in Dallas, to share ideas and proposals, listening posts and circuit tours within the synods' bounds to promote interaction with the presbyteries, and cross-synod conversations based on geographic, missional, and other commonalities that may be identified in ongoing work together. Despite these commonalities, it became clear in discussions that a single approach or structure cannot meet the needs of each presbytery across the PC(USA). Synods do and must function across a range of needs according to their constituent presbyteries.

Current synod boundaries are not perfect, yet each synod reflected that enlarging those boundaries would impede ministry with and for its partner presbyteries. The geography involved, especially in the central and western parts of the United States, would necessitate regional offices in the place of existing synod offices, to facilitate stated regional mission and ministry, if boundaries were to enlarge. Along the east coast, enlarging boundaries could necessitate an increase in staff as synod staffs would conceivably have twice as many presbyteries to serve. There would also be significant costs involved in amending endowed funds held by synods, many of which are donor-restricted.

Synods were able to see the openness and possibilities of its institutional forms rather than simply its perils while embracing openness to God's mission in the world (see F-1.0404) and the mandate of the 221st General Assembly (2014). Synods have the ability to be more diverse than presbyteries and respond more rapidly than the General Assembly. These characteristics empower synods to continue becoming more culturally appropriate and contextually relevant.

Shortcomings, failures, and ways to provide mutual support were discussed, girded by the understanding that synod boundaries are not fences. As such, ministry, resources, and support can and should flow freely between synods, toward the larger goal of nurturing ministry within the PC(USA).

Conclusions

Every problem is accompanied by an opportunity. The right timing and set of circumstances can transform an obstacle into a possibility that can lead to deep and meaningful change. But if the problem has not been framed correctly—if the problem has not been clearly stated or clearly identified—the change that comes to pass may not be what is needed to solve the problem. According to MCC II, the problem facing the PC(USA) is that “the composition and organization of the mid councils” is inadequate to undergird and promote “missional congregations ... and [the] ecclesial nature and character of [our] presbyteries. ...” Its solution was to grant MCC II the “authority to organize, unite, and divide synods and presbyteries.” The solution proposed by MCCII and others was to reconfigure boundaries in such a way as to reduce synod presence and/or responsibilities, literally reducing the number of synods by half. That authority was not granted; rather the synods were tasked to carry out a modified version of the MCC II recommendation.

The representatives of the synods of the PC(USA) have no objection to meaningful change as it relates to synod boundaries. They affirm the act of reform in response to opportunities to become something greater for the glory of God. They take exception, however, to modifications in lieu of deep and meaningful change. Meaningful change is the substance of the words *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei* (The church reformed, always being reformed according to the Word of God).

Long before MCC I or MCC II, some synods were already engaged in collaborative conversations, partnerships, and networking. Conversations and meetings between synods during the past three years (see Exhibit C, pp. 309ff), particularly the gathering in Dallas, Texas, have been tremendously helpful to a common understanding of issues and potential solutions. The conversations about failures and missed opportunities were candid and open, and several synods discovered a shared interest and found common ground on which to do fruitful and faithful ministry together. For these reasons and more, the synod representatives are deeply indebted to the MCC II for recommending a time of “collaborative process.”

The synod representatives that met in Dallas are gratified that MCC II has acknowledged that “synods are providing a space for advocacy and development of racial ethnic constituencies ... that would not easily be filled at either the presbytery or General Assembly levels of the PC(USA).” Synods are instrumental in maintaining racial and cultural diversity within the denomination. A synod in the southeast is not as aware of Native American sensitivities as a synod in the southwest. And synod staff far removed geographically from presbytery staffs will not be as responsive to needs of those staffs. The potential for sharing administrative functions and permanent judicial commission duties also is diminished with larger synods.

People of color will become a majority of the U.S. population by 2042 according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s latest projection. It is troubling that some may find themselves asking whether the genesis of the phrase “fear of loss” might actually be traced back to those who feel most threatened by the certainty that they will one day become a racial minority. Preserving the current synod boundaries is appropriate, but not because of “fear” of loss or because of vested interests “... in the system as it currently exists,” as was suggested by MCC II. The emphasis should be on providing adaptive structures that enables the church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, bearing witness that diversity means age, gender, disabilities, cultures, ethnicities, theology, and race.

From the time when five pastors gathered in Philadelphia in 1706 to form the first presbytery until today, mid council bodies are a group of colleagues in ministry who willingly serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. This is what we do to strengthen the life and work of the church.

Exhibits:

A—Presbyterian Church USA: distribution of members among Synods (p. 307)

B—Presbyterian Church USA: distribution of members among Presbyteries (p. 308)

C—Summary of Synod Reports (pp. 309ff)

MCC II COMMENT ON ITEM 05-13

Comment on Item 05-13—From the Mid Council Commission II.

The Mid Council Commission II advises that the assembly carefully consider whether the synods’ report reflects a genuine effort to comply with the direction of the 221st General Assembly (2014) to reorganize their boundaries into not more than ten to twelve synods or is simply an attempt to reargue issues resolved, in an overwhelming vote, by that assembly. From the commission’s vantage point, the synods have chosen not to follow the direction of the 221st General Assembly (2014):

- They have not suggested the redrawing of even a single boundary.
- They have not consulted with members of the commission except for a few conversations shortly after the 221st General Assembly (2014) with a few commission members.
- They declined even to hear from a representative of the commission that they invited to their November 2015 gathering.

The synods’ recommendation, simply put, urges the rejection of the work of at least three assemblies and two commissions in favor of the status quo. At a time in which the whole church, at each council, is engaged in serious discussion and reassessment of its identity for the church in the 21st century, the commission concurs with the overwhelming action of the 221st General Assembly (2014), advises that this assembly carry forward with that work, and confirm the 221st General Assembly (2014)’s recommendation that an administrative commission be formed to reconfigure the boundaries of the synods in a manner that protects ongoing mission, but realigns those nearly thirty-five-year-old boundaries with the current realities of the denomination.

The 221st General Assembly (2014), by a vote of 449 to 128 (78 percent to 22 percent) following a 65-1 vote in committee, directed a reconfiguration of the synods into not more than ten to twelve synods, from the current sixteen synods. The action was the result of the work of two commissions and years of reflection and debate regarding the role of synods in our denomination. (The full report of Mid Council Commission II is available in PC-Biz, under the Committee tab, by selecting the 221st General Assembly (2014) and going to Committee 05 (Mid Councils), at Item 05-04.) That vote was the result of neither precipitous action nor a disregard for the role of synods. To the contrary, the role and number of synods has been studied by the denomination since at least 1993. More recently, in 2010, the General Assembly, faced with a variety of requests for action related to the form and function of synods in the mid council structure of the denomination, created a Commission on Mid Council. The first Mid Council Commission listened intently to the varied voices in the denomination by means of surveys, conference calls with key constituents, and numerous conversations in every synod, at every major gathering of the church, and with key leaders in every level of the church’s life. Importantly, it found:

We live in a rapidly changing world and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not the same denomination it was sixty or thirty years ago, when the structural framework of our current version of Presbyterianism was developed and implemented. As we have envisioned what the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.) of our post-Christendom world may look like, our Commission has assumed the role of those who prepare the space, invite the artists, and affirm the creativity that already resides in our mid council system. (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 279)

Based in part on what it heard from its broad consultations, the first Mid Council Commission recommended that the best way of strengthening presbyteries and the overall denominational structure was by “repurposing synods as Multi-Presbytery Missional Partnerships” (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 279) and eliminating synods as ecclesial bodies within our constitutional structure. The 220th General Assembly (2014) charged this commission to study that recommendation further.

Based on that work, in 2014, this commission invited the 221st General Assembly (2014) to envision:

- A church whose existing mid councils come together at a bigger table or multiple tables to aspire to what God is calling them to do, to aspire to what God is calling us to be.
- A church with mid councils that engage in conversations about collaborating, partnering, and networking, as they define their purpose and the best way to live out a new identity.
- A church whose mid councils may focus on relationships or mission, leadership development, administrative support, or essential ecclesiastical functions as the glue that helps presbyteries be in covenantal community with one another.
- A church whose mid councils are prepared to engage in significant structural change for the sake of enabling adaptive and creative change within broader borders. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 320)

Instead of eliminating synods, after many meetings and much consultation, this commission found that “the time has come for fewer synods within a structure of mutual accountability that encourages each synod to discern God’s call to find its unique role in affirming the creativity that already resides in our mid council system” (*Ibid*). Ruling Elder Commissioner Courtenay Willcox of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, moderator of the Mid Councils Issues Committee at the 221st General Assembly (2014), aptly quoted a committee member in describing the way forward: “It may feel messy and chaotic, but we serve a God who brings order out of chaos.”

To accomplish this redrawing of boundaries, this commission suggested it begin with a collaborative process to include all those with a stake in the restructuring and to allow synods and presbyteries most affected to have agency in controlling their alignments. However, the collaboration was never intended to revisit the decision the 221st General Assembly (2014) overwhelmingly made to reconfigure the current synods into not more than ten to twelve synods. As this commission said in its report:

While the MCII concluded that eliminating synods as ecclesial bodies at this time would not accomplish the goal of simplifying and streamlining the governance structure of the PC(USA), the commission believes that the PC(USA) has a denominational structure that no longer fits the church of today. The current synod structure was established when we were a significantly larger church, when denominational loyalty to the mission decisions of higher councils was significantly deeper, and when geographic distance was an obstacle to efficient administration. Today our size, our understanding of denominations, and technology help to create opportunities for new ways of being church. (*Ibid*, p. 323)

To that end, this commission proposed, and the 221st General Assembly (2014) overwhelmingly recommended to this assembly that if the collaborative process for reconfiguration did not work, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve and the Moderator appoint a commission to redraw the synod’s boundaries. The two-year period authorized by the 221st General Assembly (2014) was intended to allow synods to redraw boundaries themselves. The charge to the synods was not to consider whether their boundaries should be redrawn, but how they should be redrawn. The commission urges this assembly to carry through with that directive rather than abandon the work of the last three assemblies, of this commission, and its predecessor.

The commission recognizes that the status quo is often more comfortable than living into the future to which we are called. But at a time in which the whole church is actively and energetically engaged in a process of discerning its future, abandoning the work done by the 221st General Assembly (2014) to make synods meaningful and viable councils for a future church would send the unmistakable signal that the denomination is not prepared to reform itself. Such an action would harm not only the synods, but the whole denomination as it moves into God’s future.

Item 05-14

[The assembly approved Item 05-14. See pp. 13, 35.]

On Merging the Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

The Synod of Alaska-Northwest overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve the merger of the Presbytery of Central Washington and the Presbytery of Northwest Coast to form a new presbytery to be known as the Presbytery of Northwest Coast.

Rationale

The geographical territory of the merged presbytery includes the counties of Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, that part of Adams known as the Panhandle, and that part of Klickitat east of Rock

Creek, all said counties lying within the State of Washington; and the counties of Clallam, Jefferson, Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom, and those portions of King County north of NE 160th Street, Seattle, Washington; and within the following district of the State of Alaska including the organized and unorganized boroughs and cities of Yakutat, Haines, Skagway, Juneau, Hoonah-Angoon, Petersburg, Wrangell, Sitka, Prince of Wales-Hyder, and Ketchikan.

Item 05-15

[The assembly answered Item 05-15 by the action taken on Item 05-01. See pp. 33, 36.]

On Requesting Exemption on any Action the Assembly Might Take to Reduce the Number of Synods—From the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.

The Synod of Alaska-Northwest respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) exempt the Synod of Alaska-Northwest from any action the assembly might take to reduce the number of synods, which may include forcing the Synod of Alaska-Northwest to merge all or in part with another synod, in order that it might continue as a reduced function synod as provided by G-3.0404.”

Rationale

The Synod of Alaska-Northwest, at the request of and in consultation with its presbyteries, has reduced its function to “the provision of judicial function process and administrative review of the work of the presbyteries” [*Book of Order*, G-3.0404].

The Synod of Alaska-Northwest meets annually “for the purposes of setting a budget, electing members to its permanent judicial commission, and admitting to record the actions of its permanent judicial and administrative commissions.”

The presbyteries of this synod have assumed “for themselves, by mutual agreement, such other synods functions as have and may be deemed necessary by the presbyteries and the synod.”

In 2012 the presbyteries of the Synod of Alaska-Northwest called a forum of the leadership of the presbyteries to discuss their relationships with the synod. The driving principle of the forum was the following statement by the 211th General Assembly (1999), which “commend[ed] these principles:

- a. The primary organizational focus of the life and work of the PC (USA) is on developing, encouraging, equipping, and resourcing its congregations and their leaders as the Living Body of Christ.
- b. The primary focus of the life and work of presbyteries is to enhance the effectiveness of congregations
- c. It is essential that simplified, flexible and more responsive ways be found for the PC (USA) to do its work as it moves into a new millennium in a rapidly changing environment.” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 521)

In a written, joint agreement, the presbyteries of Alaska-Northwest expressed to the synod:

- The structure of the Synod should reflect the reality that mission and ministry best happens at the congregational level to transform the lives of those engaged;
- Most ministry and mission existing at the synod level would be best stewarded by congregations and presbyteries, or at the very least, be affirmed and/or supported by them;
- The governance structure of the synod hindered it from being responsive, supportive and it was unable to react to current realities of congregational ministry;
- There was a lack of accountability in the relationship between the synod and its presbyteries; that is higher councils should offer lower councils accountability for the health of the ministry done at those lower levels, while higher councils must be accountable to resource, support and encourage those lower councils, but it was perceived that this latter form of accountability was lacking;
- In summary, the presbyteries expressed that from their viewpoint, the synod’s mission and purpose had become separated; even estranged, from the respective missions of the presbyteries and that the presbyteries no longer supported or affirmed the mission of the synod as it had evolved over several decades.

The presbyteries requested that the Synod of Alaska-Northwest reduce its function according to G-3.0404 to “provision of judicial process and administrative review of the work of the presbyteries,” and that the presbyteries would “assume for themselves, by mutual agreement, such other synod functions as may be deemed necessary by the presbyteries and the synod.”

In October of 2012 the elected synod commissioners approved the request of the presbyteries and restructured the synod to accomplish the goal. The synod’s entire organization now consists only of two commissioners from each of the presbyteries who must be members of or be directly related to their respective presbytery councils (now called by many other names to avoid confusion with the term “council” used in the *Book of Order*). Presbytery executives and stated clerks were given voice but no vote in the synod. The principle is that when the synod gathers, those present are empowered to speak for their presbyteries, and thus a meeting of the synod is a gathering of the effective leadership of each of the presbyteries.

Feedback from the presbyteries is that the synod *has* found “simplified, flexible and more responsive ways” for the church to do its work.

This model of a “reduced function” synod has been implemented and continues to work very well for the member presbyteries and their congregations. All of the ongoing ministries executed by the synod were reviewed, and were offered to the presbyteries. Where presbyteries were willing to continue a ministry, the ministry was continued. Those ministries that found no support at a presbytery or congregational level were discontinued.

When the presbyteries have needed support, sometimes in a critical way as when former Alaska Presbytery fell below the constitutionally required number of churches, this new, nimble expression of “synod” has been able to respond quickly and effectively.

For years this synod held a very large amount of funds, the original source of which were National Mission Partnership Funds, and valuable real estate holdings. In many cases these assets were used to support institutions no longer supported or affirmed by the presbyteries or congregations. These resources have now been allocated to the presbyteries, who are unleashing new ministries and mission projects. Donor restricted assets that must be held by the synod will continue to generate future resources for presbyteries and congregations to engage in innovative mission and ministry. A forced merger with another synod or realignment would be costly, and would drain resources now used directly for ministry to untangle, transfer and reallocate assets to some new entity.

As a result of reducing its function, the Synod of Alaska-Northwest now employs only a part-time stated clerk. Accounting and negligible administrative support is provided by contracted presbytery staff. There are no committees staffed by non-synod commissioners. Per capita has been reduced from \$6.63 in 2012 to \$1.50 in 2016. The Synod of Alaska-Northwest believes it would be ineffective and expensive to force it to merge with another synod of higher function with its related costs, and contrary to our covenantal purpose, such a merger would force our congregations to pay for staff and services that our presbyteries and their churches do not desire and would not use.

The Synod of Alaska-Northwest has fully embraced the General Assembly’s directive that “the primary organizational focus of the life and work of the PC(USA) is on developing, encouraging, equipping, and resourcing its congregations and their leaders as the Living Body of Christ,” and has found a “simplified, flexible, and responsive way” to accomplish this by reducing its function and revising its structure so its agenda is determined by the congregations and presbyteries it serves and supports. This process has provided us with the “clarity as to [our] ecclesial and missional identity, purpose, structure, and strategies, as mandated by the 221st General Assembly (2014).”

During its many discussions among the presbyteries and synods, the Synod of Alaska-Northwest has come to believe that forcing realignment and mergers is impractical and would be excessively costly. A better solution would be to identify those synods and presbyteries where there is congruency between mission, purpose, and function, and to allow them to continue in their present configurations, as is the case with the Synod of Alaska-Northwest. Where there is regional affinity or common levels of function, mergers may still increase both efficiency and effectiveness and could and should be pursued--but not imposed.

Reduced function, as provided by the *Book of Order*, is working very well for the Synod of Alaska Northwest and its constituent presbytery. Please let us continue this healthy, efficient, and effective ministry in its current form.

Item 05-A

[The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils approved Item 05-A with comment and with exceptions. See p. 36.]

Review of Synod Minutes.

[Comment and Exception:

[Lakes and Prairies—Comment. 2015 Auditor report does not have auditor’s signature.

[Mid America—Comment. 2014, no report of the previous review of minutes.

[Sun—Comment. 2014, no report of the previous review of minutes.

[Trinity—Exceptions, no sexual misconduct policy. No insurance policies.

[Lincoln Trails—Comment. It is hard to tell what the crossed out pages mean.]

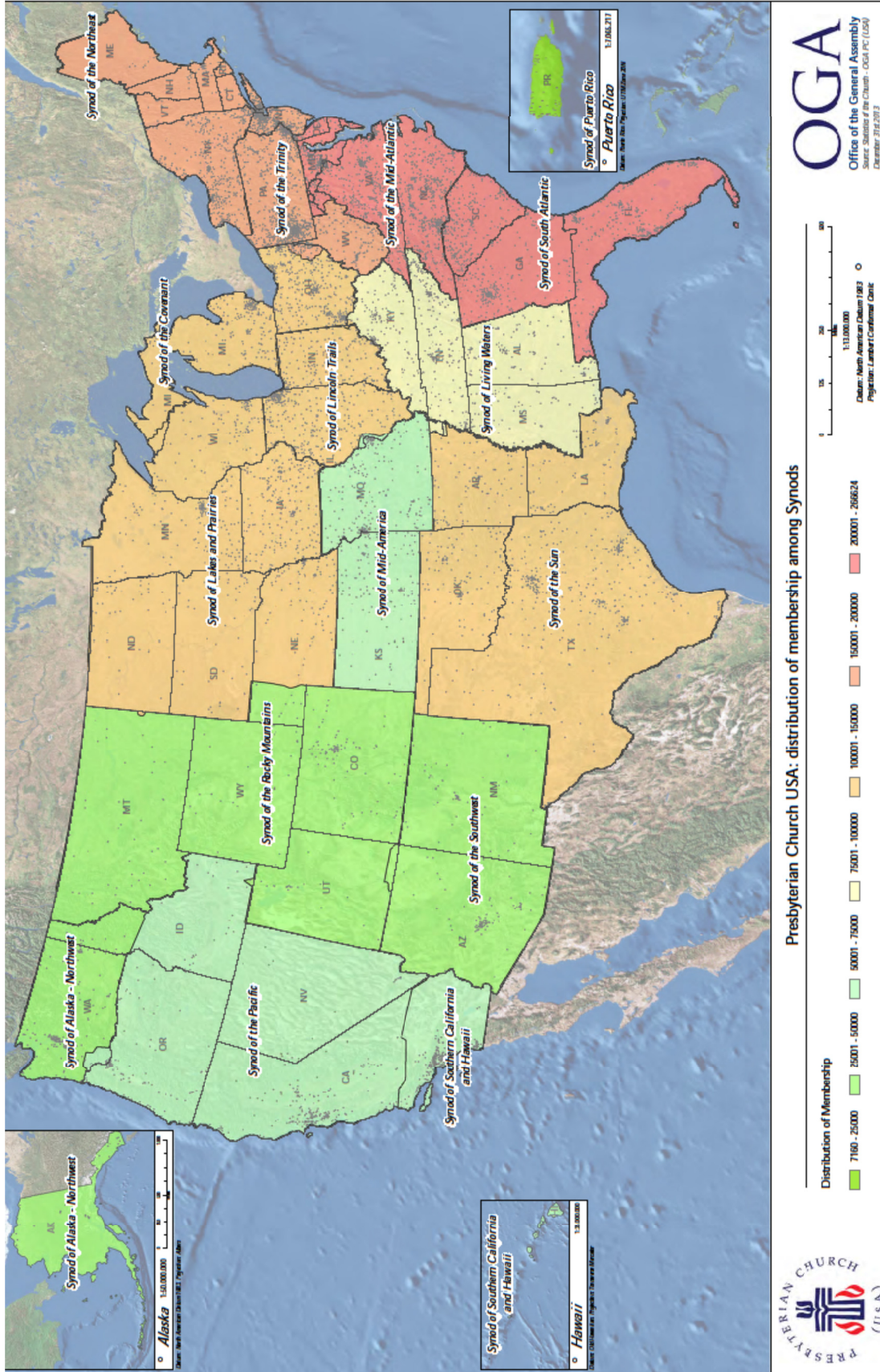
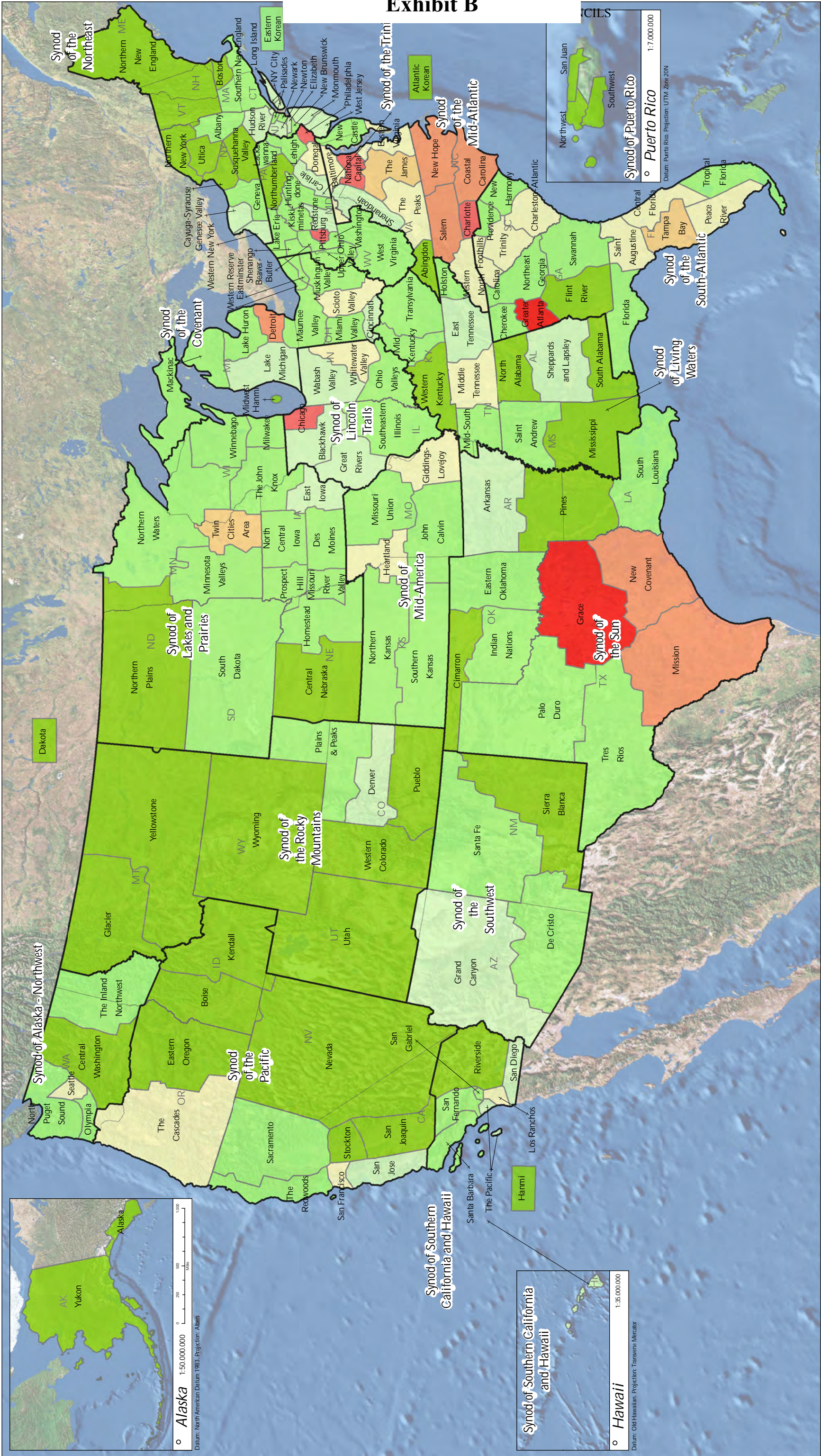
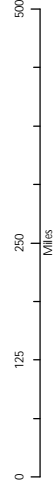


Exhibit B



Presbyterian Church USA: distribution of membership among Presbyteries.

Distribution of Membership



Datum: North American Datum 1983
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic



OGA

Office of the General Assembly
Source: Statistics of the Church - OGA PC (USA)
December 31st, 2013

05 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MID COUNCILS
Synods Report to General Assembly
Exhibit C

Reports from individual synods can be found on the following pages:

- 2 - Covenant Report
- 5 - Lakes & Prairies Report
- 8 - Lincoln Trails Report
- 9 - Living Waters Report
- 11 - Mid-America Report
- 15 - Mid-Atlantic Report
- 18 - Northeast Report
- 21 - Pacific
- 24 - Rocky Mountains
- 26 - South Atlantic Report
- 29 - Southern California & Hawaii Report
- 31 - Southwest Report
- 33 - Sun Report
- 36 - Trinity Report

Synod of the Covenant Response to the 221st GA (2014) item 05-04

In response to the 221st GA (2014) item 05-04, the Synod of the Covenant invited all eleven of its presbyteries and neighboring synods into conversation to discuss possible boundary changes and/or new partnerships. Regretfully, we were unable to fulfill the 221st (2014) GA item 05-04 as issued. However, what did emerge from our contextual discernment process was a renewed purpose and sense of call as *A Just- Peace church*.

Recommendations:

1. That the Synod of the Covenant maintain its current geographic boundaries
2. That the Synod of the Covenant be permitted to affirm its calling as *A Just-Peace church*
3. That the Synod of the Covenant invite the presbyteries and congregations that lie within its bounds to adopt *The Five Peacemaking Affirmations*

Rationale:

1. That the Synod of the Covenant maintain its current geographic boundaries

As a result of our conversations with the Presbyteries of Detroit, Eastminster, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Mackinac, Miami Valley, and Muskingum Valley and with the Synod of the Trinity, we concluded that each of us is wrestling with understanding God's mission in a world rattled by the clash of cultural and contextual identities. Yet, it is through the sharing of expertise and experiences and actively engaging in discussion that mutual movement is achieved. Hence, the Synod of the Covenant is committed to continued dialogue toward the unity of the PCUSA. However, the Synod of the Covenant must be faithful to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the maintenance of our integrity and clear sense of call.

- 2 That the Synod of the Covenant be permitted to affirm its calling as *A Just-Peace church*

During an extensive period of discernment, and after engaging in a process of consultation¹ with our constituent presbytery councils and/or executives regarding item 05-04, several important points emerged. Most notable was the importance of both the Synod of the Covenant and its presbyteries to live out faithfully our respective mission, call and purpose. Given that so many people within our urban and rural communities are struggling with issues of poverty, injustice, racism, unemployment, inadequate health care and education, violence and militarism, and other social ills, the Synod was compelled to promote not only peace but a justice-peace, because there can be no peace without justice. Thus, the call for *A-Just-Peace church*. What this means for our communities and common life together is that the Synod of the Covenant cannot be content to 'do' any type of ministry that disconnects us from the pervasive culture of violence, suffering and reality of peoples' lives. In response, we have begun the process of making internal changes that are vital to our 'walking with' rather than 'ministering to' our people.

- 3 That the Synod of the Covenant invite presbyteries and congregations that lie with its bounds to adopt *The Five Peacemaking Affirmations*

Synod of the Covenant Report

In response to three primary questions asked of presbyteries, what emerged was a shared understanding and commitment to promoting peace and justice, although the ‘how’ this should be done varied. Subsequently, what the ***Five Peacemaking Affirmations***ⁱⁱ do is nurture and enhance the existing commonalities and relationships between this Synod and its presbyteries. We recognize that this is an intentional journey full of risks and challenges which may conflict with the institutional/membership church model.

ⁱ Outline of the Synod Discernment Process:

- The Synod Moderators’ Committee oversees the discernment process and has approved the outlined process on 9/25/2014.
- Synod Assembly affirmed the process on 11/8/2014.
- The Synod designed a Survey/Study electronic tool in partnership with the Presbyterian Research Services for a cost. The study also factored in the Synod’s latest study of 2007.
- Survey/Study circulated via email on 10/29/2014 to Synod and Presbytery leadership, and postcards post-mailed on 11/4-5/2014 to all congregations.
- Invitation to all 11 Presbyteries for a conversation between presbyteries and synod executive 11/2014.
- Due date for responding to the electronic Survey/Study 1/15/2015.
- A contract staff completed a project of two phases: Brief History of the Synod and its impact on Church and Society 3/1/2015, and a Brief Review of Synod Policies, Mandates, and Expectations 6/1/2015.
- Synod Executive explored conversations and partnerships with neighboring synods as invited through their respective Executives or Councils. Invitation circulated to all neighboring Synods 3/2015.
- Second invitation to 11 Presbyteries for conversation between presbyteries and synod executive 3/2015.
- Survey/Study report and visits with councils helped shape the conversation during the Synod Assemblies, 3/18-20/2015 & 8/7-8/2015.
- Seeking consultation with Presbyteries, the Synod Executive was available for face-to-face listening and conversations with every presbytery council and other entities through 7/2015.
- Synod Executive was also available for face-to-face listening and conversations with Executive/General Presbyters through 7/2015, including EP/GP Forum 3/16-17, regarding the discernment.
- Four representatives of the Moderators’ Committee met with a delegation from Synod of the Trinity on 7/22/2015 for conversation exploring possible merger or partnerships. Both concluded to continue the conversation.
- Draft recommendation presented by Moderators’ Committee at the Synod Assembly 8/7-8/2015.
- Synod Executive is scheduled to share a progress report at the Synod Executives Forum 8/23-26/2015.
- Vote on Synod’s response during Synod Assembly 11/6-7/2015.

The following seven Presbyteries invited the Synod Executive for conversation:

Mackinac, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Detroit, Eastminster, Miami Valley, Muskingum Valley.

ⁱⁱ The Five Peacemaking Affirmations:

1. We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God’s reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.
2. We confess our complicity in the world’s violence even as we pray for the Spirit’s courage to

Synod of the Covenant Report

“unmask idolatries,” to speak truth about war and oppression, to stand with those who suffer, and to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.

3. We reclaim the power and authority of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, who proclaims God’s reign, who inspires the prophetic church, [by] forgiving, healing, and undoing violence, and who overcomes evil through the cross and resurrection.

4. We seek to understand the nonviolent revolutions and armed struggles of our time by drawing on the traditions of Christian pacifism, just war, just peacemaking and active nonviolence, and by cultivating moral imagination through prayer, study, and engagement with friends and enemies. Even as we actively engage in a peace discernment process, we affirm our responsibility of continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the U.S. military, veterans, and their families.

5. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves earnestly to seek and promote loving, nonviolent responses to conflict in our daily lives, in our communities, and in our world, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to practice boldly the things that make for peace.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Ministry and mission in purpose, partnership, context, call

December 2015

In early April 2015 representatives from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies met in Minneapolis with representatives from the synods of Lincoln Trails and Mid-America. Lakes and Prairies provided substantial financial support, about \$15,000, to be host to the meeting.

Representatives of the three synods — which had been meeting together in a variety of formats since 2011 — met to respond to the mandate from the 221st General Assembly to reduce the number of synods “based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context and call.”

Using a “red light/green light” format for discussion, representatives addressed several topics, including merger.

- While the Lakes and Prairies representatives green-lighted a discussion of merger, representatives of the other synods red-lighted the conversation.

The red lights effectively ended discussion of merger. However, representatives agreed that reconfiguring boundaries, aligning missional priorities, and combining long-standing processes create obstacles that are detrimental to the shared vision of the synods’ future together.

Representatives did agree that maintaining a relationship among the synods is important. After several days of prayer, conversation and worship, those gathered discovered many things in common and much they believed that could be done better together than apart. As Lakes and Prairies Executive Elona Street-Stewart pointed out, when the synod met later in April, “While we did not get the green light for a unified reconfiguration, we did achieve clarity of interest and made significant progress in creating a focus on our missional potential.”

The representatives identified two common areas of ministry in which they could be strong and effective working together: to engage in strengthening small and rural church ministry, and to engage in issues of racism, oppression, disenfranchisement of racial ethnic communities.

Those areas of ministry led to a covenant among the three synods that calls for a commitment of the synods to work together, an effort that Street-Stewart said would “address large goals, but will not limit any other synod’s self-generative work.”

- The covenant, in which identify “an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context and call,” is an addendum to this report.

A timeline of events and activities leading to the covenant shows the development of deeper cooperation among the three synods.

- In January 2009 the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, acting on a recommendation from its steering committee, created a task force “on the future of the synod.”
- The task force convened in the summer of 2009, and presented its report at the synod’s fall meeting in 2011. Within its final report, the task force called on the synod to “take a leadership role to identify the areas where service can be shared between one or more presbyteries or between one or more synods to improve efficiency without decreasing effectiveness where it is so important to conserve resources.”
- By the synod’s spring meeting in 2012, representatives of the three synod’s had met and created the Heartland Resource Network, a somewhat loosely connected arrangement of the three synods to work together. The Synod of the Rocky Mountains initially had been a participant in the discussion, but it chose to withdraw from future conversations.
- Lakes and Prairies commissioners put funds behind Heartland Resource Network mission efforts, allocating \$4,000 to support just.good.food., an initial mission project of the Network, designed to support local congregations in their efforts to grow and distribute food to those in need. The synod also provided a \$5,000 grant to support “Theocademy,” a web-based training resource for deacons, ruling elders and teaching elders. Physically produced by the Synod of Mid-America, other partners included the Presbyterian seminaries of Dubuque, Louisville and McCormick, and the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation.
- At its fall 2012 meeting, the synod affirmed its participation in the Heartland Resource Network, endorsing participation in other Network planning activities.
- When the synod met in the spring of 2013 commissioners passed a resolution – submitted later as an overture supported by a number of presbyteries – calling on the 221st General Assembly “to take no action regarding the future of synods, including the elimination thereof, merger, or functions that are appropriate to synods.” The resolution noted “there appears to be widespread recognition that the needs of presbyteries and congregations across the nation vary greatly and that ‘one size does not fit all.’” And the overture noted that a “bottom up” approach would work better than a “top down” approach.
- In the fall of 2013 Lakes and Prairies engaged in prayerful discussion and study of its mission and vision for the future. The synod added an extra day to its fall assembly and invited each of its presbyteries to send extra representatives to engage in “World Café” like discussions around the future of the synod. Those discussions led to the creation of a task force that would listen to the needs of the synod’s presbyteries; provide strategies for moving forward; consider resources available to presbyteries and the synod, including money, people and congregations; and communicate with the synod’s personnel committee regarding staffing implications. The task force was directed to complete its work by the spring meeting of 2014.
- In the spring of 2014, the task force recommended the synod look “beyond the synod boundaries to establish partnerships with other synods and church groups.”

Synod of Lakes & Prairies Report

- When the synod met in the fall of 2014, commissioners reviewed the varied ministries and missions of the synod and confirmed four areas in which the work of the synod should be carried out: management, leadership, collaboration, and diversity and inclusion. The synod is now beginning to work within that framework to move forward in the areas addressed in the three-synod covenant. The work begins in earnest in 2016.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Paige D. Loveall
Moderator, Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Preliminary Report from the Synod of Lincoln Trails Scouts

Since 2011, the Synods of Lincoln Trails, Lakes and Prairies, and Mid-America have been in conversation about sharing resources and ministries. While there have been conversations around the edges about the possibility of merger, no formal conversation has been had, nor decision made.

At the 221st General Assembly, meeting in Detroit in June, 2014, the following action was taken: *“Direct that a new configuration of synod boundaries be established based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods. The synods shall report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).”*

In light of the General Assembly’s action, representatives from the three synods gathered in Minneapolis April 6-9 for a green light / red light conversation on merger. The Rev. Dr. Laurie Ferguson facilitated the conversation. Synod of Lincoln Trails representatives (who were approved at a recent synod assembly) were David Comstock, Sara Dingman, Karen Hahn, Susan McGhee, and John Rickard. Jennifer Burns Lewis was unable to attend, due to a family emergency.

Following a day of discussion among the three synods, the representatives met with their own synod group to discuss the green light / red light question. The next morning, it was reported that the Lakes and Prairies group favored merger, while the Mid-America and Lincoln Trails groups did not.

While the conversation did not lead to a decision to recommend merger, it did reveal a desire on the part of those gathered to collaborate on areas of mission that might best be accomplished together. A decision was made to identify initiatives and begin to formulate a plan for our work. The group chose two: small member congregations and racial ethnic diversity / white privilege.

Each synod group agreed to appoint three persons (the synod moderator, executive, and a third person of their choosing) to a team to develop a covenant to be presented to the fall meeting of each synod. The covenant will include the two initiatives, an outline for how to begin the work to achieve each, and what each synod will be asked to commit to the endeavor. Karen Hahn, Sara Dingman, and David Comstock are our representatives.

In addition, John Rickard and Susan McGhee will work together to draft our synod’s response to the General Assembly.

Further information will be available as the process continues.



Report on Mandate of the 221st General Assembly to Participate in “A Collaborative Process Between the Synods and Presbyteries Resulting in No More Than 10 – 12 Synods”

Overview

The Synod of Living Waters (SLW) is comprised of twelve presbyteries in the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi (plus several counties in eastern Missouri and Arkansas). One of SLW’s distinctions is that it has contiguous boundaries with seven other synods – more than any other synod in the PC(USA). For this reason, as well as the reality that at different times in history its presbyteries have been parts of synods in several geographical directions, its presbyteries have missional connections with presbyteries in a number of other synods – in some cases, connections of long standing.

SLW also has a vibrant and unifying outreach ministry, Living Waters for the World (LWW), whose mission is to bring clean, safe drinking water to those places in the world where the water is unsafe to drink. There is much undisputed evidence that safe drinking water is one of the world’s greatest health needs. Most infant and child deaths around the world can be traced to unsafe water. LWW is quickly approaching 1,000 systems installed and providing clean, safe drinking water in areas of great need around the world. As “Clean Water U” sessions run by LWW continue to train mission partners to establish connections with local churches and leaders around the world, to educate people about the importance of clean water, and to install, and maintain water systems, the ministry’s focus has recently shifted to sustainability, to ensure that a system installed this year will still be producing clean water 5, 10, even 50 years in the future.

For all of these reasons, while SLW is willing to contemplate being divided up and becoming parts of synods to its north, east, and west if doing so would somehow further or enhance the ministry and mission of the PC(USA), and provided that some place is found to sponsor the continuation of the LWW mission, SLW does not feel called to move in such a direction, and its first preference would be to retain its current boundaries and focus on continuing to strengthen its missional connections both among its own presbyteries and with its neighbors.

Process

SLW held a series of multi-day Consultations on Shared Futures (Consultations) in which all twelve of its presbyteries participated. It then directly considered input from those gatherings at its 2015 Annual Meeting, and asked its presbyteries to do the same. On the basis of that discussion, SLW authorized its Permanent Administrative Commission to act on its behalf in any further boundary negotiations, so that the presbyteries could report their findings and conclusions to that Commission.

Synod of Living Waters Report

The first consultation, held in 2013, focused primarily on evolving presbytery partnerships in the synod, including both shared program and staff. Charles Wiley, PC(USA) Coordinator, Office of Theology and Worship, addressed the participants on the first day of the Consultation regarding the history and purposes of mid-Councils in the Presbyterian and Reformed Church, after which discussion focused on what we value in our mid-Councils. On the second day, Jill Hudson, then PC(USA) Associate for Mid Council Relations delivered a presentation entitled “Trends in Mid Council Partnerships and Shared Approaches,” leading to discussions about ways in which the presbyteries in our synod are increasingly – and creatively – sharing staff and working together in a variety of ways (mission, skills training, evangelism). Some of these joint ministries are occurring as SLW “Presbytery Partnerships,” with direct synod involvement. Others are being developed on their own. And as discussed above, some of them also involve presbyteries in other synods.

While the concept of synod realignment – and at that time, the elimination of synods altogether – was considered, the participants intentionally decided to focus primarily internally among our own presbyteries. Discussions were held in both table groups and gatherings by state, as well as in plenary session.

The next consultation, in 2014, followed the 221st General Assembly, and therefore focused specifically on options for synod realignment and consolidation, as directed by that Assembly. A report from the Consultations was delivered to the 2015 Annual Meeting of SLW at which Commissioners spent time discussing the matter in table groups and plenary session. Communications from the Synod of the Sun, the Synod of Mid-Atlantic, and the Synod of the South Atlantic were also delivered to the Synod, regarding realignment possibilities as well as shared mission concerns, and several presbyteries reported on their discussions with neighboring presbyteries regarding their synod membership and boundaries.

SLW’s conclusion, as described in the “Overview” above, was that its strong preference is to retain its current boundaries, which are believed to contain enough diversity as well as a regional commonality to function well as a regional expression of the PC(USA). The Permanent Administrative Commission received no input from any of its presbyteries in objection to the Synod’s conclusion, although at least one of its presbyteries has ongoing conversations about a possible realignment at some point in the future with one of its bordering presbyteries.

Synod of Mid-America Report

Tri-Synod Boundary conversation

The synods that gather as part of the Heartland Region Network (Mid America, Lincoln Trails, and Lakes and Prairies) decided to have a conversation to be proactive about exploring the possibilities of new boundary lines. Prior to the in-person meeting, documentation from each Synod and other information were provided to each participant as a way to prepare for the conversation.

In early April five SoMA representatives convened in Minneapolis with representatives from Lincoln Trails and Lakes and Prairies for a “Green Light/Red Light” discussion. A room full of 30 faithful Presbyterians spent three days and nights worshipping, talking, praying, playing, and discerning whether or not there was benefit to formally merging the three operations into one synod. The representatives from SoMA were Mary Newberg Gale, Matthew Roberts, Jesse Swanigan, Denise Pass, and Jennifer Keim.

Many topics of conversation were addressed including:

- the scope and scale of each of our programs,
- our financial pictures,
- our demographic makeups,
- potential (rough) ideas of what the governing structure of a new synod might look like,
- how to better include Ruling Elders in the life of a synod, especially in a larger synod with more geography,
- how we might overcome the geographic expanse of a new synod,
- what kind of staffing a new synod might require

On Tuesday evening, the three synods met individually to process the day’s conversation. In our private meeting the consensus among our team was quickly framed this way: “Could we merge our operations? Sure, we could. Would doing so bring enough *measureable benefit to our ability to serve our presbyteries*? No, we do not think so.” The SoMA Boundary Team decided: **Red Light**.

Wednesday morning we shared with our partners that, while we did not wish to merge, we did see benefit to forming a strong, intentional partnership with them to accomplish some shared missional goals across boundary lines. After another day and a half of discussion, we agreed to pursue a covenant of partnership focusing on two items:

- 1) The support of presbyteries as they support small, rural congregations, and
- 2) Commitment to an initiative addressing racism and white privilege in our region.

A writing team drafted a covenant of partnership that each of the three synods reviewed and adopted at their fall Assembly meetings.

The Moderator of SoMA, Mary Newberg Gale, along with the Synod Executive and the General Assembly Report Writer, Jennifer Keim, traveled to Dallas for a conversation with other representatives from other synods. The meeting focused on learning the strengths and struggles

of each synod as well as debriefing on the various conversations that each synod regarding potential merger partners.

As of today, the expense of these conversations has totaled \$14,505.76 * (waiting on invoice for lodging, food, and an airline ticket) and the final expense is estimated to be between \$16k-\$18k. The Synod of Mid America has had some thoughtful conversations about the boundary realignments and after careful discernment decided that it is in the best interest of our partner presbyteries to maintain our current structure.

Covenant

Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails, and Mid-America

Approved

September 29th, 2015 – Lakes and Prairies

October 10th – Mid-America

October 24th – Lincoln Trails

We, the Synods of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails, and Mid-America have been in conversation and discernment since January of 2012. We have joined together in fellowship on a number of occasions and have set up instances of limited programming.

We recognize the unique joy and struggle of life in the Midwest, and commit to journey together to continually discover how our regional identity plays itself out in particular ways across our ten states.

Following the 221st General Assembly's mandate for Synods to 'explore an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call', the Synods of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails, and Mid-America have engaged in the process of discernment of our continuing connection for the future. Through worship, prayer, and discussion, we could not see any benefit to our member Presbyteries in becoming a single merged synod, yet we feel a distinct call to foster and deepen our relationship through work in the areas of small and rural church ministry and racism and white privilege.

We hear our call to action reflected in our governing documents:

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. (F-1.0403)

As councils of the church we are called to particular response by giving "full expression to the rich diversity of the church's membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices. (G1-3.0103)"

Believing Christ's assurance to the gathered disciples,

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matt 18:20)

we recognize that the majority of the congregations in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and in our synods are small and rural congregations. Small and rural congregations provide the leadership for our governing bodies and are the front lines of community engagement in our cities and towns. Yet often the complexity and beauty of small and rural church ministry is lost in the ever increasing crush of ‘bigger’ and ‘better’ in our society and our church.

To that end, the Synods of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails, and Mid-America respond to an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call by covenanting to:

- Together, and individually, celebrate the unique joys and struggles found in small and rural church ministry in our contexts.
- Together, and individually, commit to the development, encouragement, education, and training of small and rural church leadership.
- Together, and individually, provide spaces for dialogue and education around the approaches, techniques, and resources available for small and rural church ministry in our churches and contexts.
- Together, and individually, bring the resources of the larger expression of the church to bear on the smaller expressions of the church.

It is our hope that these approaches will enable us to celebrate small and rural church ministry, deepen and sustain inclusion in our synods, and journey with our sisters and brothers as they live into the future of the church in our communities.

Trusting in God’s promises as reflected in the letter to the Galatians,

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:27–28)

we find ourselves convicted and brokenhearted by the divisions we see in our world and reflected in the church. We recognize that we are complicit in the pain and oppression of others. When Ferguson, Baltimore, Chicago, or Cleveland make the news, we are reminded that our lives are filled with smaller scale injustices and micro-aggressions. This is not happening TO others BY others. In ways large and small, consciously and unconsciously we perpetuate the systemic reality of oppression and disenfranchisement in our communities and in our nation.

To that end, the Synods of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails, and Mid-America respond to an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call by covenanting to:

- Together, and individually, confess to the benefit they have received and continue to receive through the marginalization and exploitation of people of color.
- Together, and individually, engage in providing anti-racism training to their stakeholders.

Synod of Mid-America Report

- Together, and individually, provide spaces for conversation and dialogue around the issues of white privilege and systemic racism in our church.
- Together, and individually, to stand with our sisters and brothers as they speak out against racist systems and to take action to witness to God's commandment to 'love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34)

It is our hope that this fourfold approach (recognition, education, discussion, action) will enable us to engage privilege where it lurks, to interrupt systemic biases in structures that are being perpetrated, to join our brothers and sisters in their protest of unjust systems, and to witness to the unity and diversity of the body of Christ.

Through our work on the issues of racism and small and rural church ministry, we hope to bring the particular strengths of each synod to bear on the needs of all three synods and to continue to strengthen our work together. It is our belief that this partnership is connectionalism in action.

Background and Timeline for the Covenant

Representatives of the Synods of Lakes and Prairies, Lincoln Trails, and Mid-America met in April 2015 in Minneapolis over three days to discuss, pray, and discern our emerging sense of partnership, purpose, context, and call. At the close of that gathering, a team was established to develop an emerging covenant between the three synods around the work of small and rural church ministry and addressing racism and white privilege in our structures.

The team began work in May and continued throughout the summer to develop the proposed covenant. The covenant will be presented to each of the Synods at their fall meeting for ratification.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies gathers on September 28th- 29th 2015. Synod of Mid-America gathers on October 11th 2015. Synod of Lincoln Trails gathers on October 23rd – 24th 2015.

The three synods will address the action items of the covenant in varying configurations, as determined by the synod assemblies. It is the recommendation of the covenant team that work in earnest starting in 2016.

In presenting the covenant to the Synods for ratification, the covenant team has completed their mandate.

Covenant approved by:

Lakes and Prairies on September 29th 2015

Mid-America on October 10th, 2015

Lakes and Prairies October 24th, 2015

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
Summary Report for the Future of Synods Conversation
December 11, 2015

OUR MOMENT:

The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic eagerly seized the opportunity to engage its presbyteries and “constituent groups” in framing our response to the 221st G.A. Overture which directed that: “a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context and call] through a collaborative process between synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods.”

In October of 2014 the Synod approved a motion inviting Synod’s Executive and Moderator in consultation with presbytery leadership to convene a “Discernment Committee” accountable to the full Synod Assembly whose work it would be to engage commissioners and presbyteries in exploring the common mission and purpose of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. This began our period of discernment.

OUR MANDATE:

The particular mandate under which the Discernment Committee functioned was... “to recommend to the full synod Assembly a clarification and or redirection of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic’s core mission and ministries in light of actions taken by the 2014 General Assembly.”

OUR MEMORIES:

The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is unique among the Synods of the P.C.U.S.A. as it is the largest in membership and it was the last synod to be organized. Prior to reunion, the synod encompasses within its present boundaries four former African American bodies, all Black presbyteries and one synod. They include Catawba, Cape Fear, Yadkin, and Southern Virginia; together, they were the Catawba Inter-Presbytery Agency or Catawba Synod. United Presbyterian efforts planted those member congregations in Southern States of the P.C.U.S. denomination. Because of reunion, the reassignment of these congregations to newly organized presbyteries critically reduced their visibility, leadership and, in some instances, jeopardized their viability. This feature of our history informs our culture as a synod ever learning to recognize our diversity as our strength.

OUR MEMBERSHIP:

Fourteen presbyteries encompassing North Carolina, the vast majority of Virginia, a small piece of West Virginia, all of Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia make up the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. The Atlantic Korean American Presbytery (AKAP) is a non-geographical presbytery within our bounds. The geographical features of our Synod define us only in part for

Report of Synod Committee
Exhibit C

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Report

we are an intensely multi-cultural body as well. As many as six culturally defined constituency groups have been active in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. These include: Women of Color, Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Men, Latino Caucus, Korean Caucus and the Black Caucus.

OUR METHOD:

The Discernment Team understood that our task would eventually require us to make recommendations regarding our geographical/administrative boundaries. However the energy and enthusiasm for the work focused early on discussions of mission and how boundaries affected the ability of presbyteries to collaborate on mutual projects. The design for engaging the presbyteries and groups was three fold.

- A first conversation was held with Commissioners at “table top” discussions with guided questions to help the Discernment Team capture the sentiments and concerns of those duly elected presbytery leaders.
- A second task was to conduct interviews with the nine identified constituency groups inclusive of those mentioned in the “Membership” paragraph and in addition; Stated Clerks, Presbytery Executives and the Board of Massanetta Springs Conference Center.
- The third piece was a survey composed and placed online for members of the Councils of each presbytery.

The results and anecdotal comments were studied, collated and drafted into a report for Synod’s Assembly in September of this year.

OUR MUSINGS:

- Above all else community and relationships are valued. The greatest resistance to merging with another synod is fear of losing the sense of community treasured primarily by our constituency groups.
- The relational vitality of the church is not enhanced by increasing the size of our councils.
- There is widespread appreciation for synod as a funding entity and anxiety among many presbyteries that if not “checked” the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic would return to a programmatic body requiring increased funding.
- The survey indicated that the top concerns and priorities of presbyteries were reversing the decline in stewardship, membership and discipleship.
- Minority, immigrant and racial-ethnic groups continue to struggle for visibility and viability.
- There was low interest among presbyteries to participate in new efforts to discuss boundaries.

OUR MOTIONS:

The Discernment Committee developed seven distinct recommendations, which were reported to and approved by the September Synod Assembly. Among these the following three recommendations address specifically the G.A. Overture and the “Mandate” from the Synod

Report of Synods Committee

Exhibit C

16

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Report

seeking greater clarity on our mission and our interest in further conversations on amending the boundaries of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

1. Recommendation, in response to the mandate from Synod and General Assembly Overture, there should be no change in the administrative boundary of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.
2. Recommendation, The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic should continue conversations with other synods on specific mission/program partnerships.
3. Recommendation, to host a gathering for education, information sharing, fellowship and community building in the model of the “Big Tent”.

Respectfully Submitted

David B. Sanders, Moderator
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

The Rev. Jim Moseley, Chair, Discernment Committee
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic



See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. ~ ISAIAH 43:19

The Synod of the Northeast has been engaged in a season of reflection and discernment well before the actions of the actions of the 221st General Assembly (05-04). Since this action, the 2014 Assembly of the Synod of the Northeast unanimously adopted the following response:

For more than four years our Synod's leadership and its assemblies have been following and attempting to respond to the work of both Middle Governing Commissions of the General Assembly (MCCI and MCCII). Over the past three years, we have engaged in a deep season of reflection upon our purpose and function, as well as considering our geographic and other parameters that define us as a synod. We have spent significant time and energy in listening among our presbyteries with full transparency.

Therefore, in response to the 221st General Assembly action on item 05-04, we recommend that the 2014 Assembly of the Synod of the Northeast establish the following three principles of how we will respond to this action of the General Assembly and instruct our officers to work on our behalf in this matter according to these principles.

Our strategic mission, ministry and governance plan outlined in the *New Way Forward* must remain the guiding principles for how we live together as a regional body of presbyteries. This plan has been overwhelmingly adopted and celebrated throughout our Synod community for two consecutive years. In the actions of our annual assembly it both directs how we choose to exercise our governance responsibilities and how we will direct our mission and ministry. It more importantly establishes essential values in how we live together in community and clearly articulates our purpose as a missional body.

The values established in the *New Way Forward* call us to act in ways that are fully hospitable and gracious. This includes our relationship with neighboring

presbyteries and synods. **We therefore make a full and deep commitment to encourage our member presbyteries who share borders with other presbyteries, both within our current Synod boundaries and those within neighboring Synods to engage in mutual conversation to explore ways in which they might re-align in order to more effectively engage in mission.** We will support this work providing both staff and financial resources as needed by the presbyteries. We commit to graciously support those presbyteries that wish to become members of our neighboring synods. We will fully welcome those neighboring presbyteries from other synods into our synod community offering them full access to the support and resources of our Synod as established in the *New Way Forward*.

We will fully commit to establishing more porous boundaries with our neighboring synods in order mutually to share good work and mission opportunities wherever possible. Living out our values of gracious hospitality we are eager to encourage partnership with all our neighbors both within the PCUSA as well as our ecumenical and interfaith partners. We will (and have already begun to) intentionally reach out to our neighboring synods and their presbyteries.

By acting in accordance with these three simple guidelines, we believe we will remain faithful to our commitment to living into our *New Way Forward* and fulfill our commitment to the mandate of the General Assembly.

In an effort to faithfully carry out the above actions of the Synod's Mission and Ministry Commission and its Leadership have held exploratory meetings with potential partners in the Synods of the Trinity, Mid-Atlantics and Boriquén. In all three cases we have established a strong cooperative spirit and the outlining of potential partnerships. These initiatives have been hopeful and gracious in what has otherwise seemed to be an unproductive top down mandate.

It is essential to understand both the size and geography of the Synod of the Northeast. Encompassing the region of New England, New York and New Jersey the Synod sits in a corner of the United States. Our only open borders are with The Synods of the Trinity and Mid-Atlantics that are both of equal size or larger. The Synod of the Northeast consists of 22 presbyteries, 1130 congregations and 180,000 members. To add even a portion of a neighboring Synod would create a new synod of disproportionate size. Further, in analysis of the cultures of the Synod of the Trinity and Mid-Atlantics reveals we have three very distinct cultures that would not easily be blended. Finally, the Synod of the Northeast would determine that any action on its part or on the part of the

General Assembly to change these boundaries to be harmful to current positive changes in all three Synods.

New relationships and future partnerships for our Synods will need to emerge organically and are already beginning. Our relationship with the Synod of Boriquén is growing and holds great promise. The Synod of Boriquén originated out of the former Synod of New York and continues to share strong relationships between the members of both Synods. Our Leadership Team recently participated in a week of reflection upon the mission and theology with the leaders of the Synod of Boriquén and its presbyteries. We had the opportunity to share our New Way Forward with members of the Synod of Boriquén, including three days of theological and cultural reflection with members of the faculty at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. New partnerships and resourcing have begun including the sharing of staff resources. We believe this sort of partnership is far more productive than simply re-configuring boundaries.

Following this new model of cultivating organic partnerships, the Synod of the Northeast recently convened its first Moderator's conference at which presbytery moderators and other leaders gathered to share best missional practices and challenges. Many new partnership opportunities were initiated at this convention. It is clear that future conventions will move our presbyteries into more productive partnerships and perhaps mergers and realignment all derived from the ground up rather than through forced consolidation.



Synod of the Pacific

200 Kentucky Street, Suite B, Petaluma, CA 94952-3825
Main: (800) 754-0669, (707) 765-1772, Fax: (707) 765-4467

Report of the Synod of the Pacific To the 222nd General Assembly In Response to Item 221.05-04.1 on Synod Boundaries

The directive of the 221st General Assembly (2014) in item 221.05-04.1 is as follows:

“Direct that a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10–12 synods. The synods shall report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).”

The Synod of the Pacific (the synod) has vigorously conducted a thorough, in-depth and open-minded series of consultations with its eleven presbyteries and the four other synods with which it shares geographic borders focused on the issue of realignment of synod borders.

At its October, 2014 assembly, the synod repurposed a task force previously elected to evaluate the future of the Synod of the Pacific. The task force’s new charge was specifically to respond to the action of the 221st General Assembly to undertake consultations with its presbyteries and other synods on the realignment of synod borders and to report to both the synod assembly and the 222nd General Assembly.

The full task force met face-to-face five times - including a meeting with the executives of the synod’s presbyteries - and twice by teleconference. Sub-groups of the task force (i.e. the listening group and staff) met separately four times with the executives and stated clerks of the presbyteries and with representatives from the other synods in the Western United States. The Synod of the Pacific hosted meetings with the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, the Synod of the Rocky Mountains and the Synod of the Southwest, with the Synod of the Pacific bearing the cost of meal and lodging for the visitors. The financial cost to the Synod for the work of the Task Force as of August 13, 2015 was \$47,744 and rising. Also, The Synod’s Transitional staff members (Executive and Stated Clerk) leveraged their own travel budgets by using travel for other purposes as opportunities to have informal conversations with staff from other Synods.

Summary of the work of the task force of the Synod of the Pacific:

- The Synod of the Pacific anticipated the report of the second GA Mid-Council Commission, and organized a visioning task force before that report was issued to the 221st General Assembly.
- The synod task force and/or its staff met at least three times with representatives from its presbyteries, to discern the needs of the presbyteries and their constituent churches, and to elicit the opinions and conclusions of presbytery leaders on the issues involved in realigning the borders of the synod in which they reside.
- The task force and/or its staff met with representatives from the other contiguous synods

Report of Synod Committee
Exhibit C

21

Synod of the Pacific Report

to determine areas of common mission and to assess the potential costs and benefits that realignment or merger of the synods would likely bring about.

- The task force expended enormous amounts of financial and human resources to organize, conduct and attend these consultation, and carefully considered numerous scenarios of synod merger and border realignment.

What we have learned:

- We have learned that there are areas of ministry and mission which the Synod of the Pacific can and should participate in cooperation with other synods in the Western United States. However, we have also learned that the Synod of the Pacific is unique – at least in the West – in being a synod which generates funding for our presbyteries. Every year the Synod of the Pacific's savings and loan program generates an average of over \$800,000 which divided into equal amounts and paid to each of its eleven presbyteries.
- We have learned that consultation with other synods strengthens the bonds between staff and commissioners of the Synod of the Pacific with the staff and commissioners of the other contiguous synods.
- We take note that the Synod of the Pacific has already developed services to its presbyteries (such as its personnel service, its insurance program and bookkeeping service) which can be promoted for development in other synods.
- We have learned that although three of the four synods contiguous to the Synod of the Pacific all do successful mission of various kinds from which we can learn, the Synod of the Pacific is by far the most successful synod in the West in fulfilling the Constitutional responsibility of synods to support the ministry and mission of our presbyteries.
- We have learned that expanding our borders to include one or more additional synods threatens to dangerously dilute the financial support the synod could provide from its savings and loan program to each of its existing presbyteries.
- We have learned that there would be extravagant legal costs involved in securing the assets of the synod in the case of a merger, e.g., preserving the income from savings and loan program for the benefit of our current eleven presbyteries; for ensuring continued PC(USA) ownership of the Zephyr Point Conference Center; and for transferring bequests and designated funds held by the synod.
- We have learned that our savings and loan program, by being confined to the current area of the Synod of the Pacific, operates with a pastoral and personal touch which provides churches taking out loans with flexibility that cannot be easily scaled upward.
- Finally, our presbyteries unanimously tell us that the financial resources the Synod of the Pacific generates from its savings and loan program and returns to its presbyteries must not be diluted. The mission of each and every presbytery in the Synod of the Pacific is underwritten in significant part by this income, and the very survival of several of our presbyteries and their support of the constituent churches within them depends on the continued high level of this financial support.

What we have concluded:

- The risk to the presbyteries of the Synod of the Pacific of reduction or loss of the

Synod of the Pacific Report

financial support provided by their full participation in the important but limited resources of our savings and loan program is great if the Synod of the Pacific merges with one or more other synods. Spinning the program into a separate corporation is possible, but entails risk in loss of flexibility in its ability to serve particular situations. Any merger also raises the possibility of loss of presbytery management and benefit of the saving and loan program.

- While we remain committed to the GA mandate insofar as continuing to develop efficient collaboration with neighboring synods, we have already spent a considerable amount of the Synod's limited resources and our mission has suffered as a result. We cannot afford to divert mission resources to the expensive project of synod realignment.
- *And, we believe that in order to preserve the mission of the Synod of the Pacific to our presbyteries and best further the mission of the church, the Synod of the Pacific must stay within its present bounds.*

Synod of the Rocky Mountains Synod Merger Conversations

The Synod of the Rocky Mountains has been considering the future of our Synod for quite some time. After consultations with our 8 Presbyteries, we have been considering what our Synod can do to follow our mission to resource and support the work of the presbyteries. SRM is not an administrative entity: each presbytery and church in our bounds moves from the “bottom” up to access resources. Because of our size, travel and our meetings take an inordinate amount of time. To address this issue, we have been seeking new ways of communicating and providing resources. Many of our presbyteries no longer have full time executive staff. We have to rely on ourselves. Because of this we are not always connected to the Synod and many prefer to work from the church level up to the presbytery. Because of this ethic, the Synod has been moving toward a reduced function model for the past several years. We have divested ourselves of most programs and have been spending down assets to provide continuing economic support to the presbyteries. We have reduced the number of board members and staff. Other than providing monetary resources for our Presbyteries, our main mission event is the Western National Leadership Conference.

Process

We have explored the possibility of joining with other synods/presbyteries before so this was not a new idea. Because of the distance we might have to travel this has not been deemed feasible. Our Synod Executive, David Ezekiel, has kept us informed about conversations that have been happening at the national level. After the action taken by the 221st General Assembly, we decided to meet with as many of the western synods as possible to consider what form this might take. After contacting all the other synods, we met with the Synod of the Pacific and with the Synod of the Southwest to talk about mission and ministry together in response to the mandate. We noted that we already do mission across Synod boundaries; but that merger would do little to enlarge that opportunity.

We met with the Synod of the Pacific twice: once in Denver and once in San Francisco. On April 28/29, 2015 SOP members Clover Bailey (TE), John Kelso (TE) Jane Odell (RE), Andy Rausch (TE), Jim Rogers (RE) met with SRM members Joanne Dobie (TE and Synod Moderator), David Ezekiel (TE and part time Executive), Ron Hanson (RE), Michael Rogers (RE) Lynn Smit (RE and Clerk)), Laura Stellmon (TE) and Adrian Washington (TE). After a time of sharing about we considered what each would bring to a merger. The conversation was positive but we concluded that we would not be having this particular discussion if it were not mandated by GA.

We continued our conversations in San Francisco on July 19/20, 2015.

Again, we celebrated our compatibility but did not sense an urgency to continue the conversations mainly because of our different governing styles and programs. The distance to be covered by such a merger was a definite negative to our ability to do so.

On June 19 and 20, 2015 we met with the Synod of the Southwest. In attendance were Maribeth Culpeper (moderator, Larry Loy (Stated Clerk), Brad Munroe (Presbytery Pastor Grand Canyon and de

Synod of the Pacific Report

Cristo), Conrad Rocha (Synod Exec. /Stated Clerk) and Sallie Watson (Executive Presbyter/ Stated Clerk (Santa Fe Presbytery. SRM was represented by Ron Anderson (Executive Presbyter, Pueblo Presbytery), Sharon Celey (RE, Plains and Peaks Pby.), Joanne Dobie (TE/Synod Moderator), David Ezekiel (Transitional Synod Executive, Ron Hanson (RE Stated Clerk, Yellowstone Pby.), Lynn Smit (RE/Stated Clerk, Plains and Peaks Pby. and Synod), and Adrian Washington (TE, Pueblo Presbytery.

Again, sharing our programs and mission emphases was a positive aspect of our conversations however, it was clear that a merger was not to be forthcoming with SSW and SRM. Additionally, all of the presbyteries in the SSW are supporting an effort to rescind the GA mandate regarding synod merger.

A meeting with all 5 western synods was tentatively scheduled, but did not take place.

Expense

The costs of our meetings were hosting SOP and SSW meetings, room and board and meeting rooms. Each Synod shared in the costs associated with the meetings that consisted of air fare and mileage and other related expenses. The expense of these meetings was \$10,872 and an approximate cost of \$2000 for Synod Moderators conference and additionally, did not include the amount of “person-hours”, telephone calls and time worked factors associated with these meetings. There were also related costs for the Synod Executive’s meetings with other Synod Executives

Conclusion

Although our meetings were informative and were positive about what mission and ministry we could do together, the conclusion was reached independently and together that merger was neither feasible nor expedient at this time and would have diminished our ability to function with our independent programs. Other factors that we have to consider are the distances we already travel to meet together and the lack of a positive groundswell movement to make this happen. We know that we would need approval of all of our presbyteries and the movement to merge would need to come from them and not from an imposed structure.



Synod of South Atlantic

118 East Monroe Street

Jacksonville, Florida 32202-3214

904.356.6070

December 8, 2015

Rev. Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202

SUBJECT: A New Configuration of Synod Boundaries

Dear Rev. Gradye Parsons,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The 221st General Assembly (2014) directed an action to the Synods that a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods], (Item 05-04), and report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Thus, the purpose of this letter is to report the result of the Synod of South Atlantic's collaborative process with its Presbyteries and neighboring Synods for the subject matter to the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

Initiation:

- The Synod of South Atlantic invited a member from Mid-Council Commission II, Rev. Liza Hendricks, to our 28th Synod Stated Meeting (September 18-19, 2014) to give us a presentation of the Mid-Council Commission II's perspective on the subject matter. A question-and-answer session followed the presentation.
- All participants of the 28th Synod Stated Meeting were given a copy of the 221st General Assembly's directive, Synod year-end (2013) statistics, and a proposed timeline for the process.
- At the 28th Synod Stated Meeting, a Synod Boundary Consultation Team (SBCT) was created to lead the process, adopted a question to ask the Presbyteries, along with instructions, and approved the processing timeline.

Report of Synod Committee
Exhibit C

26

222nd General Assembly (2016)

- A letter was sent out to all 16 Presbyteries on October 2, 2014.

Collaboration with Presbyteries:

- A member of the Synod Boundary Consultation Team (SBCT) was assigned to each state cluster (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina) to assist the Presbyteries' process.
- Responses from the Presbyteries were collected by the Synod Boundary Consultation Team (SBCT) in mid-March 2015.
- The Synod Boundary Consultation Team (SBCT) reviewed the Presbyteries' responses and reported the result to the Synod Executive Administrative Commission for further coordination and actions.
- The Synod Executive Administrative Commission directed the Synod Boundary Consultation Team (SBCT) to assist Florida Presbytery and Cherokee Presbytery, if they ever go to a possible reconfiguration of their Presbyteries.

Conversations with Neighboring Synods:

The leadership (Synod moderators, Task Force team leaders, or designated members) of the Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Living Waters, and Synod of Mid-Atlantic met during the 15 Synods' Leadership Meeting (Dallas, TX, Nov 30-Dec 1, 2015) to discuss the possibility of reducing the number of Synods in our region. The conclusion was that no Synod among the three neighboring Synods desires to merge with one another, or to draw a new configuration of Synod boundaries to reduce the number of Synods in our region. This discussion was based upon each Synod's collaborative process with their Presbyteries.

Report to the 222nd General Assembly:

At the Synod's 29th Stated Meeting (September 18-19, 2015), the following statements were approved to be sent to the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

- Presbyteries in the Synod of South Atlantic responded that with all things in consideration, there is no need to change the Synod boundary, especially to reduce the number of Synods in our region. However, there is some thinking about a possible reconfiguration of Presbytery boundaries with neighboring Synod's Presbyteries, which will result in a portion of the Synod boundaries changing, without necessarily reducing the number of Synods.
- Presbyteries in the Synod of South Atlantic responded that we are functioning well in terms of mission, partnership, historical and cultural context, and emerging sense of purpose and call. Any change from the current Synod boundary would not improve the purpose of our existence in the region.
- The Synod of South Atlantic is already large enough to be one of the proposed 10-12 Synods (2014 year-end statistics shows that the Synod has a membership of 206,108, and has 895 congregations). Therefore, merging with other Synods that will make the

Synod of South Atlantic Report

Synod even bigger, or reducing the current size of the Synod without reducing the number of Synods, would not make sense in terms of meeting the goals of the 221st General Assembly's directive action (Item 05-04).

Submitted by:

Ms. Nancy Reimer
Synod Moderator

Rev. Donnie R. Woods
Chair, Synod Boundary Consultation Team

Synod of Southern California and Hawaii

Future of Synods Conversation

Background

In June of 2014 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved this action:

Direct that a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods. The synods shall report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Before this action was taken, in January of 2014, the Synod Executive called together leaders from the eight (later seven) presbyteries in the Synod to consider possibilities for the future of the presbyteries and the synod, given diminishing members, staff, and finances in the midst of losing many congregations to other Reformed bodies. (The Synod by the end of 2015 will have lost about 25% of its churches and members; Los Ranchos Presbytery's losses are closer to half of its members.) This group met twice but took no official action. There was a consensus that something must be done at the presbytery level in light of the changing conditions. Since then, some presbyteries have informally agreed to work together on various ministries, are sharing staff members, and are working across boundaries on a variety of mission endeavors. There is minimal talk of merging, but there is much excitement about working together.

Following the General Assembly action in June of 2014, the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii was focused on the gargantuan task of dissolving Hanmi Presbytery and moving its twenty member churches and 65 pastor members into the geographic presbytery where they were located. This work has consumed much of our time and attention and the person-power of more than 40 people serving on the teams that assisted in this undertaking.

Process

Eventually, the Synod put together a team representing our seven presbyteries to look into the possibilities of merger with another synod. In January 2015, the team flew to San Jose for an overnight meeting with a group from the Synod of the Pacific, at its invitation. This conversation was amicable and educational, as we learned how each synod operates, what we have in common and how we differ. There appear to be a number of areas in which we could do ministry together. We agreed to be open to future conversations together.

In June of 2015, the same group of people from Southern California and Hawaii met in Orange County with a group from the Synod of the Southwest, at our invitation. Again, the team found much in common, some not so much, and an agreement to continue the conversation if warranted. In neither of the above meetings was there particular enthusiasm (nor animosity) about merging. Both of these meetings and their results were shared with the Synod Assembly.

People

The team representing the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii in this task consisted of: Maurice Caskey (RE, San Diego, Synod Vice-Moderator), Leon Fanniel (TE, Pacific, long history with Synod), Bill Hughes (RE, Santa Barbara, Synod Treasurer), Kristin Leucht (TE, San Fernando, Synod Moderator), Doska Ross (RE, Synod Stated Clerk), Jim Shepard (RE, Riverside, Trustee), Jo Smith (RE, Los Ranchos, Synod Trustees Moderator), Wendy Tajima (TE, San Gabriel, Executive Presbyter and Synod Trustee).

Expense

As of October 31, 2015, the Synod has spent nearly \$5000 on the first two consultations. The final gathering of all the synods on November 30-December 1 will probably add another \$2000 or so to these figures, totaling approximately \$7000 spent on the consultations. Additional costs may be forthcoming if people attend General Assembly in Portland to testify before the committee.

Conclusions

This process has been interesting and educational. We, your Synod representatives, were open to whatever we might discover or uncover. Our conclusions are: (i) there is no practical way to merge entire synods given the geographic distances involved; and (ii) there is neither energy nor desire to move forward with a merger of any kind at this point. We have learned, thanks to the process described in the first paragraph, that changes envisioned by the directive from the General Assembly are best accomplished if they arise organically from the various groups and are not imposed upon them from above. At some point in the future this synod might realign itself with another synod, or more than one, because it actually makes sense to do so, not because we are being forced to do so. It is our belief at this time that the synod boundaries in the Western reaches of the United States should remain as they are.

RESPONSE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING REALIGNMENT OF
SYNOD BOUNDARIES

Executive Summary

November 24, 2015

The Synod of the Southwest (the “Synod”) has taken very seriously the mandate of the 221st General Assembly (2014) which directed that “a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods...[and that the synods] report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)” the results of that collaborative process. The Synod of the Southwest has engaged in that collaborative process and, as a result, recommends that its boundaries not be reconfigured.

This process has been done prayerfully and with great thought and consideration. In fact the Synod began this process in 2011, as the Synod considered its work, ministry and relevance in serving our Presbyteries and their congregations. This was accomplished through the creation of the Review/Visioning for the Future Task Force (the “RVFTF”) that was established in June, 2011. Its final report was unanimously adopted by the Synod’s commissioners at the Synod Assembly in October 2013. Thus, by the time the 221st General Assembly had issued its decision in response to Mid Council Commission II’s report (General Assembly Item 05-04), the Synod was well on its way to being prepared to engage in discussions with its neighboring synods regarding the realignment of synod boundaries.

Following the 221st General Assembly, the Synod of the Southwest transmitted to each of its presbyteries a suggested process for gathering information from its commissioners and others in those presbyteries regarding the realignment of the synods. The Presbyteries responded to this request in the following manner:

Presbytery de Cristo — Decided that the Synod remain a single, stand alone, synod consisting of its current, four presbyteries.

Presbytery of Grand Canyon — Decided that the Synod remain intact, as a viable, single entity synod.

Presbytery of Santa Fe — Responded to the question by submitting an overture to the 222nd General Assembly, asking for rescission of the 221st General Assembly’s action.

Presbytery of Sierra Blanca — D not consider the question of the re-alignment of synods, believing it was not of sufficient import for it to undertake the discussion.

Synod of Southwest Report

Responding to MCCII's request that the Synods engage in conversations in consultation with their presbyteries, and the vision of MCCII's report as "[a] church with mid councils that engage in conversations about collaborating, partnering, and networking, as they define their purpose and the best way to live out a new identity," the Synod engaged in conversations with the following synods in the western part of the country with which the Synod has contiguous boundaries:

- Synod of Southern California & Hawaii
- Synod of the Pacific
- Synod of the Rocky Mountains

In addition, the Synod through its elected leaders engaged in conversation with the Synod of Alaska-Northwest, though we have no common borders, because we recognized that like the Synod we each have large Native American Presbyterian populations within our borders.

No conversation was held with the Synod of the Sun, with the understanding that to become a part of that synod, which is already large geographically and numerically, would not serve the component parts of the Synod and the Synod itself well as it seeks to serve God and God's people in this part of God's world.

The Synod at its March, 2015 meeting also engaged its commissioners and others present to discuss the ramifications, benefits and detriments to realigning its borders such that the Synod would cease to exist as currently configured. The overwhelming response was really a question: "Why are we doing this and how would that enhance the mission and ministry of the congregations and presbyteries of the Synod?" The answer to the question seemed to be that there was no good reason to do this based on the Synod's emergent and emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call.

A similar conclusion was reached in each of the conversations with the other Synods noted above. Nonetheless, the result of those conversations serves to remind us that we are all part of one body and that, regardless of borders established to create the synods as they currently exist, there is much that we can learn from one another and mission and ministry that we could do together. We learned to appreciate and understand the principle raised by MCCII that we, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must be "a church with mid councils engage[d] in conversations about collaborating, partnering, and networking, as they define their purpose and the best way to live out a new identity."

In those conversations with the leaders of the other synods we recognized that there was much we could, and do, do in collaboration with one another and with other synods with whom we do not share common borders and as partners, but given our cultural and structural differences, reconfiguring synod boundaries will not enhance, clarify or promote our mission and ministry. Therefore, the Synod, after careful consideration of the directive of the 221st General Assembly, recommends to the 222nd General Assembly that the boundaries of the Synod of the Southwest not be reconfigured.

October 25, 2015

Report to the Coordinating Team

At its meeting in October, 2014, the Synod of the Sun approved this:

PROPOSED SYNOD CONSULTATION PROCESS

1. Synod level discussion will begin at the synod stated meeting in October by having one hour presentation and discussion. - DONE
2. An MCC II member will be invited to give us a 30 minute presentation on the GA mandate directive (especially language used on the mandate) for clarification and to describe the rationales MCC II had. - DONE
3. Synod Coordinating Team leads next 30 minute discussion with the Synod to explain how we plan to proceed. The MCC II member will not be involved in this discussion but simply observes. - DONE
4. The Synod will elect a Synod Boundary Consultation Task Force to facilitate the process Synod of the Sun Boundary Consultation Task Force is to be comprised of five (5) people (representing each state, with one at-large) for easy mobility and logistics with balance for M/F, RE/TE, and at least 2 racial-ethnic members. Resourced by one EP/GP and one or both Co-leaders. - DONE
5. Soon after the Synod stated meeting, Valerie will send a letter to the EP of each presbytery to explain the process and will ask them to provide responses to the designated member of the Boundary Consultation Task Force - DONE
6. The letter will ask: (a) Guided by the mission, history, and culture of your presbytery and the synod, what changes (if any) to our synod boundaries would you recommend? Why or why not? (b) What other recommendations regarding presbytery and/or synod structures, boundaries, or relationships arise from the context and perspective of your own presbytery? Is there any other request for the synod to consider regarding presbytery and/or synod boundaries? Each presbytery may conduct its own discussion in any form it chooses. Resource persons will be available: (a) an MCC2 member avail by phone for clarification of GA mandate and requirement, (b) Synod Boundary Consultation Task Force member available for further clarification of the synod process, and (c) either or both Synod co-leaders are available in person (if requested) to be a resource person or to facilitate the presbytery discussion. Presbytery must report its responses/recommendations to the Synod through the designated Boundary Consultation Task Force member by the deadline. - DONE
7. Boundary Consultation Task Force will consolidate the result from the presbyteries and report to the Synod Coordinating Team in March 2015.
8. Boundary Consultation Task Force will coordinate with neighboring synods, if any of presbyteries request contain such desire AND are so instructed by the Synod Coordinating Team.
9. Boundary Consultation Task Force reports the all results to the Fall 2015 Synod stated meeting along with any consensus report from other synods (Oct 2015)
10. Synod Coordinating Team further coordinates or adjusts the result according to the 2015 Synod assembly instruction.
11. Synod Coordinating Team submits joint or solo synod report to 222nd General Assembly by deadline.

Report of Synod Committee
Exhibit C

33

Synod of the Sun Report

With this consultation process in place, the number of task force members was increased to six to allow for another person from west Texas. The task Force members, along with the presbyteries of assignment, are: RE Christianne Chase (Cimarron, Indian Nations), TE Dari Rowan (Arkansas, Eastern Oklahoma), RE Judia Foreman (Tres Rios, Palo Duro), TE Jim Freeman (Pines, South Louisiana), RE Ruth Roman-Meza (Grace), TE Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo (New Covenant, Mission). TE Joe Hill, general presbyter of the Presbytery of the Pines was named at EP/GP resource person.

Synod co-leader Dan Saperstein prepared some guidelines for conducting the presbytery consultation and co-leader Valerie Young distributed letters of introduction to all of the presbyteries.

We have come to the end of this process now. I've attached copies of all the written reports received from the presbyteries. In the chart below, I've compiled answers that I received from both written and verbal responses.

There is no consensus resulting from the consultations. I will attempt to summarize a bit here but will attach all the responses to your information.

Question 1

Guided by the mission, history, and culture of your presbytery and the synod, what changes (if any) to our synod boundaries would you recommend? Why or why not?

Arkansas:	perhaps add all/part of Synod of Mid America and/or Synod of the Southwest
Cimmaron:	no change
Eastern Oklahoma:	no change
Grace:	no change
Indian Nations:	no change
Mission:	no change
New Covenant:	perhaps add all/part of Synod of Mid America and/or Synod of the Southwest
Palo Duro:	perhaps add all/part of Synod of Mid America and/or Synod of the Southwest (Sierra Blanca) and shift Arkansas, Pines and South Louisiana to current Synod of Living Waters
Pines:	no change
Tres Rios:	add presbyteries in New Mexico and Arizona and possibly shift Arkansas, Pines and South Louisiana to current Synod of Living Waters
South Louisiana:	no change

(b) What other recommendations regarding presbytery and/or synod structures, boundaries, or relationships arise from the context and perspective of your own presbytery? Is there any other request for the synod to consider regarding presbytery and/or synod boundaries?

Arkansas:	no presbytery boundary change
Cimmaron:	no presbytery boundary change

Synod of the Sun Report

Eastern Oklahoma: no presbytery boundary change
Grace: no presbytery boundary change
Indian Nations: no presbytery boundary change
Mission: no presbytery boundary change
New Covenant: no presbytery boundary change
Palo Duro: no presbytery boundary change
Pines: no presbytery boundary change
Tres Rios: no presbytery boundary change
South Louisiana: no presbytery boundary change

However, one consistent theme is almost all reports was the desire and hope to be more culturally sensitive/identified and that that cultural sensitivity/identification might certainly extend across physical boundaries. For example, both New Covenant and Palo Duro mentioned extending synod boundaries to include a variety of Native American populated presbyteries, Pueblo Presbytery or presbyteries that share a common border with Mexico.

It is important to read all the reports and get a sense of their depth and variety.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Hill

**REPORT TO THE SYNOD OF THE TRINITY – FALL 2015
MID-COUNCIL TASK GROUP ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISION 05-04
(ON A NEW CONFIGURATION OF SYNOD BOUNDARIES)**

Preface:

The Synod of the Trinity (the “Synod”) has prayerfully and thoughtfully undergone a process to discern how to respond to the 221st General Assembly (2014) decision 05-04, which directed that: “a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods.”

We have been working for the last two years to create an environment of cooperation within the Synod and among our 16 member presbyteries. We have cooperatively defined what we believe the Synod should be and do, and as a result, we have defined aspirational goals (which we call our “Ends”) for working not just within the bounds of our Synod, but also as the Church at large.

As a result of this work, and in light of the General Assembly’s action, the Synod of the Trinity established a Task Group comprised of ten leaders from around the Synod. This Task Group was asked to:

- 1) Listen deeply to our Synod Commissioners and the leaders of our member presbyteries to understand how they use Synod resources; how they cooperate with one another in ministry and mission; how they are affected by existing presbytery and synod boundaries; and what benefits and drawbacks would be experienced by redrawing presbytery and/or synod boundaries. We also asked them to share whatever additional thoughts about this subject they felt were important to their experience.
- 2) Synthesize the responses to develop a recommendation to the Synod and to the Transitional Synod Executive as she works with other synod executives around the PCUSA to determine how best to respond to GA decision 05-04.

Process and timeline:

The Task Group was convened in December 2014, and met together in January 2015 to determine how to undertake the work. At that meeting, it was decided that the group would focus on the purpose, partnership, context and call aspects of the mandate, and focus on listening to see if there were opportunities that might lead to mergers within existing presbyteries, of presbyteries across existing synod boundaries, or among synods themselves.

The Task Group agreed that each member would work with two or three presbyteries, meeting with the respective presbytery executive and their executive councils in whatever configuration

made sense for the presbytery. During the ensuing months, the Task Group members met with the presbytery leaders [in 14 of the 16 presbyteries] to gather feedback.

There was additional discussion with Synod Commissioners at the March and June 2015 Synod Assembly meetings and with the Synod Executive Advisory Team in May 2015. Further meetings were held with commissioners and with the Synod's Executive Forum (comprised of the Synod's executive presbyters), and with Warren Cooper, a member of our Synod who was a member of both the 1st and 2nd Mid-Council Task Groups of the General Assembly.

Additionally, during this time period the Synod of the Trinity's leaders held conversations with our neighbor, the Synod of the Covenant, to discuss areas for mutual ministry, including intercultural ministry and human trafficking. The Synod Executive also met with the Executives of the Synod of the Northeast and the Synod of the MidAtlantic. We look forward to future conversation and partnership with them to understand what we have in common in mission and ministry to determine how best to work collaboratively in the interests of the Church.

Feedback:

While it is not the intention to reiterate all the feedback the Task Group and executive leadership team have received, several themes emerged:

1. All of the Synod's member presbyteries use Synod resources to some extent. The presbyteries appreciate the synod's grant-making abilities, although they are used to different extents in different places, and are perhaps are not as widely known as we would like. Presbyteries also appreciate the support and general helpfulness of the Synod staff.
2. The most frequently mentioned inter-presbytery ministries related to camp and conference ministry and mission partnerships. There was also a general sense that continuing education is a shared ministry that can benefit from increased Synod resources; and an appreciation for the Synod's ability to gather people together for shared COM/CPM training, the Executive Presbyter Forum, and for things such as PJC and stated clerk training. Several mentioned that they miss "Synod School," our former annual summer education event for presbyteries and congregations in the synod.
3. The presbyteries do not generally see geographic boundaries as limitations to their ministry. When it makes sense, churches within and across presbyteries join with other churches, and presbyteries join together for learning, mission and fellowship. Some members described difficulty in sharing certain types of resources across borders, though this seemed limited. An example is the use of supply preachers who have been approved in one presbytery and not another. The conversations gave presbyteries an opportunity to express hopes for the future as well as criticisms of the Synod. The distance between presbyteries and travel time to meetings was consistently noted as a challenge.
4. The Task Group did not discover great enthusiasm among presbyteries to redraw synod (or presbytery) lines, although presbyteries indicated that the Synod should continue to

help facilitate cooperation among the presbyteries, both inside and outside current Synod boundaries.

Many of our conversations were deeply valuable and introspective; that said, as in all organizations, tensions exist among various levels of church hierarchy, whether between congregations and their presbytery or between presbyteries and their synod, and not every meeting engendered the kind of response we had hoped. Some individuals and presbyteries value the contributions and role of the Synod more than others, while some are simply unaware of many of the ways that synods contribute to the ministries and mission of the PCUSA, in our Synod or elsewhere.

Conclusion:

Briefly put, our conversations with our member presbyteries and neighboring synods did not indicate the need for a plan for changing the boundaries of this Synod, and so we do not recommend developing such a plan. These conversations did, however, lead us more deeply into affirmation of our Synod Ends. In our consultations, we found that our work of “support[ing] and challeng[ing] member Presbyteries to be vital, innovative and faithful in their collaborative and distinctive callings” (the Synod’s defined “Primary End”) is succeeding in ways that – lacking compelling missional reasons to do so – could be undermined by efforts to reconfigure our Synod boundaries. We welcome the opportunity to expand partnerships and especially to make any current boundaries – whether between presbyteries or synods – more porous and easier to navigate for the purposes of more effective mission and ministry.

We lift up three highlights of this process:

1. The affirmation of the importance of relationships to the members of our presbyteries – both within and beyond their own boundaries. These relationships are multiform and continue to evolve, but we believe they are not yet firm enough to merit or withstand any boundary-shifting process.
2. The Synod of the Trinity – whether in its current configuration or in partnership with others – has valuable roles to play for its member presbyteries, particularly in facilitating new relationships of ministry and mission regardless of geographical or other boundaries. Financial and professional support is even more critical in light of diminishing resources within our presbyteries.
3. Our Task Group believes strongly that continuing to spend significant resources of time and money seeking mergers or reconfigurations of councils in the PCUSA for any reasons other than to specifically enhance our ministry and mission is not in the best interest of the Church. Additionally, any church-wide reorganization should include all levels of church councils, as suggested in the report from the Mid-Council I Commission. (Recommendation 7. *We call on the 220th General Assembly to establish a task force to review the nature and function of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly specifically with respect to their relationship with and support*

Synod of the Trinity Report

of mid councils as they serve the vitality and mission of congregations in our changing context.)

Item 06-01

[The assembly answered Item 06-01 by the action taken on Item 06-10. See p. 50.]

On Amending G-2.0509 by Deleting Recently Added Language Dealing with Renunciation of Jurisdiction—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0509 of the Form of Government be amended by deleting the last paragraph at the end of that section as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

~~“Whenever a former teaching elder has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former teaching elder shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”~~

Rationale

The paragraph that is proposed to be deleted was added by the action of the 221st General Assembly (2014) and subsequent vote of the presbyteries. This overture seeks to reverse that action. The paragraph proposed for deletion conflicts with our principles of ecclesiastical discipline in two important ways. First, it imposes what amounts to permanent and radical censure upon a person without benefit of a trial or finding of guilt or innocence. The fact that a person has removed himself or herself from the reach of ecclesiastical discipline by renunciation does not imply guilt. Second, even the most serious of the existing levels of censure, removal from membership (D-12.0105b), contemplates the possibility that the offender may at some point and after sufficient repentance be restored to membership (D-12.0200). By contrast, the language proposed for deletion permits no such restoration, making it significantly more draconian than any existing standard. In short, the present language permits the church to obtain by fiat what it cannot establish through appropriate disciplinary means. Even if an accused or alleged offender seeks refuge through renunciation from the church’s discipline, such behavior ought not encourage the church to circumvent its own commitment to due process and censure appropriate to the offense.

The paragraph to be deleted creates an unreasonable compliance burden for every congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). One effect of the paragraph is that no individual within the scope of the paragraph is eligible to perform any work, paid or volunteer, for any PC(USA) congregation or entity. Thus every PC(USA) congregation and entity has an obligation to know whether any applicant, whether for a paid or volunteer position, is within the scope of this paragraph. A congregation or entity may attempt to fulfill this obligation by, for example, requiring every applicant to affirm that he or she is not within the group targeted by the paragraph, by requiring background checks, or by performing a check of the PC(USA) on-line Minister Directory database. However, even all these checks taken together cannot guarantee that an applicant is not in the targeted category, so a congregation may fail in its duty despite its best efforts. Furthermore, every applicant for work, whether paid or volunteer, will be subjected to these screens in order to identify a tiny number of individuals who, despite being without guilt under our rules of discipline, have been singled out for extraordinary sanction.

Finally, the paragraph to be deleted violates the rights of a session to employ such administrative staff on behalf of the congregation as it deems necessary to the mission and work of the congregation (G-3.0201c). Regardless of the gravity of an offense alleged against a person who has renounced the jurisdiction of the church, the session’s right to determine the proper staff for its needs exceeds the larger church’s desire to complete through administrative means what it could not through judicial means.

Concurrence to Item 06-01 from the Presbyteries of Charlotte and Cimarron.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEMS 06-01, 06-07, AND 06-10

Advice on Items 06-01, 06-07, and 06-10—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

All of these items refer to the last paragraph of G-2.0509, which was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) and the requisite number of presbyteries:

Whenever a former teaching elder has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former teaching elder shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- Item 06-01 proposes deleting G-2.0509.
- Item 06-07 proposes amending G-2.0509.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

- Item 06-10 proposes amending G-2.0509, and adding a new section, “d”, to D-10.0401.
- Items 06-07 and 06-10 also include a section (“Section 2” below) that does not have constitutional implications.

Renunciation of jurisdiction is an extremely serious action, carrying with it a sense of fracture of relationship and injury to the body of Christ. If an individual desires to resume participation and service in a PC(USA) congregation, the session should inquire into any previous relationship with and involvement in the PC(USA).

The ACC advises that the General Assembly act upon these items as follows:

- Approve Item 06-01
- Disapprove Item 06-10
- Disapprove Item 06-07

If it is the will of the assembly to retain the last paragraph of G-2.0509, then the ACC advises to amend it using the language proposed by Item 06-07.

Rationale Regarding Item 06-01

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises approval of Item 06-01. The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry of the 221st General Assembly (2014) considered the overture that added this paragraph to the *Book of Order*, and voted to disapprove the overture that ultimately was approved by the General Assembly. The committee vote was 48-7-2; the assembly approved the overture by a vote of 309-207.

While a majority of the presbyteries approved the original amendment adding this language to the *Book of Order*, the ACC recommends that this language be removed. We find the original advice to the committee from the ACC still to be compelling. (See <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=4573>.)

The current language at G-2.0509 is in conflict with the church’s mandate to openness and grace—“Persons who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction” (G-1.0404). The current wording of G-2.0509 creates a permanent bar to active participation and service in the church, excluding the possibility of future grace, repentance by the accused, reconciliation, and restoration. This openness does not minimize the authority of a council having responsibility and authority for particular paid or volunteer service to assess the suitability of the individual.

If the council having jurisdiction over that paid or volunteer work learns of the prior renunciation, that council has the responsibility to inquire into the circumstances to assess the suitability of the particular service for the individual. Alleged misconduct is a serious issue and should be addressed by councils in their administrative manuals. Councils should explicitly ask, in writing, about any involvement as a defendant in disciplinary cases or renunciation of jurisdiction from the PC(USA). Section F-3.0209 provides that “Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church.” Any council that employs individuals in paid or volunteer service already has the authority and responsibility to screen such individuals in order to protect those served by the church. Most employing councils have adopted employment policies and should consider adding to their administrative manuals the requirement of appropriate background checks.

Rationale Regarding Item 06-10

Recommendation 1

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises disapproval of Item 06-10. The item seeks to provide a means for a former teaching elder who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding to be restored to participation in the church. This requires an individual to plead guilty to all allegations or charges at the time of renunciation. This conflicts with other provisions of the *Book of Order*, including the right of the accused to a fair trial (D-11.0101) in closed proceedings (D-11.0306), under the presumption of innocence (D-11.0401). This may lead to the resumption of judicial proceedings against the individual.

Item 06-10 also establishes a significant change in defining the time limits for disciplinary proceedings. Currently, the *Book of Order* states that “[n]o charges shall be filed later than five years from the time of the commission of the alleged offense, nor later than one year from the date the investigating committee was formed, whichever occurs first, except as noted below” (D-10.0401). That exception states that in “instances of sexual abuse of another person, the five-year time limit shall not apply” (D-10.0401b). This item would remove the time limit for beginning disciplinary proceedings for all alleged offenses.

Recommendation 2:

This section does not present any constitutional issues requiring the advice of the ACC.

*Rationale Regarding Item 06-07**Recommendation 1*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises disapproval of this item. Please see advice for Item 06-01.

If it is the will of the committee to amend G-2.0509 rather than delete it as proposed by Item 06-01, this item presents language that is clear and concise. The ACC advises that if this overture is approved, a former teaching elder who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a judicial proceeding as the accused may be subject to judicial process, under the time limits specified in D-10.0401.

Recommendation 2

This section does not present any constitutional issues requiring the advice of the ACC.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 06-01.

The ACWC does not support Item 06-01. Although we understand the reasoning of the ACC and the Presbytery of New Covenant and respect their theological position, we also believe that we would be particularly leaving vulnerable individuals open to potential harm if we approved this measure. As the church, we are also called to protect and nurture those in our care, we are to be God’s openness and grace to the most vulnerable as well, and approving this measure would put this call of the church in jeopardy. One example would be in the case of a former teaching elder who has renounced jurisdiction and who has been accused of child sexual abuse, and at the session and presbytery’s discretion, this person is deemed “rehabilitated” and goes on to serve in a volunteer capacity at another church or church event and ends up offending again. This measure opens this possibility and other similar situations to happen. The ACWC believes we would be extending this measure of grace to those who have renounced jurisdiction at the expense of the most vulnerable if we approve this measure.

Item 06-02

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-02. See p. 50.]

On Amending G-2.0607c. to Add Training in Evangelism—From the Presbytery of Tampa Bay.

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay respectfully overtures the 222st General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-2.0607c (Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service) be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“c. a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, *practical training in evangelism (agile speaking and teaching concise truth about Jesus Christ as confessed in the Nicene Creed)*, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and”

Rationale

Evangelism is a central element of our calling to follow our Lord. Jesus himself gives the whole life-style command particularly in Matthew 28:18–20 in telling his disciples “as you are going, be making disciples” (also: Luke 24:47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). Similarly, Scripture directs us to be able with skill, purpose, and hope, to engage culture and its competing claims for Lordship (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3; Phil. 1:7; 2 Cor. 10:5). This discipline is therefore essential for the spiritual formation of all who grow in Christ and an indispensable discipline for teaching elders responsible for equipping the saints.

The testimony of the saints indicates the importance of evangelism. The structure of the Apostles’ Creed may be based on Jesus’ command to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Heidelberg Catechism (Q71, 4.071) and The Second Helvetic Confession (Inward Illumination Does Not Eliminate External Preaching, 5.006) record the importance of evangelism as well as The Westminster Confession (6.055–.058) and The Confession of 1967 (9.37). More recently, the new *Book of Order* underscores the centrality of outreach to all cultures and their people (in that sense evangelism) in worship and witness (W-3.5500; W-7.2000; W-7.6000).

The PC(USA)'s bold new vision, 1001 new worshipping communities, requires strategic empowerment from all PC(USA)-related organizations. This vision can become reality if we are intentional about evangelism throughout all denominational organizations. Equipping new leaders in the art and science of evangelism will help existing churches to flourish eventually giving birth to 1001 new worshipping communities.

In these stressful times, the church hears the Lord's call to be His chosen witness regardless of circumstance (Is 43.10). The General Assembly turns to PC(USA)-related seminaries for practical assistance and strategic leadership. We seek new leaders with increased agility to adapt, improvise, and thrive in our shifting cultural context: (1) diminishing confidence in religious institutions; (2) declining Judeo-Christian orientation; (3) expanding religious diversity.

The church requires trained seminary graduates to meet multidimensional challenges in positive ways, especially in equipping believers with disciple-making skills of evangelism. Emerging teaching elders will experience resistance to teaching evangelism. They must respond with compassion and resolve born of sound preparation to lead believers to more demanding dimensions of discipleship in order to witness to those who are lost, hurting, or seeking. Merely showing love does not bring people to Christ when "love" is perceived by what many people "feel" rather than a commitment to act—or refuse to act—in ways that are often challenging, self-effacing, and deeply sacrificial. The agape love of which Jesus speaks flows from the cross and is not largely articulated so the church loses "evangelism moments" continuously.

The necessity of emerging leaders to know, teach, and model personal evangelism is paramount regardless of the new economic realities, new methods of theological education, or challenging demographic trends. This fundamental discipline required to equip the saints must at a minimum take its place alongside mandated or popular theologically blended course work such as Greek or Hebrew exegesis, higher criticism, pastoral counseling, social justice, and liberation theologies. If the seminaries who honor Jesus do not equip our new leaders to know, teach, and demonstrate evangelism, who will do this? Where will it get done? By what means then would a new teaching elder equip oneself for leading and teaching evangelism at the local congregational level? Will we franchise this responsibility to para-church ministries? Or will we take responsibility?

Indoctrinating all new teaching elders in evangelism fulfills biblical mandates and has the potential to set the church on a different course. The entire church will become more effective in her witness if all seminary graduates are taught that evangelism is an essential part of their profession, that seminary is more than concepts of theology influenced by academic trends but an actual training process to articulate our faith persistently, politely, and effectively through academics, practical training, and by living the Message.

A life in Christ has core disciplines and skills. Let us ensure every new teaching elder has demonstrated competency in the core discipline of evangelism. Let us keep the main thing, the main thing. Let us be relentless in advancing our core belief, "Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in Heaven."

Concurrence to Item 06-02 from the Presbyteries of Huntingdon and Kiskiminetas.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-02

Advice on Item 06-02—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 06-02.

The Historic Principles of Church Order (F-1.0301) states, "The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God's transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord." The church today has been seeking new ways to fulfill this calling, including the 1001 New Worshipping Communities program.

The proposed amendment would add the words "*practical training in evangelism*" as a prerequisite for a presbytery to certify a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call. The 1984 General Assembly considered and rejected this same concept. It stated: "it is inappropriate for the General Assembly to seek to achieve the great ends of the church through placing the requirement of seminary courses in the Constitution" (*Minutes*, 1984, Part I, pp. 43, 74, 600, Item 24).

This overture raises the following concerns:

1. The purpose of G-2.0607 (Final Assessment) is not to exhaustively list all requirements for final assessment but to guide the presbytery to make its final determination for the candidate's readiness for the ordered ministry.
2. The Constitution provides the presbytery with the responsibility to oversee the process of nurturing and training throughout the phase of inquiry and candidacy. If the presbytery chooses to do so, it may add training in evangelism to its candidacy requirements, much as many presbyteries require clinical pastoral education.
3. The language being proposed is non-specific without any objective criteria with measurable goals. The words "practical," "agile," and "concise" are constitutionally vague and may invite a variety of interpretations.

Item 06-03

Item 06-03 has been moved to 09 Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues and has been re-assigned the following item number: Item 09-11. (See p. 556 of the electronic version.)

Item 06-04

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-04 with comment. See pp. 49, 50.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapproved this item as *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th edition*, does not impair a council's capacity to authorize remote meetings.]

On Amending G-3.0203 to Allow for Virtual Attendance in Session Meetings When Appropriate Technology Is Available—From the Presbytery of Lake Erie.

The Presbytery of Lake Erie respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0203 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. The moderator^h shall call a special meeting when he or she deems necessary or when requested in writing by any two members of the session. The business to be transacted at special meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting. There shall be reasonable notice given of all special meetings. The session shall also meet when directed by presbytery. Sessions shall provide by rule for a quorum for meetings; such quorum shall include the moderator and either a specific number of ruling elders or a specific percentage of those ruling elders in current service on the session. *A session may vote to allow virtual attendance and participation, including voting rights, in meetings when appropriate technology is available.*”

Rationale

Technology exists to allow full participation virtually in all meetings.

Virtual session accommodations provide the homebound, those traveling for work, pleasure, or family responsibilities, and those with family situations requiring their presence at home a vehicle for full participation.

Virtual meetings allow those unable to be physically present at session meetings the opportunity to fulfill their call to discern and measure the congregation's fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life.

The quality of session is greatly improved by membership from the diversity of its congregation.

Concurrence to Item 06-04 from the Presbyteries of Florida, Huntingdon, Palo Duro, Pittsburgh, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-04

Advice on Item 06-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 06-04.

This action is not necessary to achieve the desired results. The Form of Government establishes that “Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except when it is in contradiction to this Constitution” (G-3.0105) The Constitution does not prohibit it and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 11th Edition, allows for virtual (electronic) meetings.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that certain conditions should be met by those councils implementing electronic meetings.

- The council's bylaws or manual of operations must specifically allow the use of electronic meetings, and should establish additional rules for the conduct of such meetings (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 11th Edition, pp. 98–99).
- The basic deliberative quality of the meeting is maintained by providing, “at a minimum, conditions of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area” (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 11th Edition, p. 97).

- A virtual (electronic) meeting must meet the legal requirements of the state in which such a meeting occurs.

Item 06-05

[The assembly approved Item 06-05 with amendment. See pp. 49, 50.]

On Amending the Second Paragraph of G-3.0109 Regarding Parity in Committees of Councils Above the Session—From the Presbytery of St. Andrew

The Presbytery of Saint Andrew overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall the second paragraph of G-3.0109 of the *Book of Order* be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown as ~~strikeout~~]:

“A committee shall study and recommend action or carry out decisions already made by a council. It shall make a full report to the council that created it, and its recommendations shall require action by that body. Committees of councils higher than the session shall consist of both teaching elders and members of congregations, [~~with at least one half being members of congregations~~] in numbers as nearly equal as possible.”

Rationale

The requirement for parity in our system of government is historic and is grounded in our theological understanding of the nature of the Christian Church. But while parity is essential in decision making, requiring it of all committees (which by definition do not make decisions, but only study matters assigned to them, make recommendations, and carry out decisions made by councils or their commissions), is an unnecessary-restriction placed on councils. In particular, it is a burdensome requirement in the matter of committees of counsel, which, as defined in D-6.0302, may be composed of no more than three persons.

Indeed, the current constitutional language is even more restrictive for committees than it is for commissions, where, if they are composed of an uneven number of members, they may in fact have a slight majority of teaching elders.

While the Presbytery of St. Andrew would prefer that the entire sentence be deemed unnecessary and deleted, it respectfully requests the deletion of at least the final clause (“with at least one half being members of congregations”).

Concurrence to Item 06-05 from the Presbyteries of Foothills and the Mid-South.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-05

Advice on Item 06-05—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly to disapprove Item 06-05.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution agrees that the requirement for parity in our system of government is historic and is grounded in our theological understanding of the nature of the Church and so we encourage participation of all members in every aspect of our life together. “The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. . . . The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution” (F-1.0403). Responsibilities of governance are shared jointly by presbyters (ruling elders and teaching elders), and the ministry of the Church is shared by all members (F-3.0202, F-3.0208, G-1.0304). While a committee may not always be empowered to make final decisions on behalf of a council, the committee members do decide how to study matters assigned to them, decide which recommendations will be presented to the council for final resolution, and decide how best to carry out decisions made by councils or their commissions. Because all committees must resolve questions or issues as part of their work, we believe it is important that we maintain the historic parity of teaching elders and members of congregations on all committees.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution points out, for example, that a committee of counsel (D-6.0302) does make decisions throughout the procedure for which it has been appointed. It must determine what statements or actions are in the best interest of the complainant or respondent it represents without a requirement that those decisions be approved by the council which appointed it.

If, however, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) believes that the intent of Item 06-05 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the assembly retain the current language and add a new sentence to the existing second paragraph of G-3.0109:

“A committee shall study and recommend action or carry out decisions already made by a council. It shall make a full report to the council that created it, and its recommendations shall require action by that body. Committees of councils higher than the session shall consist of both teaching elders and members of congregations, with at least one half being members of congregations. *A council may determine that its mission strategy requires that the provisions for parity be waived. Such a waiver may be established by a three-fourths vote of the members of the council present and voting.*”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution points out that any change to G-3.0109, if approved, would not affect G-3.0307, which requires that certain committees/entities be composed of equal numbers of teaching elders and ruling elders.

Item 06-06

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-06. See pp. 49, 51.]

On Adding Section G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA)—From the Presbytery of Central Nebraska.

The Presbytery of Central Nebraska overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall a new section be added to G-2.11, Certified Church Service, to read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“G-2.1104 Administrative Personnel Association (APA)

“a. Skills and Training

“Certified Administrative Personnel Assistants are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of church administration in congregations and councils. They shall have skills and training in church polity, church history, reformed theology, spiritual growth and discipline, office administration, Directory for Worship, Book of Confessions, and General Assembly Entities.

“b. Councils Responsibility

“The presbytery shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing for recognition at presbytery at the time of their certification and by inviting these employees to presbytery meetings, granting them the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified APA members who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

“Names of those who have earned certification through APA shall be transmitted to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, which will forward them to the Office of the General Assembly and to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.”

Rationale

A request from twelve women attending a business administration course at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia, laid the groundwork for a professional organization to be created. In 1976, the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) was founded by Joyce Bauer and in almost forty years APA has expanded to nine regions, which includes all fifty states with a membership of 367 representing churches of all sizes, including those denominations with whom we are in full communion, presbyteries, synods, and the different agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The APA defines its active members as all persons engaged in administrative work in any local church or church-related institution, governing body or agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), or those denominations with which we have communion.

The APA is ruled by the body but lead by the Executive Board and Council. The Executive Board is made up of elected officials to include the president, president-elect, immediate past-president, certification chair, membership chair, secretary, and treasurer. The Council is composed of the following: The National Executive Board, all regional presidents, bylaws chair, nominating chair, finance chair, council on accreditation chair, membership chair, and national conference planning chair.

The mission of APA is to offer the opportunity for professional development and personal growth for those called by God to serve as support staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and those denominations with whom we are in full communion. The mission is accomplished by providing continuing education events for certification and occasions for fellowship, worship, and spiritual nurture and prayer at both national and regional meetings as well as APA-sponsored training events.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

We offer three levels of certification with the opportunity to receive recognition for every fifty hours of continuing education beyond level 3. Our members may also receive an additional certificate in Concentrated Studies in Polity, Communications, Administration and Facilities Management, Theology, Church History, and Finance after completing another twenty-five hours in each of these areas of studies. Approved instructors are required to teach the requested amount of time for the class. Approval is given by our certification chair. The Certification Committee reviews the classes to ensure the classes being taught are current with what is happening in the church and office administration. Elective hours include conflict management, designing for communication, technology classes, financial matters, and other classes that provide professional growth and understanding of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Below explains the breakdown for each level.

LEVEL I

Core Courses

Church History (Part 1)	2.5 hours
Church History (Part 2)	2.5 hours
Polity 1 (Part 1)	2.5 hours
Polity 1 (Part 2)	2.5 hours
**Office Administration	2.5 hours
*Spiritual Growth and Discipline	2.5 hours
Theology—Christian Perspectives of the Church (Part 1)	2.5 hours
Theology (Part 2)	2.5 hours
Total Core Hours	20 hours
Total Elective Hours	20 hours
Total Hours Required	40 hours

LEVEL II

Core Courses

Directory for Worship	2.5 hours
Legal Matters	2.5 hours
PC(USA) History Since Reunion (Part 1)	2.5 hours
PC(USA) History Since Reunion (Part 2)	2.5 hours
Polity II	2.5 hours
**Office Administration	2.5 hours
*Spiritual Growth and Discipline	2.5 hours
Total Core Hours	17.5 hours
Total Elective Hours	27.5 hours
Total Hours Required	45 hours

LEVEL III

Core Courses

<i>Book of Confessions</i>	2.5 hours
GA Entities	2.5 hours
Polity III	2.5 hours
**Office Administration	2.5 hours
*Spiritual Growth and Discipline	2.5 hours
Total Core Hours	12.5 hours
Total Elective Hours	37.5 hours
Total Hours Required	50 hours

Prior to the changes made to the Form of Government, APA had been recognized previously by General Assembly, and under the former section G-14.0740 we had been affiliated with the Office of Vocation and had a PC(USA) staff liaison. We had also been listed in the *Directory* and Book II. However, after the new Form of Government was approved we were lost in translation and have struggled since to be specifically identified by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our service and dedication to the larger church. Therefore, it is time after almost forty years of service and dedication, that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) specifically recognizes the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) and its certified members in the *Book of Order*.

Concurrence to Item 06-06 from the Presbyteries of East Iowa, Florida, Minnesota Valleys, New Castle, and San Jose.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-06

Advice on Item 06-06—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 06-06.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

While the ACC recognizes with deep appreciation the work of dedicated administrative personnel who faithfully serve the Church of Jesus Christ in and through our congregations, we feel that this proposed overture is problematic on several matters.

1. There are certified members of the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) who are not members of a Presbyterian congregation. Such individuals should not be granted voice at meetings of presbyteries as a right of their certification status.
2. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is governed by presbyters (F-3.0202) who are elected by the people (F-3.0106). This overture mandates participation in presbytery meetings of individuals not in ordered ministry.
3. If a member of APA who is a ruling elder is thereby automatically granted voice and vote in presbytery meetings, this might supersede an individual council's rules for how they have discerned granting this status, and it could affect the parity balance of teaching and ruling elders in a presbytery.
4. This overture does not provide for any constitutional provision for establishing and/or monitoring the certification process.
5. The desire to properly and appropriately recognize the value of ministry exercised by administrative professionals in the church can, and should, be given without the necessity of providing for constitutional designation.
6. Recognition of individuals in any specific form of certified church service (G-2.1101) may be provided for in a council's manual of administrative operations.

Should the General Assembly choose to approve this overture, we would suggest amending it by deleting the word "these" in paragraph b, and adding the words "who are Presbyterian" after the word "employees," so that part of the sentence would read: "...and by inviting employees who are Presbyterian to presbytery meetings, granting them the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings..." Specific certifying organizations should not be listed in the Constitution, as names change periodically.

"b. Councils Responsibility

"The presbytery shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing for recognition at presbytery at the time of their certification and by inviting ~~these~~ employees [who are Presbyterian] to presbytery meetings, granting them the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified APA members who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 06-06.

The ACWC is committed to recognizing, supporting, and advocating for women across the denomination, and while Item 06-06 does not speak specifically to women as persons who are in the roles of church administrators, historically these positions have indeed been held by women. The *Book of Order*, G-2.11, Certified Church Service, recognizes, supports, and advocates for Certified educators, and whereas the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) was recognized and supported in previous *Books of Orders*, the ACWC believes it is a misstep for members of the Administrative Personnel Association (APA) to not be recognized, supported, and upheld in the current (and future) *Book of Order*. Thus, the ACWC encourages the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Item 06-06 for its inclusion into the *Book of Order*.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-06

Comment on Item 06-06—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully advises the assembly to answer Item 06-06 (on adding section G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (APA) to those included in "Certified Church Service") with its response to Item 06-15 (amendment of G-2.1101).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created "to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk ..." (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk and the Office of the General Assembly. Section G-2.1101 currently contains a process for inclusion of a certifying body. Item 06-15 contains the committee's recommendations regarding those certifying bodies, consistent with G-2.1101.

Item 06-07

[The assembly answered Item 06-07 by the action taken on Item 06-10. See pp. 49, 51.]

On Amending G-2.0509 to Clarify the Relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of a Person Who Has Renounced the Jurisdiction of the Church—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the last paragraph of G-2.0509 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“Whenever a former teaching elder has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, *and as long as the former teaching elder remains outside of the membership and jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),* that former teaching elder shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”

2. Direct General Assembly agencies to include in their personnel, sexual misconduct, and child protection policies a question about renunciation of jurisdiction; and to encourage other councils to do the same.

Rationale

For reasons of order and safety, all persons engaged in work under the auspices of the church should be accountable to the church. Renunciation of jurisdiction is an explicit declaration by an individual that he or she refuses to be subject to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is therefore deliberately unaccountable.

Renunciation of jurisdiction is a serious matter, and any teaching elder who chooses that course must be aware of the consequences. As the 218th General Assembly (2008) declared:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends to the 218th General Assembly (2008) that renunciation of membership in a congregation or of church office is a serious action that carries significant implications. In the case of both officers and members, there are other, less disruptive ways by which a person may relinquish standing in the church ... Renunciation of jurisdiction, on the other hand, carries with it a sense of fracture of relationship and injury to the body of Christ. ... In the case of an officer, renunciation carries with it the requirement of the immediate termination of the exercise of office as well as removal from the membership roll (G-6.0701). ... (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 274, Item 04-21)

However, the church is dependent upon grace, and always holds out hope for repentance and reconciliation.

The same Item 04-21 from the 218th General Assembly (2008) explains:

A person who has renounced membership and/or church office in a PC(USA) congregation may, at some subsequent point, seek admission to membership in another PC(USA) congregation by reaffirmation of faith. Membership may not be denied “for any ... reason not related to profession of faith” (G-10.0102b). It is the session’s responsibility to receive such persons, and to determine if their reaffirmation of faith is consistent with the requirements for a profession of faith in W-4.2003a–c. In such determinations, sessions may wish to pay particular attention to whether the applicant declares “intent to participate actively and *responsibly* in the worship and mission of the church” (W-4.2003c, emphasis added), and whether the person will fulfill the obligations of church membership as defined in G-5.0102, especially G-5.0102f—“demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church”—and G-5.0102h—“living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life.” In its examination, the session may also inquire about the faith journey of the person requesting membership, and the nature of relationships between that person and prior congregations from which he or she has renounced membership. The session may wish to emphasize that the act of professing faith is itself a form of renunciation: the person requesting membership “renounces evil” and affirms reliance on God’s grace. (*Ibid.*, pp. 274–75)

A person who has renounced jurisdiction while in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused should be aware that

Section D-3.0106 is clear that “jurisdiction in judicial process ends when a church officer or a member renounces jurisdiction of the church.” There is no provision in either the Form of Government or the Rules of Discipline that ... makes provision for the resumption of proceedings against a member or officer who renounces jurisdiction to avoid prosecution and then is admitted to membership in another PC(USA) congregation. However, a person who is accused of sexual abuse as defined in D-10.0401c and who renounces jurisdiction to avoid prosecution on those charges, becomes liable to those charges again when he or she comes under the jurisdiction of another governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (D-10.0102a) by being received into congregational membership. To the extent that it is aware of prior renunciations of jurisdiction, a governing body has both the right and the obligation to inquire into the circumstances of any such renunciation in its examination of an officer. (*Ibid.*, p. 275)

If a former teaching elder who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused wishes to work under the auspices of the PC(USA), he or she has the option of demonstrating willingness to be accountable, by submitting again to the jurisdiction of the church.

Concurrence to Item 06-07 from the Presbyteries of Southeastern Illinois and the Western Reserve.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 06-07.

The ACWC supports Item 06-07 on amending G-2.0509 to clarify the relationship to the PC(USA) of a person who has renounced the jurisdiction of the church. As the last paragraph of the rationale states, “If a former teaching elder who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused wishes to work under the auspices of the PC(USA), he or she has the option of demonstrating willingness to be accountable, by submitting again to the jurisdiction of the church.” It is through these already established disciplinary procedures that the possibility of restoration and reconciliation is opened.

Item 06-08

[The assembly approved Item 06-08 with amendment. See pp. 49, 51.]

On Amending the Book of Order to Clarify Titles to Ordered Ministry—From the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

The Presbytery of Great Rivers respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Amend F-3.0202 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders (*also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament*). Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and ~~measure~~ *guide in its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life.* ~~Teaching elders~~ *Ministers of the Word and Sacrament* shall be committed in all their work to *teaching the faith in word and in deed* and equipping the people of God for their ministry and witness.”

2. Amend the third paragraph of G-2.0102 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Ordination to the ministry of ~~teaching elder, ruling elder, or~~ *deacon, ruling elder, or minister of Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elder)* is unique to that order of ministry.”

3. Amend G-2.0301 follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ~~teaching elders~~ *ministers of the Word and Sacrament*, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ~~teaching elders~~ *ministers of the Word and Sacrament*, and they are eligible for any office.”

4. Amend G-2.05 and G-2.0501 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-2.05 ~~Teaching Elders~~ *Ministers of the Word and Sacrament: The Ministry of the Word and Sacrament Teaching and Pastoral Care*

“G-2.0501 ~~Teaching Elder~~ *Minister of the Word and Sacrament Defined*

~~“Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders and pastors) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith in word and deed and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). They may serve in a variety of ministries as authorized by the presbytery. When they serve as preachers and teachers of the Word, they shall preach and teach the faith of the church, so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. When they serve at font and table, they shall interpret and ‘show forth’ the mysteries of grace and lift in word and action, lifting the people’s vision toward the hope of God’s new creation. When they serve as pastors, they shall support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life. When they serve as presbyters, they shall participate in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ’s body through devotion, debate, and decision.”~~

5. Amend G-2.0701 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“Ordination to the ordered ministry of teaching elder minister of Word and Sacrament is an act of the whole church carried out by the presbytery, setting apart a person to ordered ministry. Such a person shall have fulfilled the ordination requirements of the presbytery of care and received the call of God to service to a congregation or other work in the mission of the church that is acceptable to the candidate and to the presbytery of call.”~~

6. Amend G-3.0307 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“G-3.0307 Pastor, Counselor, and Advisor to Teaching Elders Its Pastors and Congregations~~

~~“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations.~~

~~“Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to teaching elders its pastors, both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (also called commissioned lay pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders)), as well as the and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, teaching elders, ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service, pastors and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.” [The last two paragraphs of the section remain unchanged.]~~

7. That within the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline, the terms “ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service” or “ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service” and “teaching elder” shall be replaced with its former terms, “commissioned lay pastor (also known as commissioned ruling elders)” or “minister” or “minister of Word and Sacrament”, respectively.

8. Amend W-4.4001a as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“a. In ordination the church sets apart with prayer and the laying on of hands those who have been called through election by the church to serve as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders. (W-2.1005) In installation the church sets apart with prayer those previously ordained as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders ministers of Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders), and called anew to service in that ministry.”~~

Rationale

In 2012, the PC(USA) adopted a new Form of Government. Among its many changes designed to help clarify our polity were changes in the titles of ordered ministry: “Elder” was changed to “ruling elder,” “minister of Word and Sacrament” was changed to “teaching elder,” and “commissioned lay pastor” was changed to “commissioned ruling elder.” Yet this change has been met by some with resistance, others with confusion, and by many through simply ignoring the changes.

In 2012, the Presbytery of Santa Fe, with the concurrence of the Presbytery of Newton, sought to change this language back in its entirety. In response to this overture, the ACC (Advisory Committee on the Constitution) highlighted the historical connection for new terminology as well as a desire that the new term might minimize clericalism:

The Form of Government as adopted by the church in 2011 understands that “the basic form of ministry is the ministry of the whole people of God, from whose midst some are called to ordered ministries, to fulfill particular functions” (G-2.01). In establishing this principle, the Form of Government seeks to counteract the tendency abroad in the church toward clericalism. Clericalism is the habit of the religious communities to rely mainly or even exclusively on a limited number of leaders—often professional leaders—to carry out the work of ministry. There are at least two ways in which clericalism poses a danger for Reformed communities.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

First, clericalism suggests an unwarranted limitation on the call to ministry. Using the term “minister” to apply particularly to those ordained as teaching elders suggests that “ministry” is the work of the “minister of the Word and Sacrament” rather than the work of the whole people of God and of every baptized person individually.

Second, clericalism undermines the basic parity between ruling and teaching elders in the governance of the church. The Form of Government uses the terms “Teaching Elder” and “Ruling Elder” to suggest that, while the particular orders of ministry of the two are different, they are united in the shared responsibility as elders to govern and guide the ministry of God’s people. It is the unique gift of the Reformed community that there is a basic parity in the governance of the church between ruling and teaching elders.

The terms “teaching elder” and “ruling elder” point to vital functions that lie at the heart of these orders of ministry. The Form of Government lifts up teaching as the primary function through which the ministry of the Word and Sacrament is exercised. Section G-2.0501 states: “Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) shall in all things be committed to teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:12). . . .”¹

And later:

The Form of Government lifts up this teaching function because it is central to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. In so doing, it follows the tradition established early in the history of the Kirk of Scotland. In Chapter 4 of the *Second Book of Discipline* (1621), the Kirk of Scotland describes as a central function of the minister the “teaching of the word of God . . . publicly and privately, always traueiling [travailing] to edifie, and discharge his [sic] conscience, as God’s word prescribes him.” That same section notes the minister’s responsibility for the administration of the Sacraments, “for both are appointed by God, as meanes to teach us, one by the ear and the other by the eyes, and other senses, that by both knowledge may be transferred to the minde.” By virtue of the educational requirements of those ordained to this ministry, the teaching elder is nearly always the best prepared, and in many communities uniquely prepared, to serve as the teacher of the faith.²

The ACC shares some important rationale that speaks to challenges within the contemporary church, while at the same time points us to our proud Scottish heritage.

The rationale offered by the Presbytery of Santa Fe (2012) in their motion to change these terms was to address the underlying confusion and possible limitations created when these terms were changed, including the following:

... Vocational ministry encompasses many functions. There is, of course, a “teaching” aspect, but even there the current terminology of “spiritual formation” may better convey the reality of what is intended for “teachers” of the gospel. A primary focus on the “teaching” role can too easily direct us toward old tendencies of focusing on the intellect at the expense of the heart and habits of life. It also raises the question of how the designation “teaching elder” encompasses the pastoral aspect of the vocational minister’s function.

Another, presumably unintended, consequence of the change to “teaching elder” from “minister of the Word and Sacrament” is that the emphasis on “teaching” may too easily focus on “the Word” at the expense of “Sacrament.” Presbyterians assert a balance of “Word” and “Sacrament” but in practice we have often emphasized the “Word” to the neglect of “Sacrament.” The former designation of “minister of the Word and Sacrament” constantly reminds us of the intended balance, and hopefully of the importance of experiencing the “sacred mysteries” of the faith in conjunction with our study and reasoning.

The role of a vocational minister is to minister the Word and the Sacraments to and with the people of God. The minister does this not, primarily, as a social worker, or psychologist, or administrator, or (even) teacher. The minister’s primary function is to bring the Word and the Sacraments to the community of faith “truly” and “rightly” so that they may be used by the Holy Spirit to do God’s work within and among us. Thus, the title “minister of Word and Sacrament” conveys—not only to those who bear the office, but to members of the community of faith, and even to those with no church affiliation—a clearer descriptive summary of what the role and function is.³

These are also legitimate concerns raised by the changes in terminology. Additionally, from an ecumenical perspective, the nomenclature of the office of “teaching elder” versus “ruling elder” are somewhat confusing as many denominations ordain their clergy to a ministerial office, such as minister, pastor, priest, whereas the title “teaching elder” often needs qualifiers or explanations.

After observing the changes to these terms for a few years, it has been noted that there is still much confusion. As a result, the local church and many churches and pastors have simply ignored the change to the nomenclature: pastors are still pastors, elders are still elders, and mid councils and General Assembly seem to be the only bodies who tend to use the terms ruling elder and teaching elder with any regularity or appreciation for the historical and pragmatic rationale.

Furthermore, in speaking to younger clergy regarding this change, some have reported feeling disempowered in the formation of their sense of pastoral authority and professional development by no longer being ordained to the office of “minister of Word and Sacrament.” Some feel this title has been particularly disempowering to female clergy.

Lastly, the title, “commissioned ruling elder,” greatly minimizes the broad and important pastoral role and responsibility that is played by our commissioned ruling elders whereas the title “commissioned lay pastor” was a far more apropos title.

In summary, this overture seeks to honor the historical and pragmatic rationale given by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in 2012, address the primary concerns raised by the Presbytery of Santa Fe, provide greater clarity to the local

¹ ACC response to Item 07-04, *On Amending the Book of Order Concerning the Titles Used for Those in Ordered Ministries—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe*. (Minutes, 2012, Part I, p. 677)

² Ibid.

³ Rationale for Item 07-04 (2012) *On Amending the Book of Order Concerning the Titles Used for Those in Ordered Ministries—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe*. (Minutes, 2012, Part I, p. 677)

church, offer more empowerment to our younger clergy, and better reflect the important pastoral ministry of our commissioned ruling elders.

Concurrence to Item 06-08 from the Presbyteries of Charleston Atlantic, Huntingdon, Minnesota Valleys, and New Castle.

Concurrence to Item 06-08 from the Presbytery of Santa Fe (with Additional Rationale)

The Presbytery of Santa Fe affirms the rationale offered by the Presbytery of Great Rivers.

We further note that upon examination of the *Book of Confessions*, there are no indexed references to “teaching elders,” but numerous references to “ministers” throughout. Historically the designation of “minister” (and/or “pastor”) has been primary among the Reformed. The terms used in the Reformation era and into the 17th century were consistently “minister” or “pastor,” along with “elder” and “deacon.” In addition to the documents found in the PC(USA) *Book of Confessions*, this is true in the following foundational documents of Reformed polity: *Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances* (John Calvin, *et al*, Geneva, 1541); *First Book of Discipline* (John Knox, *et al*, Scotland, 1560); *Second Book of Discipline* (Andrew Melville, *et al*, Scotland, 1578); and, *The Form of Presbyterian Church Government* (Westminster Assembly, Great Britain, 1645).

There are some instances of the term “teaching elder” being used as a secondary descriptive designation in the 17th century. In some cases (such as George Gillespie and Alexander Henderson, Scottish commissioners to the Westminster Assembly) it was used for the additional ecclesiastical order of “Doctors” rather than for Ministers. Emphasis on the distinction of “teaching” and “ruling” elders only seems to have come to prominence in the United States during the 19th century via Presbyterian “politists” such as Samuel Miller (1769–1850) and Charles Hodge (1797–1878) of Princeton Seminary, and prominent southern professors such as James H. Thornwell (1812–1862), R.L. Dabney (1820–1898), etc.

We also suggest that, given continued dissatisfaction and concern within the church about both the “teaching elder” and “commissioned ruling elder” designations, having the presbyteries vote on this will settle the matter.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-08

Advice on Item 06-08—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 06-08.

This overture seeks to amend the *Book of Order* in numerous locations to “clarify titles to ordered ministry.” Among the eight points in the overture, there are two classes of amendments:

1. To change some occurrences of the title “teaching elder” to “minister of the Word and Sacrament.”
2. That “within the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline the terms ... “ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service” or “ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service” ... shall be replaced with its former term “Commissioned Lay Pastor.”

These will be addressed serially.

1. When “teaching elder” was presented as the default term for this ordered ministry in the Form of Government proposal presented to the 219th General Assembly (2010), the ACC offered the following advice:

The proposal has adopted terminology concerning church offices that is markedly different than that with which most Presbyterians are familiar. Instead of “church offices,” the proposal speaks of “ordered ministries”; rather than “minister of the Word and Sacrament,” the proposal utilizes the term “teaching elder.” These changes call for special consideration by both the assembly and the church generally.

... these changes have the purpose of reclaiming the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, that is, the shared nature of the mission and ministry of the Church. ... by replacing “minister of the Word and Sacrament” with the term “teaching elder,” the unique and historic Presbyterian principle of parity in governance between the clergy and ruling elders is underscored. (Indeed, even the word “clergy,” with its connotations of special status and privilege, is out of place in historic Presbyterian polity, which asserts that the biblical word “elder” (*presbyteros*) embraces both those exercising the role of governance and pastor to the flock.) The term “teaching elder” has been used as the preferred term for those exercising the pastoral function in the Church in various historic streams of our current denomination, most recently in the Book of Church Order of the former Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) prior to its reunion with the UPCUSA in 1983.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that changes in nomenclature in the proposal constitute a healthy appropriation of the historic principles of Presbyterian polity. Apart from the inherent challenge of relearning some fundamental terms of our polity, the changes do not present obstacles to the orderly functioning of our church government. They may, however, highlight distinctives of polity that are unique to the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, which have been our contribution to ecumenical dialogue regarding the mutual recognition of ministries. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution believes that the proposal presents a faithful representation of our historic polity to our ecumenical partners. (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, pp. 537–38)

The ACC reminds the assembly the particular title for the ordered ministry is different from the functions a person performs locally. A teaching elder may perform the functions of pastor, counselor, chaplain, or minister. In the current Form of Government, teaching elders are twice also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament (G-2.0501; G-4.0301), making the terms interchangeable.

Additionally, the overture is concerned that the term “teaching elder” causes a focus on teaching the Word to the detriment of teaching the Sacraments. Section G-2.0501 has a broader focus for the primary activity of teaching: “Teaching elders (also called ministers of the Word and Sacrament) shall in all things be committed to *teaching the faith and equipping the saints for the work of ministry*” [emphasis added].

2. Ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service must have been previously ordained to the ordered ministry. Referring to them as a “commissioned lay pastor,” as the overture asks, delegitimizes the parity of ordered ministry shared by ruling elders and teaching elders.

If the General Assembly decides to make the changes proposed by the overture in regards to the term “teaching elder,” the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the following:

- The proposed change from “teaching elder” to “minister of the Word and Sacrament” is clear and consistent. The General Assembly should review all uses of the term in the *Book of Order* for consistency.

- Recommendation 6 of the overture proposes amending G-3.0307 to strike out “teaching elders” and insert “*its pastors, both ministers of Word and Sacrament . . .*” This section currently gives the responsibility to the presbytery to be pastor and counselor to all of its teaching elders, including those who serve in non-congregational ministries, are members-at-large, or honorably retired. The amendment would limit this responsibility only to teaching elders serving as pastors of congregations.

- In several instances, the overture seeks to amend language to section titles and the indexing references in the margins of the *Book of Order*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution reminds the General Assembly that these texts are not part of the Constitution, and do not require change by the amendment process. If the General Assembly decides to change the text of the Constitution, the headings and margin references can be edited as the new *Book of Order* is prepared.

Item 06-09

[The assembly referred Item 06-09 to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. See pp. 50, 51.]

On Amending G-2.0301, “Ruling Elder Defined,” to Allow for Individually Commissioned Ruling Elders—From the Synod of the Northeast.

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-2.0301 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they ~~shall serve faithfully~~ *may be individually commissioned or may serve* as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as teaching elders, and they are eligible for any office.”

Rationale

Section G-2.0104 indicates that those fulfilling leadership responsibilities in the church—including ruling elders—“should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.”

Section G-2.0301 describes ruling elders as “persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit.”

The ordination question specific to ruling elders in W-4.4003i(1) includes, as responsibilities of that ordered ministry, 222nd General Assembly (2016)

“watching over the people ... [sharing] in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church.” It concludes by asking, “in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?”

Clearly, the responsibilities of ruling elders extend beyond merely serving a term on the session.

This is also seen in the church’s historic understanding of ordination as continuing for life, beyond a ruling elder’s term of service on the session. “Once an elder, always an elder” is a phrase frequently heard in Presbyterian congregations.

This indicates that ruling elders enhance the church’s mission and ministry through the leadership and witness they provide outside the session meeting room, both as spiritual exemplars and by “serving in councils of the church” beyond the congregation.

Precedent: Individually Commissioned Deacons (G-2.0202)

In light of the many and varied ways deacons serve Christ and the people of God, G-2.0202 recognizes that some congregations may elect individuals to the order of deacon who do not serve on a board of deacons. The Constitution does not presently offer a similar option for ruling elders.

Practical Applications

Situations sometimes arise in which congregations may find it useful to elect individuals as ruling elders without having them immediately begin a term on the session. For example, if the local custom is that only ruling elders fulfill functions such as making certain kinds of visits to members, assisting in serving the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper or exercising other forms of spiritual leadership, then it could be useful to elect, ordain, and individually commission ruling elders for this sort of service.

Situations also arise in which councils above the level of the session would find it valuable, for purposes of balancing representation or utilizing unusual talents, to ask a congregation to elect a particular individual as ruling elder. For example, a presbytery or synod may find such an option helpful in fulfilling the mandate for unity in diversity (F-1.0403) or as they assemble a team with varied talents to serve on a committee or commission. While such purposes may often be accomplished through the ordinary means of a congregation electing such a person to first occupy a seat at the session table, sometimes a seat may not be readily available, or the person may not be immediately available to attend session meetings but could exercise ruling-elder responsibilities in other ways.

Situations also arise in which it may be advantageous for mission workers to be ordained as ruling elders prior to deployment, but whose deployment plans make immediate service on their home church’s session problematic.

As the church continues to explore new forms of mission through efforts such as 1,001 New Worshiping Communities and in new immigrant communities, situations sometimes arise in which it would be useful to have promising leaders designated for leadership in fellowships that are not congregations in the usual sense. If such individuals could be received as members of a neighboring congregation, then elected by that congregation as ruling elders to exercise their ministry in the nontraditional community, the community’s work and witness, as well as the work and witness of the presbytery, would be enhanced.

Congregations have, in the past, pursued a clumsy workaround in order to permit a promising leader to be ordained as a ruling elder without serving for very long on the session. This involves asking a ruling elder nearing the end of his or her session term to resign, allowing for the new leader to be elected to a short, unexpired term. If the Constitution allowed for ruling elders to be individually commissioned, this complex maneuver would no longer be necessary.

The effect of this proposed amendment is permissive. It does not impose the model of individually commissioned ruling elders on any council, but rather provides flexibility to allow them to order their ministries in new and varied ways in service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Concurrence to Item 06-09 from the Presbyteries of Monmouth and Newton.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-09

Advice on Item 06-09—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 06-09.

The overture seeks to amend G-2.0301 to provide for the election of elders to individual commissions without requiring service on the session. The essential functions of ruling elders identified in G-2.0301 (“exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline”) are yoked to the practice of governance in the context of councils. The Constitution assumes such experience as a prerequisite to exercise governance in higher councils. Removing this requirement would deemphasize the essential governance function of ruling elders and incorporate other forms of service.

Within the life of a particular church, beyond service on the session, the only functions that require ordination as a ruling elder are: the authority to administer sacraments *when trained and authorized by the presbytery* (G-3.0301b); to exercise limited pastoral service *when commissioned by the presbytery* (G-2.1003), and to serve as commissioners to councils when elected (G-2.0301) [emphasis added]. Sessions already have the authority to commission members to exercise pastoral care, lead worship, and perform a variety of mission functions, none of which require ordination as a ruling elder.

The rationale cites G-2.0202 as precedent for individual commissioning of ruling elders. However, the individual commissioning of deacons is not comparable to that of ruling elders. Each ordered ministry has its unique functions and requirements. Service as a deacon is explicitly “under the authority and supervision of the session” (G-2.0202). The essential function of deacons is compassionate service, not governance. Individual commission may be necessary and helpful in congregations that do not have a board of deacons. Every particular church must have a session (G-3.0101).

Election to service beyond the session introduces other concerns. The ordered ministries of the church differ from other forms of service in function only, not status. Election to individual commissions invites congregations to elect ruling elders without function or accountability. It is also unclear how term limits would apply to ruling elders elected to individual commission. Depending on the particular service in a commission, it is conceivable that the purpose of mandatory rotation of service could be thwarted. Ordaining ruling elders to service beyond the congregation would constitute a substantive change to long-established Presbyterian polity that persons who serve in ordered ministries are elected by the body to be served. The Historic Principles of Church Order, approved by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1788, states:

That though the character, qualifications and authority of Church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution, yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society (F-3.0106).

Finally, the use of the term “individual commission” creates confusion with a presbytery’s authority to commission ruling elders to particular, limited, pastoral service (G-2.10). Commissions to pastoral functions such as regular preaching of the Word, administration of the sacraments, moderation of sessions, and performance of weddings are governed by the presbytery, not the session.

Item 06-10

[The assembly approved Item 06-10 with amendment. See pp. 49, 50, 51.]

On Amending G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to Clarify the Relationship to the PC(USA) of a Person Who Has Renounced Jurisdiction of the Church—From the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

a. Shall the fourth paragraph of G-2.0509 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“Whenever a former teaching elder has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused, that former teaching elder shall not be permitted to perform any work, paid or volunteer, in any congregation or entity under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless and until the person re-joins the church, comes forward [~~in self-accusation either directly or by reference to the stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member, pleads guilty to all charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former teaching elder had renounced jurisdiction, has censure imposed without trial and with no participation from victims required, and completes appropriate rehabilitation~~] [and resubmits to the disciplinary process].”

b. Shall D-10.0401 be amended by adding new section “d.” to read as follows:

“d. For instances where a former teaching elder comes forward in self-accusation to undergo a disciplinary process to regain permission to perform work under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (G-2.0509), no time limit from the time of the commission of the alleged offense to the filing of charges shall apply. Charges based on all accusations that had been made by the time that the former teaching elder had renounced jurisdiction may be brought regardless of the date on which any such offense is alleged to have occurred.”

2. Direct General Assembly agencies to include in their personnel, sexual misconduct, and child protection policies a question about renunciation of jurisdiction; and to encourage other councils to do the same.

Rationale

When members of many helping and service professions are accused of misconduct (e.g., physicians, nurses, dentists, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, attorneys, counselors, actuaries, accountants), state licensure boards and disciplinary committees of national credentialing organizations require investigations to be done promptly, and that the results of the investigations be made public. While those who are accused may choose not to participate, they have no power to stop investigations against themselves. These professions learned long ago that such disciplinary procedures are necessary to maintain their professions' integrity and keep the public's trust.

In the PC(USA), teaching elders are professionals.¹ In contrast to other professions, our polity states that any member of our church may renounce jurisdiction at any time, since membership in the church has always been purely voluntary. The "Rules of Discipline" state that, if any member (including a teaching elder) is accused of an offense in a disciplinary case, and also renounces jurisdiction of this church before the investigating committee files charges, then the accused unilaterally forces the entire disciplinary process to be shut down, and makes it unconstitutional for the nature of the accusation(s) to be disclosed (D-3.0106), thereby making it impossible for the judicial process to achieve the purposes of church discipline for all individuals involved (c.f., D-1.0101).

In 2014–2015, G-2.0509 of the *Book of Order* was amended to create a *permanent* ban on teaching elders who renounce jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary process from working in or for the church in either a paid or volunteer capacity.² While this amendment was written in response to the renunciation of a teaching elder accused of sexual abuse,³ the ban applies to all teaching elders who renounce while being accused "[w]ithout regard for the nature, seriousness, or truth of the alleged delinquency, irregularity, or offense."⁴

As Christians, we live in hope of reconciliation for all. This overture proposes a process by which a former teaching elder, after many years (perhaps decades) of therapy, may publicly face accusations that he or she had evaded before, as a step towards possible reinstatement to be able to work in the church (at least in some capacity). This procedure requires such a person to

- rejoin the church,
- come forward in self-accusation to a presbytery⁵ (which is far more likely to have the resources and expertise to conduct thorough investigations and oversee appropriately comprehensive plans for rehabilitation),
- plead guilty to all charges based on all accusations that had been made at the time of renunciation (so that no one who renounced while being accused could gain any advantage by waiting for victims or key witnesses to move away, move on, or die before coming forward to request a trial),
- have censure imposed without trial and with no participation from victims required (so that the church would not require victims of offenses to come forward to have to re-describe painful events and be re-victimized at a time chosen by the accused⁶),
- and complete appropriate rehabilitation (which would be light for accusations of small offenses and more comprehensive for accusations of severe offenses).

Whenever a former teaching elder wants to come forward and self-report all accusations made by the time he or she renounced (which would assure the public that he or she is no longer evading any previous accusations), this procedure would suspend the five-year statute of limitations for offenses that are not sexual abuse⁷ (e.g., embezzlement), which is consistent with a legal principle established in American federal and state laws starting in 1790.⁸ In this way, a former teaching elder could become genuinely reconciled with the church by coming forward to say something like, "I have a gambling addiction. Ten years ago, I was a pastor who stole \$15,000 from my congregation. I renounced jurisdiction after I was accused. But I've been seeing a counselor for nine years, attending Gamblers' Anonymous for eight years, and I haven't placed a bet in six years. I've paid back my former congregation in full. I'd like to be able to apply for a job in youth ministry—I was good at it!" A presbytery may have such a person examined by a forensic psychologist and conclude that the person may be ready to work with youth again.

This overture also recommends that all councils add questions to forms asking about renunciation of jurisdiction. While not everyone is truthful in filling out forms or answering questions,⁹ adding these questions would remind councils that no background check for working in the church is complete until it determines if an applicant used to be a teaching elder, and had renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case.¹⁰

As long as our polity requires that membership in the church be strictly voluntary at all times, then both performing complete background checks on potential workers in the church, and also following the above procedures, are necessary for congregations and all councils of the PC(USA) to avoid future civil and criminal legal action from allowing a former teaching elder who had renounced jurisdiction to harm others. Here in the Twin Cities Area, we have seen what happens when a

church entity fails to protect people under its care: The Archdiocese of St Paul and Minneapolis has been served with public nuisance claims and civil petitions, been charged with criminal child endangerment, and filed for bankruptcy.¹¹

When teaching elders who are accused no longer have any advantage in renouncing jurisdiction, we hope that they will all act like ethical professionals for themselves (especially if they are innocent), their profession, and to maintain the public trust. May teaching elders who are accused choose to go through the disciplinary process when they are called, as members of many other professions are required.

Discussion of the “Straw Poll”

The informal “straw poll” of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures on this proposed overture was 4-Yes, 1-No. The member of the committee who voted No indicated a preference for permitting the former teaching elder an opportunity to plead guilty or not guilty whenever the former teaching elder wishes to pursue reinstatement to work.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Isn't requiring someone to plead guilty a bit harsh? Why not just hold a trial as soon as the accused feels ready to confront accusations?

Whenever there is an accusation, the church is obligated to try to fulfill as many purposes of our disciplinary process as possible (c.f., D-1.0101), such as:

- To preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community,
- To achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved,
- To correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration,
- To uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses,
- To restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division,
- To secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.

When someone accused renounces jurisdiction during the investigation, the disciplinary process must shut down, and it is not possible for the judicial process to achieve most of these purposes. For example,

- Victims who bravely came forward to tell their stories are stranded without justice.
- An offender who renounced is no longer a member of the believing community and is not brought to repentance.
- Those who are officially aware of the nature of the accusation against the accused are constitutionally prohibited from disclosing it even if they are specifically asked about the accused in all future background checks, so causes for mistrust and discord remain.
- No speedy or just judicial proceeding is possible.

There is also the practical matter that an offender may use renunciation to gain unfair advantage, by waiting until victims or key witnesses move away, move on, or die before coming forward to request a trial, and then argue to be granted benefit of the doubt when victims or key witnesses are unable/unwilling to respond at the time of the offender's choosing.

From a victim's perspective, it is often hard enough for a victim to summon the courage to come forward and describe painful events. Our disciplinary process is designed so that the judicial process proceeds when a victim files an accusation at a time of the victim's choosing, which increases the likelihood that the victim will be able to withstand what is often a grueling process. Allowing an offender to insist that a trial begin at a time of the offender's choosing, when the victim may feel weaker, risks having the complainant feel re-victimized more strongly, or not be strong enough to testify at all.

To maintain the integrity of a profession, and to keep the public trust, judicial processes regarding professional misconduct need to proceed with all deliberate speed, as many professions require. As long as the church allows its members who are accused to renounce jurisdiction and shut down disciplinary processes at any time (unlike many other professions), other kinds of procedures will be necessary for the church to keep the public trust.

What if the accused just wanted a brief delay before a trial began?

While there are time limits in the “Rules of Discipline” for reporting accusations not related to sexual abuse and to file charges (D-10.0401), there are no deadlines for negotiating an alternative form of resolution (in lieu of a trial) or conducting a trial, so permanent judicial commissions (PJs) already have ample flexibility in scheduling (e.g., to make allowances for family or medical emergencies). Needing a brief delay before beginning a trial would seem more likely than not to be granted by a PJ, so the accused would likely need a different or stronger reason to renounce jurisdiction.

Why not just amend the Book of Order to require no renunciation of jurisdiction until after the disciplinary process is completed?

Amending the *Book of Order* to disallow renunciation as soon as a member is accused would probably require even more widespread and drastic changes to our polity than the procedure described in this overture. Church membership would no longer be fully voluntary.

Also, some former teaching elders have already renounced jurisdiction after having been accused of serious offenses. Choosing to amend the *Book of Order* to “close a back gate” in the future would still leave open the question about what to do if any former teaching elders who have already renounced jurisdiction wish to be reinstated to work. The church will still need to decide on a process that is flexible enough to allow those with accusations of minor offenses to be reinstated quickly, but also to prevent predators from working in the church again.

I like the process, but it seems to be a detailed procedure instead of articulating fundamental principles. Isn't this sequence of procedures contrary to the trend in our polity to decentralize? Why can't this procedure simply be added to manuals of operations to be implemented by committees on ministry instead of being hard-wired into the Book of Order?

It is true that, especially in recent years, a powerful trend in Presbyterian polity has been to have sessions and presbyteries make decisions about inessential matters in accordance to what is best in their particular contexts.

However, in addition to the trend above regarding inessential matters, there has been a concurrent slow trend for the church to recognize that sometimes there are predators in the church, and that it is essential for the church to prevent predators from doing further harm to those who are vulnerable. This other trend is reflected in amendments to the *Book of Order* that have slowly closed cracks and loopholes that had allowed predators to evade accountability over the last several decades:

- When a teaching elder wishes to be released from ministry as a teaching elder (and thereby leave membership in a presbytery to join a congregation), G-2.0507 prevents the teaching elder from leaving the jurisdiction of the presbytery as long as he or she is accused in a disciplinary case.
- When a teaching elder is accused, transferring to another presbytery is prohibited while an inquiry or charges are pending (D-10.0105).
- When a teaching elder transferred to another presbytery *just before* an accusation was filed in the teaching elder's former presbytery, our polity did not seem to allow a disciplinary process to proceed. Sometime over the last two decades, the *Book of Order* was amended to make clear that, if an accuser under the jurisdiction of one presbytery files an accusation against a teaching elder who is a member of a different presbytery, the two “involved councils shall proceed cooperatively with judicial process” (D-10.0104).
- It appears that the last procedure that a predator can use to evade accountability for misconduct is to leave the church altogether by renouncing jurisdiction (D-3.0106). The permanent ban now in G-2.0509 is only a first step towards discerning how to set up a process that keeps the public trust in professional ministry while protecting the church from predators.

Lastly, while there is a trend for the *Book of Order* to contain fundamental principles instead of uniform procedures, the “Rules of Discipline” still needs to contain many specific safeguarding procedures, since the narratives of people's lives and careers are at stake. To ensure that no one can gain any advantage by renouncing jurisdiction instead of going through the disciplinary process, articulating a procedure in the *Book of Order* in some detail seems unavoidable.

Endnotes

1. Teaching elders are required to be trained and examined over many years before they are credentialed by presbyteries, after which they have special authorities and responsibilities that other members of the church do not (c.f., G-2.05, G-2.06, G-4.0301, W-1.4005).
2. James 3:1; see also *Book of Confessions*, 5.167.
3. This amendment was proposed by two presbyteries that had formed a joint administrative commission (AC) to make pastoral inquiry about the actions of a former teaching elder who had renounced jurisdiction while being accused in 2012 [c.f., G-3.0109b(6)]. The AC concluded that the former teaching elder had molested at least five youth with ages ranging from 8 to 17 years old between 1984 to 1995. See the minutes of the stated meeting of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta on August 17, 2013, pages A-34 to A-67, searchable on-line at: < http://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3181744/August_17_2013_Minutes.pdf >.
(After clicking on the link, refreshing the browser may cause the special typesetting characters to convert to English.)
4. Advice to the 221st General Assembly (2014) from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC), which had opposed the amendment to G-2.0509 that eventually passed.
< https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2014-proposed-boa-electronic-version%5B1%5D.pdf >
5. If the former teaching elder joins a congregation, the session would request a reference in order to transfer responsibility of the disciplinary case from the session to its presbytery (D-4.0000). If the presbytery where the self-accused is seeking to be restored to work is not

the same as the presbytery in which the self-accused initially renounced jurisdiction, “[t]he involved [presbyteries] shall proceed cooperatively with judicial process” (D-10.0104).

6. A member of the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) advised that, while victims should not be required to participate since they may feel re-victimized [ed. note: at a time of the offender’s choosing], victims should be given a space to be heard if they wish, since it may be very important to them.

7. *Book of Order*, D-10.0401.

8. “No statute of limitations shall extend to any person fleeing from justice” (18 U.S.C. §3290). See p. 10 of Doyle, Charles, *Statutes of Limitations in Federal Criminal Cases: An Overview*, Congressional Research Service, October 1, 2012. (The Reformed tradition has long held that God works through civil/secular government processes as well as those of the church. See *Book of Confessions*, 5.252–5.253; 8.22.)

9. See the Summary Report of the AC referenced in Footnote 3 above.

10. To complete such a background check today, one can access a database of present and former teaching elders through a PC(USA) website (which has been set up to administer pensions) to determine if an individual ever used to be a teaching elder. Then one can contact the presbytery of which the former teaching elder had most recently been a member to find out if the teaching elder had renounced jurisdiction while being accused in a disciplinary case. Unless the investigating committee filed charges before the accused renounced, the nature of the accusation is never to be disclosed (c.f., D-3.0106).

11. <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/06/05/archdiocese-investigation>

Concurrence to Item 06-10 from the Presbytery of Cimarron.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 06-10.

The ACWC does not support Item 06-10. We are in agreement with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution’s advice that this resolution would require an individual to plead guilty to all allegations or charges, which denies the individual the right to a fair trial (D-11.0101) in closed proceedings (D-11.0306), under the presumption of innocence (D-11.0401). This recommendation would enable the individual and councils to forgo important disciplinary procedures that are already indicated in the *Book of Order*. It is through the already established disciplinary processes that reconciliation is possible.

Item 06-11

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-11. See pp. 49, 51.]

On Amending G-3.0104 to Clarify the Role of Ecclesiastical Officers—From the Presbytery Of Detroit.

The Presbytery of Detroit overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-3.0104 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“G-3.0104 *Ecclesiastical Officers*

“(a) *Moderator*

“The pastor of a congregation shall be the moderator of the session of that congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall both be considered moderators and have provisions for designating who presides at a particular meeting. If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.

“The moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the body. He or she shall convene and adjourn the body in accordance with its own action.

Each council higher than the session shall elect a moderator for such terms as the council determines. At the time of their election, moderators must be continuing members of, or commissioners to, the council over which they are elected to preside. They shall preside at meetings of the council during their term of office; councils shall provide by rule who shall preside in the absence of the moderator.

“(b) Clerk and Stated Clerk

“Each council shall elect a clerk who shall record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registers, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church. Such extracts, verified by the clerk, shall be evidence in any council of the church. The clerk of the session shall be a ruling elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine.

“The clerk of a presbytery, a synod, and the General Assembly shall be called stated clerk, shall be elected by the council for a definite term as it may determine, and must be a ruling elder or teaching elder. *A stated clerk is the council’s chief ecclesiastical administrator and relates to other governing bodies and Christian communions, interprets council actions, represents the council, staffs the council’s permanent judicial commission, and is the council’s executive secretary and parliamentarian.*

“A stated clerk may be removed from office prior to completion of his or her term of service through the use of the process outlined in G-3.0110.

“Councils may elect such other officers as the council requires.”

Rationale

The ecclesiastical governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is deeply rooted in John Calvin’s *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*. John Calvin, as well as his successor, Theodore Beza, were committed to the plurality of church ministers, and never intended for church governance to be the right nor responsibility of a single person, be it a bishop or a pastor. Hence the Geneva Consistory and Company of Pastors informed the reformation of the Church of Scotland under John Knox and Andrew Melville, from whence our denomination descends, along with our polity.¹

These amendments underscore the historic and current chief ecclesiastical offices of each council of the church. With these amendments the elected offices of the church are further defined as ecclesial, which aids in our ecumenical dialogues, and gives further explanation of their particular functions.²

The amendment to the role of moderators in the ordination and installation of ordered ministers connects the Form of Government to the Directory for Worship, and underscores the historic role of all moderators in this sacred role in local congregations as well as in presbyteries.

The amendment to the role of stated clerks more clearly marks the historic tradition and function of a stated clerk within the Presbyterian tradition, and brings the Form of Government in line with the practice and the guidance already given by the Office of the General Assembly.

Endnotes

1. For further reading on the historic role of moderators and clerks, see Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin’s Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church 1536–1609*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
2. Under Calvin and Bucer, the role of moderator was to be the presiding presbyter elected by peers, responsible to oversee the meetings of the assembled presbyters of a given council, and served as the chief spokesperson. The moderator was also given precedence at ceremonial functions, like ordinations and installations (Ibid, 62). This was one part of the former role of a bishop in episcopal traditions. The role and function of principal or stated clerks is administrative, again picking up the other part of the traditional role of bishops in the episcopal traditions, having oversight and stewardship of the daily business of a given council as well as judicial process.

Concurrence to Item 06-11 from the Presbyteries of East Iowa and Minnesota Valleys.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-11

Advice on Item 06-11—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 06-11.

The overture proposes an amendment to G-3.0104 to insert language concerning the roles and functions of stated clerks. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the overture would grant powers to the stated clerk that constitutionally reside within the council, and are best left to individual councils to delegate according to the needs of their particular context. In addition, by assigning different roles and functions to stated clerks only (and not clerks of session) the essential unity of the office across gradations of councils would be lost. The particular proposals will be addressed serially.

The descriptors used in the overture pose particular challenges. The title “chief ecclesiastical administrator” is not supported by the Constitution or by the historical polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It also creates immediate conflict in

councils where this role has been assigned to other executive or administrative staff or has been retained by the council itself. The language, “relates to other governing bodies and Christian communions, interprets, council actions, represents the council...” suggests broad authority that is not supported by the Constitution. The inherent powers of the stated clerk are limited to the specific functions enumerated in the Constitution.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) (Item 05-14) clarified the distinction between the core constitutional functions inherent in the office of stated clerk and the administrative functions which may be assigned to stated clerks, executives, other administrative staff, or may be retained by the council (G-3.0110). The powers of oversight, interpretation, and relationship to other councils or denominations reside in the body as a whole, of which the officers are servants: “Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in councils” (F-3.0208).

The stated clerk performs important functions assigned in the Rules of Discipline. However, the phrase “staffs the council’s permanent judicial commission” could suggest roles and functions not enumerated in the Constitution, and does not properly reflect the role of the stated clerk as a facilitator for judicial process beyond the permanent judicial commission.

Particular advice is warranted regarding the title “parliamentarian.” The *Book of Order* nowhere requires the appointment of a parliamentarian or that it be a role assigned to the stated clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises this is a role that should be addressed in the standing rules of the council and not mandated by the Constitution.

The overture would impose a staffing model irrespective of the particular needs and context of a council. Historically and presently, the role of council officers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been limited by design. This does not preclude a council from assigning additional duties and delegating responsibility to a clerk should it so choose, according to its particular mission context.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-11

Comment on Item 06-11—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 06-11, on amending G-3.0104 to clarify the role of ecclesiastical officers.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk, as well as the Standing Rules under which the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly operates.

This item would mandate that stated clerks in presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly be assigned duties that they may or may not currently have. COGA is of the view that building such responsibilities into the Form of Government is unwise. First, it constrains all councils in the structure of their administration, at a time in the denomination in which the Form of Government seeks to allow councils freedom in designing structure and administration. Many current presbytery or synod stated clerks may have no interest in taking on the responsibilities added by this amendment. Those councils that wish to add such responsibilities to the duties of their stated clerks are currently free to do so. At the General Assembly level, the proposal is unclear in precisely what it means that the Stated Clerk “interprets council actions,” “represents the council,” and “is the council’s executive secretary and parliamentarian.” The committee is concerned that at a time in which the denomination is engaged in actively discerning its identity, such an amendment may add either confusion to the process or remove flexibility in the consideration of the most effective expressions of that identity.

Item 06-12

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-12. See pp. 49, 52.]

On Amending Book of Order, G-6.02, Concerning the Role of the ACC and PJC When Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

The Presbytery of Grand Canyon overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Amend the first paragraph of G-6.02 as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“The General Assembly may provide authoritative interpretation of the Book of Order, which shall be binding on the councils of the church when rendered in the manner described in this section or through a decision of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in a remedial or disciplinary case. *The General Assembly’s Permanent Judicial Commission may issue a stay of enforcement if it finds the enactment of an authoritative interpretation (AI) to have been*

issued outside of the prescribed procedures found in the General Assembly's Standing Rules and deemed detrimental to the denomination as a whole."

Rationale

It seems obvious that some changes need to be made in the General Assembly's Standing Rules so that they more clearly and explicitly define the governing procedures and express the scriptural basis upon which our denomination was ordained.

Understanding that recommendations of the Advisory Committee of the Constitution (ACC), which become authoritative interpretations (AI) when passed by the General Assembly, commissioners not only carry with them the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) but also become effective immediately. Nevertheless, they should *not* be enacted in haste. The importance of such action and its effect upon the numerous individual church bodies requires much thought and prayerful deliberation in order to prevent the abuse of power by a few.

The commissioners to General Assembly must have the ability to clearly understand the implications resulting from their support of an authoritative interpretation (AI), the rationale of the issues placed before them, and the process by which an AI is both rendered and implemented. The existing procedure has a tendency to be self-serving and does not provide for transparency. The ability of the permanent judiciary committee to issue a stay of enforcement of an enacted AI is essential to protecting the integrity and the credibility of the Presbyterian denomination.

The current rules for amending the *Book of Order* by a simple majority vote of one General Assembly and a simple majority of the presbyteries has fostered the instability of the church's Constitution. The result of this condition has led to both the loss of support for the work we are commissioned to achieve and a decline in the denomination's membership.

Concurrence to Item 06-12 from the Presbytery of de Cristo.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-12

Advice on Item 06-12—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that Item 06-12 amendment to the *Book of Order* be disapproved.

This overture would expand the powers of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission to permit that body to stay enforcement of an action of the assembly itself. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to disapprove Item 06-12.

This overture proposes that G-6.02 be amended to grant authority to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) to issue a stay of enforcement of an action by the General Assembly. The GAPJC has specific authority to act in response to the facts of a particular case. The GAPJC does not have general power to review or invalidate the actions of the General Assembly. The GAPJC found in *First Presbyterian Church, Palmdale v. The 221st General Assembly (222-02)* that "this Commission [GAPJC] has no jurisdiction over the GA or the Committee."

This amendment posits a fundamental change in the power of the GAPJC. In effect, it makes the GAPJC the final arbiter of all actions, including those of the assembly. It is inherently inappropriate for a council to assign, outside its constitution, the power to overrule the will of the council to one of its commissions. (The power of the GAPJC to issue authoritative interpretations in specific cases is granted by the Constitution, not the assembly.) The 219th Assembly (2010) considered the inverse proposal that GAPJC decisions be reviewed by the assembly, and rejected that amendment (Item 05-24).

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-12

Comment on Item 06-12—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly advises the assembly to disapprove Item 06-12.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) consists of fifteen elected members and was created "to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk ..." (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It also regularly reviews the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

The COGA believes that approval of this item is not practical, wise, or consistent with our polity. The proposed amendment would give the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Committee (GAPJC) the power to stay an action of the General Assembly, but nothing more. The GAPJC has found that the Rules of Discipline give it no power to review an action of the General Assembly. See, e.g., *Session of First Presbyterian Church Palmdale v. The 221st General Assembly*, Remedial Case 2014-06; *Session, New Lebanon Church v. General Assembly*, Remedial Case 210-8, *Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 137; *Metherell*

v. *The 204th General Assembly*, Remedial Case 205-3, *Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 177. Thus, the proposal would grant the GAPJC the power to stay an action of a General Assembly, but not the power to move forward to determine whether the action was legitimate. Further, the GAPJC is a commission of the General Assembly. It would be a major departure from Presbyterian polity to allow a commission to review and overturn a decision of the council that created it.

Item 06-13

[The assembly disapproved Item 06-13. See pp. 49, 52.]

On Amending Section G-2.1001 to Clarify the Discretion Given Presbyteries to Utilize Commissioned Ruling Elders—From the Presbytery de Cristo.

The Presbytery de Cristo respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-2.1001 be amended as follows: [Text to be inserted is shown as italic.]

“When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee *within the presbytery*, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. *The commission may be to more than one specified congregation for occasional specified service, when such requests for occasional service originate from the session or its clerk or the pastor.* This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.”

Rationale

A number of presbyteries (such as the Presbytery de Cristo) have churches not served by a teaching elder (TE) nor, on a regular basis, by an assigned commissioned ruling elder (CRE). In addition, there may be some number of single pastor (sometimes part-time) churches, and geographical distances involved which mean that TE’s are not always available or agreeable to administering the Sacraments or moderating session or congregational meetings when congregations or their sessions so require.

To deal with this, several presbyteries (including de Cristo) have adopted the commissioning of CRE’s to a list of specific congregations where, upon request from the clerk of session or the session or, in other cases, the TE, these CRE’s can administer the Sacraments or moderate meetings at any of these named congregations.

While these presbyteries believe this is wholly within the bounds of the existing section G-2.1001 of the *Book of Order*, there has been a disciplinary complaint filed seeking to reject this practice as not in accord with the *Book of Order*.

While this complaint may well ultimately fail in the judicial system of the church, it appears sensible and helpful to the presbyteries using CRE’s in this manner and to others considering such usage, to remove any ambiguity in G-2.1001 and provide for such service to congregations.

Concurrence to Item 06-13 from the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-13

Advice on Item 06-13—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly to disapprove Item 06-13.

The amendment seeks to permit the use of commissioned ruling elders in more than one congregation to perform occasional specified tasks. From the overture’s rationale, these tasks are celebrating the Sacraments and moderating session and congregational meetings, when securing a teaching elder to perform them is difficult. While the overture is focused on the Sacraments and moderating, the proposed amendment will make it possible for a commissioned ruling elder to perform any function included in the commission, upon invitation by a session, its clerk, or pastor.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that this amendment is not necessary. One of the provisions of G-2.1001 empowers the presbytery to determine, if its strategy for mission requires it, how to structure commissions within the presbytery. There is nothing in G-2.10 that limits a presbytery from doing what this overture would provide, and G-2.0504b

permits a presbytery to create temporary pastoral relationships for congregations that do not have an installed pastor, including a temporary relationship of occasional pulpit supply.

Section G-3.0301b gives a presbytery the responsibility and power of “authorizing and training specific ruling elders to administer or preside at the Lord’s Supper when it deems it necessary to meet the needs for the administration of the Sacrament.” Commissioned ruling elders are already trained and often authorized to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, as spelled out in their commissions. This service can also be provided by any ruling elder that the presbytery has trained and authorized.

Three sections of the Form of Government address the issue of the moderator of a congregation or session: G-1.0504, G-3.0104, and G-3.0201. All indicate that if the moderator is unable to serve, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator. Section G-3.0201 states that “presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.” A presbytery may define such a rule to permit commissioned ruling elders to serve as moderator, when invited by the pastor or moderator. The presbytery can train and authorize other ruling elders to serve as moderator, when needed, such as former moderators of presbytery or members of the committee on ministry, or its equivalent.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-13

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 06-13.

The ACREC concurs with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) and urges the assembly to follow the ACC advice.

Item 06-14

[The assembly approved Item 06-14. See pp. 49, 52.]

On Creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force Charged with Revising the Rules of Discipline—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the PC(USA) to create a Rules of Discipline Task Force, to be charged with revising the entire Rules of Discipline to make the Rules of Discipline more accessible to the church, to preserve and enhance the accountability of councils and individuals to the church, to expand the role of mediation and alternate dispute resolution, and to provide flexibility in crafting censures and remedies, particularly in light of recent learnings in ethical and social development and experiments by the secular legal system with alternative sentencing. The task force, which shall be appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) Moderator, shall release its proposed revised draft by September 2017, and shall gather comments and present a final report to the 224th General Assembly (2020).

Rationale

The Rules of Discipline express a profound vision:

The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ. (*Book of Order*, D-1.0102).

Unfortunately, the vision does not match the reality.

The Rules of Discipline are confusing to those who are unfamiliar with them: one cannot read the Rules of Discipline and understand how the process works. Moreover, much of the binding authority interpreting the Rules of Discipline is found only in decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission or authoritative interpretations by the General Assembly. That authority is accessible only to persons who know about and can access the *Annotated Book of Order* and/or the *Stated Clerks’ Handbook*.

The Rules of Discipline are poorly organized. The chapters pertaining to remedial actions describe what a complaint is (D-6.0201) and who may file it (D-6.0202), only after explaining in detail how to request a stay (D-6.0100). The necessary subject of a remedial action, a delinquency or an irregularity by a council, is defined four chapters earlier (D-2.0202). Jurisdictional requirements, also known as preliminary questions, while implied in D-2.0202 (definition of irregularity and delinquency) and D-6.0202 (who may file), are actually found in D-6.0305—Examination of Papers. Confusion about who may file has been particularly acute in cases involving synod administrative commissions assuming original jurisdiction over

presbyteries, including presbytery administrative commissions, for example *Hwang v. Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Remedial Case 220-05* (2011); *Kim, et al. v. Administrative Commission of the Synod of Lincoln Trails, Remedial Case 221-07* (2013).

The chapters pertaining to disciplinary actions are equally confusing. An “offense” is defined only as “any act or omission by a member or a person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (D-2.0203b). However, there is also a significant definition of “sexual abuse,” found in D-10.0401. Section D-10.0401 provides the statute of limitations for offenses, but does so only in the context of explaining when charges may be filed. Inexplicably, while there is no statute of limitations for sexual abuse, the usual five-year statute of limitations applies to all other forms of abuse, including serious, perhaps even fatal, physical abuse.

Above all, it is time to evaluate the wisdom of the Rules of Discipline. The advantage of our current process is that it acts as an intervention—confronting the accused with the consequences of his or her own behavior—while also giving the victim a voice. The requirement of a public rebuke provides for transparency: rebukes put the basic facts on the table, and guarantee both that misconduct will not be swept under the rug and that those involved in the disciplinary process—the stated clerk, the permanent judicial commission, the investigating committee—cannot act as a secret police.

However, the current language required in rebukes is quite harsh (see, e.g., D-12.0102), and out of proportion for many offenses. For lesser wrongs, the harshness of the mandatory rebuke promotes alienation rather than healing and restoration. Because there is no censure that does not include a rebuke, and no flexibility to temper the language of a rebuke to fit the severity of the offense, one ends by rebuking a jaywalker with the same words one uses to rebuke an ax murderer. The only alternative to public shaming is sweeping the problem under the rug. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can do better than this. We have much to learn, particularly from the secular legal system’s experiments with alternative sentencing for juveniles and misdemeanors.

Over the past decade, the Form of Government has been substantially revised, and a revised Directory for Worship will be presented to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for consideration and adoption. It is time for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to turn its attention to the Rules of Discipline, so it may fulfill the promise of its Preamble.

The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings (D-1.0101).

Concurrence to Item 06-14 from the Presbytery of Denver.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-14

Comment on Item 06-14—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 06-14, on creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force charged with revising the Rules of Discipline.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the work of the Stated Clerk. In that capacity, it has had opportunity to review the effectiveness of the Rules of Discipline. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly also oversees the per capita budget of the General Assembly, which would fund the task force proposed.

In light of the few specific concerns raised by the overture, which could be addressed by future overtures making relatively minor revisions to the existing Rules of Discipline, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly is concerned that the expense of creating a task force is not justified by the concerns raised. Each of the concerns raised in this overture could be addressed by a straightforward amendment to the Rules of Discipline, if indeed the concern has merit. In addition to the cost of creating a task force, a major revision of the Rules of Discipline, made simply for the sake of revision, would remove useful precedential interpretations of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission and create confusion in cases currently in process. The Committee of the Office of the General Assembly does not see evidence that any of these costs are warranted.

Item 06-15

Recommendation to Amend G-2.1101, Forms of Certified Church Service, in the Book of Order and also Approve National Certifying Bodies—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following:

[The assembly approved Item 06-15, Recommendation 1. See pp. 49, 52.]

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following *Book of Order* amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-2.1101 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by of a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.”~~

Rationale for Recommendation 1.

Current language in the *Book of Order* calling for a “handbook” seems antiquated and limiting. Most organizations maintain certification requirements on-line or in other electronic formats. This change would provide clarification and reflect current practice.

[The assembly approved Item 06-15, Recommendation 2. See pp. 49, 52.]

2. Approve the applications of the Administrative Personnel Association, the Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians as national certifying bodies.

Rationale for Recommendation 2.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s *Book of Order* calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly approved, at its October 2015 meeting, the application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

Approved national certifying bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an approved national certifying body.

Applications were due to the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) by January 15, 2016. OGA received three applications: the Administrative Personnel Association, the Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) is asked to review the applications and transmit appropriate applications to the General Assembly for action.

COGA, in reviewing the applications, gave thanks to the Administrative Professionals Association, Educator Certification Committee, and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians. As the applications were reviewed, COGA discussed two areas for comment. First is uncertain financial standing on which these professional associations stand. Two of the three certifying bodies recommended by COGA operated on a deficit budget in the last fiscal year. COGA encourages all certifying bodies to determine a strategic path to return to financial solvency in the near future. Second, COGA encourages these certifying bodies to explore ways to increase membership and certification within their memberships. COGA affirms the necessity for these certifying bodies in our church and further encourages these groups to continue their work while exploring ways to be creative in growing their work to reach all eligible church professionals.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Section G-2.11 from the *Book of Order*
- Attachment 2: Synopsis* of the Application from the Administrative Personnel Association, p. 428 of the electronic copy
- Attachment 3. Application form* from the Educator Certification Committee, p. 431 of the electronic copy
- Attachment 4. Narrative section* from the application from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, p. 435 of the electronic copy

*—The full applications from these organizations include several supporting documents. A hard copy will be available during the COGA meeting and access to the electronic versions are available upon request (please contact Kerry Rice at kerry.rice@pcusa.org).

Attachment 1

From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s *Book of Order*

G-2.11 CERTIFIED CHURCH SERVICE

G-2.1101 Forms of Certified Church Service

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

G-2.1102 Presbytery and Certified Church Service

The presbytery shall encourage sessions to make continuing education funds and time available to those seeking certification, and shall affirm the skill and dedication of these certified persons by providing a service of recognition at the time of certification. The presbytery may grant the privilege of voice at all its meetings to persons in certified church service.

G-2.1103 Christian Educators

a. *Skills and Training*

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, faith development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. *Presbytery Responsibility*

The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

Attachment 2

Synopsis* of the Application from the Administrative Personnel Association

See PDF file: 06-15-attachments2-4.pdf on page 428 of the electronic file.

*—The full applications from these organizations include several supporting documents. A hard copy will be available during the COGA meeting and access to the electronic versions are available upon request. (Please contact Kerry Rice at kerry.rice@pcusa.org.)

Attachment 3

Application Form* from the Educator Certification Committee

See PDF file: 06-15-attachments2-4.pdf on page 431 of the electronic file.

*—The full applications from these organizations include several supporting documents. A hard copy will be available during the COGA meeting and access to the electronic versions are available upon request. (Please contact Kerry Rice at kerry.rice@pcusa.org.)

Attachment 4

Narrative Section* from the Application from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians

See PDF file: 06-15-attachments2-4.pdf on page 435 of the electronic file.

*—The full applications from these organizations include several supporting documents. A hard copy will be available during the COGA meeting and access to the electronic versions are available upon request. (Please contact Kerry Rice at kerry.rice@pcusa.org.)

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-15

Advice on Item 06-15—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 06-15.

Current language in the *Book of Order* calling for a “handbook” seems antiquated and limiting. Most organizations maintain certification requirements online or in other electronic formats. This change would provide clarification and reflect current practice.

Item 06-16

[The assembly referred Item 06-16 to the Office of the General Assembly with comment. See pp. 49, 52.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) refers Item 06-16 to the Office of the General Assembly to develop and recommend language that addresses the problems raised by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) and report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).]

A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Amend D-10.0401 by adding a new section “d.” to read as follows:

“d. For instances of gross negligence enabling the sexual abuse of another person, charges may be filed within ten years of the date the person making the accusation attains the age of eighteen, or within five years of the date the person making the accusation discovers or reasonably should have discovered that gross negligence enabled the sexual abuse to occur, whichever later occurs.”

Rationale

This recommendation adds to the list of those additional persons who are to be held accountable for the abuse of children, expands the definition of behavior that may fall under the disciplinary process, and removes the time limitation.

Extensions for filing civil actions for child sexual abuse are most often based upon the discovery rule—by the time the victim discovers the sexual abuse or the relationship of the conduct to the injuries, the ordinary time limitation may have expired. This “delayed discovery” may be due to emotional and psychological trauma and is often accompanied by repression of the memory of abuse. [For victims that are minors, they] frequently do not discover the relationship of their psychological injuries to the abuse until well into adulthood—usually during the course of psychological counseling or therapy. They may not even discover the fact of such abuse until they undergo such therapy. (State Civil Statutes of Limitations in Child Sexual Abuse Cases.” *National Conference of State Legislatures*. National Conference of State Legislatures, July 2012. 20 October 2015. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/state-civil-statutes-of-limitations-in-child-sexua.aspx>)

Additionally, it has been well documented that children are “groomed” by their abusers not to talk about being sexually abused. The process of grooming that perpetrators engage in conditions the young person to believe that “telling” would cause some great irreparable damage, either to themselves, their families, or even the abuser. Often times, “keeping that secret becomes the only thing the child can do to feel some safety, some semblance of control.” And, it can take decades for the victim to begin a journey toward healing and becoming a survivor (“Why Don’t Children Report Abuse Earlier?” Stop Abuse Campaign: Working Together to Stop Abuse. Stop Abuse Campaign, n.d. Web. 20 Oct. 2015. <https://stopabusecampaign.com/protect-children/child-abuse-prevention-courses/why-dont-children-report-aabuse-earlier/>).

Once victims of sexual abuse in the church have come to a safe, emotional, psychological, or even spiritual space to report abuse, often well into adulthood, they are often met with time limitations that prohibit finding true systemic accountability. The current language of the *Book of Order* allows for a disciplinary process to hold perpetrators accountable, but decision makers and church leaders who acted with gross negligence (who knew or reasonably should have known of the danger or risk posed by perpetrators with histories of boundary violations involving sexual misconduct) are unable to be held accountable.

It is the church’s responsibility to provide a safe and sacred space for children and youth to discover their God-given potential, “and we must take seriously how our faith informs this responsibility. Our theology of the child is reflected in how we care for and nurture children and youth who are under the care of the church. This theology must reflect the love, care, and high regard for the humanity and dignity of the child reflected in the Gospels” (“14-C. Child Protection Policy.” *Pcusa.org*. Office of the General Assembly: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), 2014. Web. 27 Oct. 2015, p. 11, [http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2014-proposed-boa-electronic-version\[1\].pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2014-proposed-boa-electronic-version[1].pdf)). And, it must take seriously the power and role of decision makers and church leaders who are entrusted with the responsibility of providing safe and sacred space.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 06-16

Advice on Item 06-16—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that Item 06-16 from the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns raises issues that the assembly should consider.

The overture seeks to extend the time limitation for filing charges in cases of alleged “gross negligence enabling the sexual abuse of another person” from the default time limit of five years to “within ten years of the date the person making the

accusation attains the age of eighteen, or within five years of the date the person making the accusation discovers or reasonably should have discovered that gross negligence enabled the sexual abuse to occur, whichever later occurs.”

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution concurs with the intent of the recommendation and finds the intent consistent with the purposes of discipline. The recommendation, however, raises the following issues:

1. The recommendation proposes introducing legal terminology into the Rules of Discipline that is not constitutionally defined. “Gross negligence” and “enabling” are defined in particular jurisdictions of secular law, but are not defined in the Constitution. As with the term “sexual abuse” in D-10.0401c, a specific definition is warranted to justify the waiver or extension of time limits for filing charges.

2. A specific definition is also necessary to help identify the scope of persons to be held responsible for “gross negligence enabling the sexual abuse of another person.”

3. The lack of definition noted in 1. and 2. above may intimidate persons so that they discount efforts at rehabilitation and restoration to good standing following a conviction lest they risk exposure to charges in the future.

4. The determination of the applicable time limit as stated in the overture—“within five years of the date the person making the accusation discovers or reasonably should have discovered”—presents issues of fundamental fairness. An accused person could only assert a time bar against the charges through a trial of fact at a preliminary hearing without having seen the evidence on which the determination is based, or submit to a full trial in order to establish a claim against the timeliness of the filing of the charges. This particular concern could be addressed by removing time limits for filing charges alleging the proposed offense, as is the case with charges alleging sexual abuse.

Because of the issues of ambiguity and fundamental fairness outlined above, the ACC advises the assembly that, should it agree with the intent of the recommendation, it refer the recommendation to the Office of the General Assembly to develop and recommend language that addresses the problems raised above and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Item 06-17

[The assembly approved Item 06-17 with amendment. See pp. 13, 52.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding Church Property.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016)

1. takes notice that this conflict (settlement of disputes regarding church property) exists and acknowledges that presbyteries are working to adapt to a difficult and changing legal landscape;

2. prays for our presbyteries and our congregations as they face legal challenges[§] [.]

3. [Recommendation 3. was declined because it implied constitutional interpretation.]

~~[4. invites this General Assembly to encourage conversation about the long term implications of court rulings that property is a legal issue and not an ecclesiastical issue.]~~

Rationale

This commissioners’ resolution originates from situations that are developing in the State of Texas and in other areas, as well. Due to recent court decisions, circumstances now exist where presbyteries are functionally unable to enforce G-4.0203 (Church Property Held in Trust, known as the Trust Clause). This commissioners’ resolution seeks to inform the General Assembly of the current situation, to petition the body for prayers for the affected presbyteries, and to ask for forbearance as presbyteries seek to work through a developing conflict between state law and the requirements of the *Book of Order*.

Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), each congregation has the right and responsibility to own, possess, and control church property.

The only ecclesiastical limitations to the property rights of a congregation are found in the *Book of Order*: G-4.0203 (Church Property Held in Trust), G-4.0204 (Property Used Contrary to the Constitution), and G-4.0205 (Property of a Dissolved or Extinct Congregation).

Congregations have challenged these and similar ecclesiastical property rules in state courts and, in some states, courts are ruling consistently in favor of the local congregations and against the larger ecclesiastical judicatories.

The “presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness” (G-3.0301, see also G-3.0303b, d(3), e).

This commissioners’ resolution seeks relief for presbyteries where there is now a conflict between the *Book of Order* and the state law. The conflict exists clearly when ecclesiastical law requires the presbytery to defend the property interests of the PC(USA) and civil law, either through judicial rulings or legislative action, has rendered the Trust Clause (G-4.0203, Church Property Held in Trust) to be of no force or effect.

For example, in some states it may be permissible for a congregation to ask to clarify its property rights. This request might take the form of a congregation, acting properly through its trustees, asking the presbytery to execute a Quitclaim Deed in favor of the congregation. Regardless of the requirements of state law, the *Book of Order* arguably prohibits the presbytery from granting the congregation’s request and requires the presbytery to defend the property interests of the PC(USA).

In similar circumstances, some congregations have filed lawsuits against the presbytery, the synod, and the PC(USA). This litigation has been costly and counterproductive. Some presbyteries have suffered significant financial losses related to the litigation. In these lawsuits, congregations routinely request and courts routinely issue restraining orders against the higher governing bodies. These restraining orders limit a presbytery’s ability to fulfill its ordinary ecclesiastical responsibilities.

BACKGROUND: The Book of Order and Church Property

The *Book of Order* reflects wisdom received from our predecessor denominations, including the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). An example of this is the shared value reflected in the principle that church property is held in trust for the larger denomination. In the circumstances of congregational dissolutions and church closures, this principle has allowed for the church property to be used to carry the work of the church to successive generations. However, recent state court rulings and other legislative actions have created circumstances where the requirements of the *Book of Order* are in conflict with the requirements of state law. This situation is unproductive and unsustainable for affected presbyteries.

In principle and in practice each congregation is simultaneously an expression of the Body of Christ and an institution of the state in which it is located. This is to say that each congregation, as a part of the Body of Christ, bears witness to Jesus Christ in the fullness of our biblical and theological traditions; and, that each congregation, as an institution of the world, is also subject to the ordering and responsibilities required by civil authorities. When addressing issues of church property ownership and possession, the language of the *Book of Order* reflects the richness of our heritage, the complex nature of the church, and our commitment to the ongoing work of the church.

The *Book of Order* recognizes civil law and requires compliance with it. For example, our Form of Government establishes, “Where permitted by civil law, each congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed and maintained” (G-4.0101). Furthermore, the Form of Government grants certain civil responsibilities to the congregation:

The corporation so formed, or the individual trustees, shall have the following powers: to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for the congregation, provided that in buying, selling, and mortgaging real property, the trustees shall act only after the approval of the congregation, granted in a duly constituted meeting; to accept and execute deeds of title to such property; to hold and defend title to such property; to manage any permanent special funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the congregation, all subject to the authority of the session and under the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The powers and duties of the trustees shall not infringe upon the powers and duties of the session or the board of deacons. (*Book of Order*, G-4.0101)

The *Book of Order* also recognizes the connectional nature of the church and its continuation throughout the ages. Such is the wisdom that grants certain property rights to higher governing authorities—that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to continue beyond the lifespan of any particular congregation. As there was in the constitutions of the PCUS and the UPCUSA, the current *Book of Order* includes a provision that the property is held in trust for the denomination. “All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ... is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0203)

The language of the *Book of Order* recognizes that each congregation has authority and responsibility for the property owned by the congregation. However, the language of G-4.0203, G-4.0204, and G-4.0205 creates a property interest in favor of the PC(USA). A presbytery is required to take action in any of three possible situations: (1) when property “ceases to be used by that congregation as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in accordance with this Constitution” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0204), (2) when “a congregation is formally dissolved by the presbytery” (G-4.0205), and (3) when a congregation “has become extinct by reason of the dispersal of its members, the abandonment of its work, or other cause” (*Book of Order*, G-4.0205).

BACKGROUND: Conflicting Requirements of State Law

This commissioners' resolution has its origins in the State of Texas. The circumstances described in this rationale are rooted in a decision of the Texas Supreme Court. These same issues are likely to apply to other states and to other presbyteries as well.

In 2013, the Texas Supreme Court issued a widely publicized ruling regarding a property dispute between a congregation and The Episcopal Church of the United States (*Masterson v. Diocese of Northwest Texas*, 2013). At issue was a property dispute between a congregation and the denomination; and, like the PC(USA)'s *Book of Order*, the constitution of The Episcopal Church includes a property trust clause.

Among the issues addressed by the Texas Supreme Court was the legal methodology to be applied when considering issues related to the ownership and possession of church property. The court decided in favor of using a standard known as "neutral principals of law." The court concluded:

Under the neutral principles methodology, courts decide non-ecclesiastical issues such as property ownership based on the same neutral principles of law applicable to other entities, *Jones v. Wolf*, 443 U.S. 595, 603–04 (1979), while deferring to religious entities' decisions on ecclesiastical and church polity questions. See *Serbian E. Orthodox Diocese v. Milivojevic*, 426 U.S. 696, 708 (1976). (<file:///C:/Users/tstephen/Documents/RGAs/2016/Commissioners%20Resolutions/Robert-Masterson-et-al.-v.-Diocese-of-Northwest-Texas-et-al..pdf>, p. 2)

and

Properly exercising jurisdiction requires courts to apply neutral principles of law to non-ecclesiastical issues involving religious entities in the same manner as they apply those principles to other entities and issues. Thus, courts are to apply neutral principles of law to issues such as land titles, trusts, and corporate formation, governance, and dissolution, even when religious entities are involved. (*Ibid.*, p. 19)

The methodology of "neutral principles of law" does not simply or immediately wipe-away the property interests of the PC(USA). This methodology introduces a new and complex set of issues to be considered. The specifics are likely to vary from state-to-state, but, some of the matters to be considered are foreign to the language used in the *Book of Order*.

In *Masterson*, the Texas Supreme Court listed some of these considerations.

Under the neutral principles methodology, ownership of disputed property is determined by applying generally applicable law and legal principles. That application will usually include considering evidence such as deeds to the properties, terms of the local church charter (including articles of incorporation and by laws, if any), and relevant provisions of governing documents of the general church. (*Ibid.*, pp. 14–15)

As it currently reads, the *Book of Order* does not allow for a presbytery to consider the information required by the neutral principles of law and then to act in a manner that is inconsistent with G-4.0203.

David Green, Presbytery of New Covenant
Robert Field, Presbytery of Palo Duro

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-17

Advice & Counsel on Item 06-17—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 06-17 be disapproved.

This resolution appears to recommend that presbyteries accept and accommodate the use of "neutral principles" in some state laws governing church property, an approach that leaves out consideration of internal church principles and laws such as those that bind our congregations together. To say that we all hold our properties in trust to the single body to which we all belong is an important part of the identity of any connectional or hierarchical church. It should be part of the free practice of our religious beliefs to be able to define our own approaches to matters of property. It has generally been the practice of the PC(USA) (and some ecumenical partners) to contest the claims of congregations that decide to change their identity or affiliation and take with them property dedicated to our church and its predecessors.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) sees the trust clause to embody the solidarity of the church and the conviction that the church cannot be "owned." The Heidelberg Catechism states, "That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ" (*Book of Confessions*, 4.001). The trust clause puts this in both communal and concrete terms, so that *we* "are not [our] own . . ." In practical terms, it separates us from congregational polities, and throughout our history there have been various ways funds have circulated and been used to support each other. It is part of our social witness as a community to maintain that shared trust that points to the larger whole.

In a context where our church's beliefs are challenged and efforts made to weaken our connectionalism, ACSWP would encourage conversation on how to strengthen our bonds of mutual accountability and our ability to resist legal and other ef-

forts to weaken our church. It is not clear that this measure would add much to the discussions that regularly occur in many of our congregations and presbyteries.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 06-17

Comment on Item 06-17—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly offers the following comment on Item 06-17.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members. Its responsibilities include supporting and reviewing the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

Item 06-17 must be considered in light of existing authoritative interpretation of the responsibilities of presbyteries in addressing their responsibilities under G-4.0203 and G-4.0207. In *Tom v. Pby of San Francisco*, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) authoritatively interpreted the Trust Clause found in the *Book of Order* at G-4.0203. The GAPJC held that while a presbytery has broad discretionary authority under the *Book of Order* to determine property rights [within the context of determining the mission of Jesus Christ in the world (G-4.0201) and in its district (G-3.0303a) to dismiss a particular congregation within its geographic region (G- 3.0301[a]), the presbytery must fulfill its fiduciary duty under the Trust Clause (G-4.0203) to consider the interest of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a beneficiary of the property. The GAPJC stated that this process must include exercising due diligence regarding the value of the property of the congregation seeking dismissal, which would include doing a financial analysis of the value of the property. The presbytery must be informed of this financial analysis before it votes on a dismissal.

Since Item 06-17 was not brought within the 120-day deadline for seeking a constitutional interpretation, the committee does not believe that this assembly may take any action with respect to Item 06-17 that could be interpreted as in any manner altering the authoritative interpretation contained in the GAPJC's decision in *Tom*.

Further, Item 06-17 makes certain representations as to the content of various state legal decisions. The committee urges caution in accepting, without legal advice, the characterization of the impact of these legal decisions.

Item 06-Self-Study

[The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry approved Item 06-Self-Study. See pp. 49, 52.]

Report of the Self-Study Committee of the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

General Scope of the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) administers ordination examinations as a uniform (standard) process for assessing candidates' readiness to begin service as teaching elders performing the functions of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. These examinations are "prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries" (*Book of Order*, G-2.0607d), the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC).

Purpose and Principles of the Standard Ordination Exams

The denominational ordination exams within the Presbyterian church arose in the late 1950s and early 1960s in response to a perception that the historic pattern of each presbytery having sole responsibility for examining candidates for ordination was creating a growing disparity between the qualifications and preparedness of persons entering ministry across the church. There was a general perception that standards in some presbyteries were too lax, especially with respect to well-connected men from the dominant culture, even as presbyteries routinely examined women and racial ethnic candidates more stringently.

The exams began, then, from a concern for equitable treatment of those seeking ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The principles formed to achieve this purpose have provided the basis for the exams up to the present day. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor bodies have expressed the following principles on which the exams are based.¹

- *The exams are evaluated through a process of blind review by future peers in ministry (ruling and teaching elders) from outside one's own presbytery of care.*

The model of written examinations identified only by code number and evaluated by readers selected by presbyteries across the church works to minimize biases in reviewing the exams that might arise from preconceptions formed by evaluators about the candidate (either positive or negative) based on past contacts or stereotypes regarding geographical differences, gender, race, or human networks and connections, including those formed in seminaries. That evaluations are done by peers in ministry brings to the fore that the exams are focused on the practice of ministry.

- *The exams are an assessment of the ability to integrate seminary education with one's gifts for and past experience in ministry through demonstration of "pastoral imagination."*

The ordination exams are carefully constructed to perform a unique role within the preparation for ministry process. They are *not* tests of academic achievement; the seminaries properly assess that through grades in course work and fulfillment of degree requirements. They are *not* tests of the acceptability of the candidate's theological views or understanding of the church; the presbyteries properly make those assessments in relationship to particular fields of ministry. The exams *do* emphasize responses that are consistent with the Reformed tradition. They *are* assessments of a candidate's ability to integrate academic training and experience gained through the supervised practice of ministry when responding to situations typical of those encountered in fulfilling the responsibilities of a teaching elder engaged in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. This integrative ability has been described as "pastoral imagination" by one study of clergy professional preparation and formation.²

- *The standard of assessment is readiness to begin ministry as a teaching elder.*

In forming their assessment of responses to exam questions, readers are instructed to use two basic considerations. (1) Whether the response addressed all the elements required by the questions. The abilities to listen carefully to information that has been presented and to respond completely to what is required in a given situation are key pastoral skills. (2) Whether the response demonstrates sufficient understanding of the issues presented and ability to convert that understanding into practical application in ministry as would be expected of someone beginning in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The issue is not whether an answer shows the depth one would hope to see from someone with decades of ministry experience, but rather of someone starting out.

- *The evaluations are done in a context and spirit of Christian community.*

The exam scenarios arise from the lived experience of the church and are evaluated with concern for the future of those who will serve it and those who will be ministered to by them. The evaluation process, then, is always to be an expression of loving Christian concern for all those within the community of the church.

The Areas of Examination

There are currently five standard ordination examinations approved by the General Assembly: Bible Content, Bible Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship and Sacraments, and Church Polity. "Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder" in these areas of competence is required of all those who will serve the functions of ministry of Word and Sacrament as teaching elders (*Book of Order*, G-2.0607, G-2.0610; see also G-2.0505a).

The Bible Content Examination is a "multiple choice" and "matching" exam ordinarily taken during the first year or at the beginning of the second year of seminary to determine basic knowledge of the Bible. The other four exams present pastoral challenges offering candidates the opportunity to demonstrate how they integrate faith and theological education in ministry utilizing "energy, intelligence, imagination, and love" (see *Book of Order*, W-4.4003h).

Strategies for Accomplishing Its Mandate

Membership and Meetings of the PCC³

The Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC) will be composed of no fewer than twelve members and no more than twenty-four members who are ruling or teaching elders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

- No more than half and no less than one-third of the members will be elected by the General Assembly to four-year terms on a staggered schedule. These members will be eligible to be reelected for an additional term. Candidates for these positions are nominated through the General Assembly Nominating Committee with consideration being given to areas of needed expertise, to gender and racial ethnic representation, to an approximate balance of ruling and teaching elders, and to various subcultures within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with regard to the overall composition of the PCC.
- Remaining members of the PCC will be elected from among and by examination readers designated by the presbyteries. To facilitate representation from across the church, the PCC will group presbyteries into regions. The reader representatives will be nominated from and voted on by readers from their respective regional groupings of presbyteries following procedures determined by the PCC. These members will be elected and serve on a staggered schedule in four-year terms, and will be eligible to be reelected for an additional term.

The PCC meets at least once annually to develop and review the forthcoming examinations and to transact such other business as may be necessary. The members of the PCC are divided into task groups of approximately equal size. Each task group is responsible for the development of questions and resources to assist readers for one or more of the standard ordina-

tion examinations. Members are assigned to a task group by the executive committee based upon personal interest and expertise of each member as well as upon the comparative needs of each task group.

Development of Examinations

The PCC utilizes “consultants” brought in to assist the Bible Task Group of the PCC (which also develops the Exegesis exam) by developing new questions for the Bible Content Exam (BCE). These consultants are ruling or teaching elders in the PC(USA) who hold graduate training in biblical studies beyond the M.Div. (usually the Ph.D., but sometimes other professional degrees such as the Th.M. or D.Min.), and usually serving on seminary faculties. The consultants also propose which former questions to include in each BCE administration. Beginning in September 2015, the PCC withdrew from use any questions that had previously been publicly released along with exam results—a practice that was discontinued in 2010 with the move to online administration of the BCE. The PCC was concerned about mounting evidence that inquirers and candidates were overly reliant in their preparation for the BCE on studying those publicly available questions rather than the Bible itself. After the initial draft of a BCE is developed, it is commented upon by the Bible Task Group prior to final copyediting and translation into Korean and Spanish.

The development of senior examinations in the areas of Bible Exegesis, Church Polity, Theological Competence, and Worship and Sacraments takes place over a three-year process. In considering possible question topics, four factors are kept consciously before the task group:

1. *Appropriateness for Beginning in Ministry.* Highly complex scenarios or ministry settings unlikely to be encountered early in ministry generally do not make appropriate questions for the exams. Questions certainly may have a range of difficulties, but any ministry settings that would be exceedingly rare in beginning service as a teaching elder are avoided.
2. *Fit with the Exam Subject and Section.* The descriptions of the exams and their particular sections have been approved by the General Assembly and the PCC, respectively, and are communicated in the exam handbook and instructions. Topics for exam questions are carefully reviewed to assure that they fit within those guidelines.
3. *Variety of Subject Matter.* Task groups are encouraged to keep a list of topics that have been addressed in questions over the last several years so as to avoid treating the same, limited range of issues in the exams repeatedly.
4. *Cross-Cultural Accessibility.* Given their situational character and case study quality, all exam questions are necessarily going to arise from and reflect a particular life setting. Consequently, it is impossible to create questions that are truly “culturally neutral.” Because there is a broad range of cultural differences among candidates taking the exams in terms of racial, ethnic, economic, regional, and other aspects of background, care must be taken to assure that the questions are “cross-culturally accessible.” That is to say, any culturally specific details essential to the question need to be explained rather than assumed, and culturally specific details that would either create confusion or distraction must be avoided. Working across cultural differences is a reality of ministry for everyone in our current social context, but the focus of these exams is on proficiency in applying theological training to ministry contexts and not mastery of the particularities of either the “dominant” or specific “sub-” cultures of contemporary American society.

Once topics for each section of a particular exam have been agreed upon, task groups may assign particular members to create drafts of the questions, which are then reviewed by all members of the task group. In the second year of question development, each task group presents its draft questions to PCC members from other subject area task groups. This process presents a critical opportunity to those developing exam questions to observe reactions to the proposed questions by PCC members who do not have background information on question development. The question developers also have the opportunity to take notes on the reactions and observations to be used in the next phase of question development and refinement. The goal of this process is to improve both the clarity and the accessibility of the questions for those who will be taking the exams.

Task groups take the feedback provided by colleagues in the other areas and continue to refine and clarify the questions for each exam. At the annual meeting in the third year of development every question is presented to the full membership of the PCC that must then approve the final language of each question. After copyediting, these approved questions are also translated into Korean and Spanish.

Administration of the Examinations

Since its last General Assembly review in 2008, the PCC has led the examination administration process through its most significant changes since the exams were begun in the late 1960s. Key to these changes has been the moving of all registration, administration, and evaluation processes related to the exams to online procedures. These changes have resulted in savings well in excess of \$300,000 per year to General Assembly per capita budgets and needed exam registration fees. These cost savings have been accomplished through reduced costs in required staff support and elimination of the need to gather exam readers at regional sites to complete exam evaluations. While achieving these cost savings, the PCC has doubled the opportunities to take the examinations each year and has reduced the time needed to receive results from more than two months to less than two weeks.

The Bible Content Examination is now administered twice a year using an Internet-based testing system under proctors' supervision. Because its "multiple choice" and "matching" question formats can be machine scored, examinees immediately receive their test results upon completion of the exam, and reports summarizing overall score and performance within each section of the canon are immediately forwarded by email to the presbytery committees overseeing their preparation and to the seminaries where they are studying.

The case study-based, essay examinations in the areas of Bible Exegesis, Church Polity, Theological Competence, and Worship and Sacraments are now offered once each quarter. Candidates also take these examinations online, but adopting a format used for the Exegesis exam for decades these tests allow consultation of resources and are not completed under a proctor's supervision. All of these exam submissions are electronically reviewed for plagiarism (both copying other exam responses and uncredited use of published materials). Reader evaluation of the exams begins four days after Exegesis exam submission, and examinees receive exam results and readers' comments no more than seven days after the reading period begins. As with Bible Content Examination results, these reports are also available at the same time to their presbytery committees and seminaries.

Evaluation Process and Support of Exam Readers

Readers elected by the presbyteries (G-3.0302b) evaluate all essay examinations. To support them in this work, the PCC provides a variety of training resources through an online system widely used by schools, universities, and corporate trainers. The online system permits material to be provided through text and video presentations, as well as creates messaging and forums where readers can interact with members of the PCC.

There are three areas of focus in this training. Since the training itself and all aspects of the evaluation process are conducted online, the first phase of training deals with simply navigating and using the online training site and the exams evaluation site. Second, readers are provided with general training about the standard ordination examinations, the standards for their evaluation, and their place in the overall preparation for ministry process. Finally, once readers have been assigned to specific exam subject areas for a particular reading period, they are provided with resources specific to the questions for which they will be evaluating candidate responses. Those resources walk through the required elements of a complete response to each question along with background information the readers may need to evaluate the quality of the specific content of each candidate's response. To accommodate the preferences of different readers, much of this training material is presented in overlapping video and text presentations, including real-time interaction between PCC members and readers through webinars.

During reading periods members of the PCC are available to respond to questions from the readers about either training materials or individual candidate responses. Two members of the appropriate task group review every reader's exam evaluation and comments to be sure that it properly applies the evaluation standards and clearly supports the evaluation assigned by the reader. When there is disagreement between two readers' evaluations (one assigns a final evaluation of Satisfactory and the other assigns an Unsatisfactory), a third reader evaluates the exam and the concurring evaluation is the final evaluation. These interactions between readers and PCC members occur through the messaging system of the training site, standard email exchanges, and phone conversations.

Reporting Results and Support of Presbytery Committees

All examination records are integrated with the online system maintained by the Office of the General Assembly for reporting about inquirers and candidates who are under care in the preparation for ministry process with the presbyteries. This system provides presbyteries with anytime access to transcripts of each inquirer and candidate's complete exam history. For the examinations with an essay structure, the system stores the questions, candidate responses, and readers' evaluations for all exams taken using the online administration platform.

Through staff support in Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly, the PCC produces three separate handbooks to present policies and procedures for all aspects of the standard ordination examinations. The primary handbook is geared toward inquirers, candidates, and their presbyteries and covers every phase of the exams from registration through review of exam evaluations. Separate handbooks are prepared for exam readers and members of the PCC that cover their particular roles and responsibilities, as well as present in print format much of the general information from the training website for easy offline review and reference. All three handbooks are augmented by video demonstrations of the testing systems and tutorials that can be accessed from the Office of the General Assembly website or the online training system.

Indications of Effectiveness in Accomplishing the PCC's Mandate

The examinations of the PCC have a distinct purpose: to provide one form of "[e]vidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder" (*Book of Order*, G-2.0607). Seminaries are especially concerned with evaluating academic competence. Presbyteries evaluate the adequacy of a candidate's theological views and his or her personal gifts for ministry. Ordination exams focus on a third area of concern (shared by the seminaries and the presbyteries): a person's ability to integrate what he or she has learned through graduate theological education and supervised practice of ministry with pastoral situa-

tions. The ordination examinations offer candidates a significant opportunity to move from thinking of themselves as students in an academic context, to thinking of themselves as pastors and leaders in the church and for the world.

Pass rates on individual examinations in the areas of Exegesis, Polity, Theology, and Worship and Sacraments have ranged between 55 percent and 88 percent in recent years. Satisfactory rates of completion by content area are provided in Appendix A. Statistical evidence indicates that the proportion of examinees receiving “Satisfactory” evaluations of their work decreases substantially with each subsequent attempt of an examination area. As a group, individuals taking exams for the first time have a higher “Satisfactory” rate than those taking the exam a second time. In the same way, those taking an exam for the second time generally have higher “Satisfactory” rates than those taking an exam in that area for the third time. The pattern continues with each increment of repeats. Since candidates do not repeat areas in which they have received a “Satisfactory” evaluation, these data would indicate that those who do not have the competencies evaluated by the exams generally do not end up passing, even with multiple attempts. Accommodations are made for those who have demonstrated need for alternate means of examination to ensure that the standard examination format does not present a barrier to “certification of readiness” for those who have the required competencies.

The PCC reviews at each annual meeting the results of surveys from readers and test takers administered following each exam cycle. As part of the self-study process, the PCC also carefully reviewed data from surveys administered to readers of ordination examinations, moderators of presbytery committees/commissions on preparation for ministry (CPMs) and test takers in 2014 and 2015. Comparative analysis was conducted between the surveys from the last self-study and current self-study where data was available. The surveys provide rich material for ongoing self-evaluation by the PCC.

CPM moderators were surveyed in 2015 in order to obtain their input on the standard ordination exams. Ninety-six percent (96 percent) of CPM moderators who responded to the survey agreed that successful performance on the examinations reflects readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder. Based on overall responses to the survey questions, it is clear that CPM moderators seem to affirm the examinations and the current examination process.

The exam takers are particularly favorable in regard to the ability of the exams to demonstrate readiness for ministry. In recent surveys, responses demonstrated their positive response to this question: 85 percent for Biblical Exegesis, 91 percent for Church Polity, 92 percent for Theological Competence and 94 percent for Worship and Sacraments. To this end, the exam takers shared comments such as the following, indicating the practical nature of exam questions:

- “[The exam] allowed me to combine theological knowledge and conviction with real-life ministry situations.”
- “I thought the questions were very thoughtfully composed—there was a chance to show you knew the *Book of Order*, but also a chance to show some pastoral sensitivity in the way you would respond to the person in the situational questions. . . .”
- “It was good that the questions applied directly to ministry work.”
- “Allowed me to apply direct knowledge with real-world, common situations.”

In summary, exam takers provided very positive feedback in regard to the current exam format and process.

Exam readers were asked to rate the extent to which each exam, as presently structured, assesses candidates’ integration of academic learning and pastoral skills. The percentage of readers responding that the exams provide such assessment to a “very great” or a “great extent” were as follows: 51 percent for Biblical Exegesis, 51 percent for Church Polity, 54 percent for Theological Competence and 56 percent for Worship & Sacraments. (Just over a quarter of all readers expressed “No Opinion” on this question). Readers were also asked to what extent they think that a “Satisfactory” evaluation on the exams reflects candidates’ readiness for pastoral ministry and for other forms of ministry. About 40 percent felt a satisfactory response reflected readiness for pastoral ministry. In 2015, 21 percent felt the exams reflect readiness for other forms of ministry.

Overall, written comments on the surveys reflect positive attitudes toward the examinations. The PCC will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the exams to demonstrate readiness for ministry and keep working to improve in this area wherever possible through feedback from all stakeholders.

Collaboration with Others in Fulfilling the PCC’s Mandate

The process of administering ordination exams has evolved since its inception in order to reflect and serve the needs of the church. As part of this process of ongoing change and refinement, the PCC has been working closely with the entities that are involved with those seeking ordination.

Through online publications and communications from support staff, the PCC is involved regularly with the committees that oversee preparation of candidates for ministry. These communications include the *Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations*, provision of information about recruiting readers from within presbyteries, and communications about the changes in exam administration procedures that have taken place in recent years.

The PCC also has interactions with the General Assembly Committee on Theological Education (COTE) through PCC support staff and direct communications between the PCC members and COTE staff. In addition, the PCC support staff person regularly visits PC(USA) seminaries to conduct training seminars and informational meetings to facilitate a better understanding of the ordination exams by students as well as faculty.

In response to the 221st General Assembly (2014) direction for the PCC to consult with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), representatives from that group met with the PCC at its annual meeting in 2015. These interactions produced fruitful dialogue and ideas for future directions. This partnership is discussed more fully in the next section.

Responses to General Assembly Directives

Following the last PCC self-study, the 218th General Assembly (2008) Review Committee recommended that the PCC continue and strengthen effective communication with the larger church, specifically, committees responsible for those preparing for ministry (CPMs). This review committee also encouraged the PCC to engage in “continual reassessment” with regard to the changing demographics of the denomination. In response, communication has been significantly improved through partnerships with ACREC and COTE and personal and electronic contact by PCC staff with CPMs, exam readers and presbyteries regarding updates on ordinations exams and scores. As noted elsewhere in this report, regular feedback is sought through periodic surveys of CPM moderators, readers, and exam takers.

As a result of its own self-study results, the PCC formed a task force to explore the feasibility of a pilot program in which candidates, including racial ethnic candidates, would take ordination exams only after completion of their seminary work and a significant internship in a supervised pastoral context. The intent was for the task force to bring a report to the PCC in 2011 regarding this pilot program. The pilot centered on a requirement for candidates to participate in a one-year field experience/internship prior to taking the ordination exams. Following a thorough study of the issue, including feedback from seminary students, it was determined that the pilot program was not feasible because students did not want to add another year (for a total of four years) to their seminary education for financial and vocational reasons. Therefore, the pilot program was never implemented.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) included a report by the Special Committee to Review the Preparation for Ministry Process and Standard Ordination Exams (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 73, 376ff.). This report included three recommendations requiring action by the PCC (Recommendations 4, 5 and 6, *Ibid.* 377–78). The first of these recommendations (Recommendation 4) directed the PCC to “consult with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic concerns (ACREC) for comment on the cross-cultural accessibility of standard ordination exam questions” (*Ibid.*, 377).

In response, ACREC was given the senior ordinations exams from Fall 2009 to Fall 2014 for their review and feedback. While ACREC identified no cultural bias, they did make recommendations that are the subject of ongoing consideration and evaluation by the PCC. These recommendations include ongoing assessment of Spanish and Korean translation of the exam questions to reduce ambiguities in the translated exams; a recognition by the PCC when writing exams that candidates are serving in the global church, where a perspective broader than service to a local congregation is warranted, including a variety of forms of validated ministry; continued encouragement of presbyteries to invite exam readers who are diverse in terms of their racial ethnic backgrounds and global church perspectives, and to consider providing training opportunities for exam readers regarding cultural sensitivities.

In addition, two representatives from ACREC attended the PCC Annual Meeting in March 2015 and participated in the review and development of exam questions for 2015–2016.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) also directed the PCC “to include more culturally diverse resources and references in its instructions to and preparation of readers of the examinations, so that the Reformed theological insights of racial ethnic and non-European persons are included” (Recommendation 5, *Ibid.* p. 377).

In response, the PCC reviewed ordination exams and resource papers from 2014 and 2015. It was determined that there are opportunities for improvement in regard to this directive. For example, the resource papers for the theology exam tended to identify western theologians with very few theologians from other perspectives. The PCC is committed to strengthening resource papers by including a spectrum of Reformed theologians that represents a greater variety of cultural and global contexts. In addition, the Polity and Worship and Sacrament resource papers are being developed with a goal of including culturally diverse resources and references. Readers’ resources for the Exegesis Exam currently include a bibliography inclusive of scholars from a wide range of cultural and global perspectives. The resource papers for the Exegesis exam also recognize cultural diversity by including guidance to readers that exam responses may include concerns with those on the margins of society; concerns with gender and with how the text might be heard if read from the perspective of persons of color and minorities underrepresented in the theological disciplines (e.g. African American, Asian American, Latino/a, etc.). Such culturally diverse references in the resource paper help eliminate cultural barriers.

At the PCC Annual Meeting in 2015, this directive from the General Assembly was discussed with a resulting commitment to increasing the use of Reformed theological insights of racial ethnic and non-European persons in its exam materials.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) also directed the PCC “to broaden the format of standard ordination examinations beyond time-limited essays, and include additional protocols that may integrate oral presentations into the standard examination process” (Recommendation 6, *Ibid.*, p. 378).

In response to this directive, the time limits were extended for the examinations in Church Polity, Theological Competence, and Worship and Sacraments. In July 2015 each exam moved from a three-hour time limit to a nine-hour time limit per exam; the additional time to complete each exam is given even though the number of exam questions and length of expected responses were not expanded. Recent surveys indicate that 93 percent of exam takers have reacted positively to this change. The PCC will be following results from this new time limit to assess the impact, if any, on performance on these exams.

In addition, the inclusion of oral presentations in standard exam procedures has been addressed and is designed for cases where there are circumstances known in advance that make it clear that the test taker may need to comment or elaborate upon written responses. The oral presentations do not replace written responses to the standard exam questions, which must still be completed and evaluated following the usual process for the standard exams. Rather, the oral presentation provides an opportunity for the candidate to clarify and expand upon answers provided in the written exams. Likewise, the oral presentations are not designed to be after-the-fact responses to “Unsatisfactory” evaluations. They are special accommodations granted in advance of the exam to persons for whom the overall experience in the preparation process leads the CPM to conclude that the particular candidate will need an opportunity to clarify and elaborate on written submissions.

By authorizing this special accommodation, both the candidate and the CPM are committing to a set of requirements that have been specified in the *Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations* released on May 1, 2015 (see Appendix B).

Strengths and Weaknesses of the PCC

PCC members receive evaluations from exam takers and readers every time an exam is administered. Since moving to four exam cycles per year in 2014, the committee members receive quarterly evaluations and feedback materials. This information, along with the experience of writing exams and reviewing readers’ comments in each exam cycle, provides PCC members with regular data to use in assessing strengths and weaknesses. Input concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the PCC was solicited from the Executive Committee of the PCC and from all members of the committee at its annual meeting in March 2015. Additional input was received from the PCC in the fall of 2015. This input as well as the self-study task group’s evaluation of materials reviewed for this study provided the basis for this self-understanding.

Strengths

PCC members understand the committee to be fulfilling its mandate. They believe the denomination is being effectively served by the exams and the PCC. PCC members regularly review the exam-takers’ surveys and have noted that these responses consistently give high ratings of the exam’s ability to assess readiness for ministry. The findings reported earlier in this report, that about 90 percent of exam takers felt the exams allowed them to demonstrate their readiness for ministry, attests to this self-understanding. In addition, PCC members noted that the exams may be seen as one component of the spiritual call to teaching elders to give the best of what they have for the sake of Christ. As the work of teaching elders requires spiritual and academic preparation as well as pastoral imagination, the ordination exams reflect this work. Since seminaries do not ordain teaching elders, the national process and standards for this component, embodied in the work of the PCC, fulfills an important role in the denomination.

Members see the changes initiated by the committee to move to online exam administration and reading weeks as strengths of the PCC. This system is more cost-efficient and also allows the exam results to be released within roughly a week after the last exam is administered. Surveys of moderators of committees that oversee candidates, exam takers, and exam readers all show strong support for the majority of changes that have been instituted by the PCC. The PCC continually assesses readers’ perceptions of their work. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which a number of factors posed challenges to them in the reading process. Preparing helpful comments posed the greatest challenge to the readers, while the majority of readers reported that the other factors presented small or no challenge to them. It is of note that nearly three-quarters of readers did not experience any challenges from the quality of training provided by the PCC, indicating that the online materials and the online process of providing feedback to readers meets readers’ expectations.

Another strength has been the organized and timely response to the report to the 221st General Assembly (2014) by the Special Committee to Review the Preparation for Ministry Process and Standard Ordination Exams. These include closer collaboration with ACREC, increasing the time permitted for three exam areas from three to nine hours, and the institution of an option for an oral exam component as a follow-up to the written exams.

PCC members noted a number of strengths in the process of writing and revising exam questions. This work takes place in task group and plenary sessions at the annual meeting and is also done by PCC members throughout the year, either individually or in working groups of two or three. Strengths of this process include the benefits of working face-to-face at the annual meeting, with potential questions and resource materials identified prior to the meeting. Efficient group dynamics and good teamwork were identified as strengths of the PCC, as was the process by which all exams are reviewed and approved by

the four different task groups (Bible, Polity, Theology, and Worship and Sacraments). This process enables all PCC members' familiarity and ownership of all examinations.

The PCC sees its primary support staff person, the Reverend Dr. Timothy Cargal, as a tremendous strength and asset to the PCC and to the denomination. Dr. Cargal's experience as a professor and in pastoral ministry within a congregation, his expertise in test construction, and his passion for moving us into the future through the use of technology have been invaluable in assisting the PCC to fulfill its mandate. The committee has been incredibly fortunate to have one person who possesses all of these gifts and talents, and it recognizes how essential it is to have these skills in staff support for the PCC.

Weaknesses

As noted elsewhere in this report, the move to the online reading process without face-to-face meetings during reading week has presented both opportunities and challenges in the ordination exam process. PCC members are aware that many readers preferred the regional gatherings during reading week; concerns about the lack of face-to-face interactions appear on the readers' surveys that are reviewed by PCC members. In addition, it has become clear that the election of regional conveners has been affected in a significant way by the absence of the gatherings. Participation in the elections through the online system is very limited, and it is more difficult for readers to know much about the individuals standing for election beyond a brief biographical sketch placed online during reading week.

PCC members have expressed considerable concern about the perceived inconsistency of readers' preparation for and work during reading week. There was a sense in 2014 and 2015 that the readers provided by the presbyteries were not always able or chose not to learn how to use the online resources and evaluation system efficiently. A potential weakness of the online system is the inability of the PCC to ensure that all readers are exposed to training materials, since they access these materials from the online training site without the benefit of the previous system of a half-day plenary orientation and training session. In order to address this issue, in July 2015 the PCC instituted a system of requiring all readers to log into the online training site prior to the beginning of the exam reading period before they are assigned exams to read. However, nearly all (96 percent) of the readers surveyed in 2015 said they prepared for reading exams by reading the resource papers prepared by PCC members, and almost as many (93 percent) said they viewed the training videos on the PCC online training site.

PCC members affirm the importance of the ordination exam process to the life of the PC(USA). However, we note that more work could be done to help people across the denomination understand why the exams are needed and how the PCC is fulfilling its mandate. While the ruling and teaching elders who read exams are in a good position to communicate about the exams to their presbyteries, less than a third of readers surveyed in Summer 2015 said they were at all likely to make a report to their presbytery as a whole. More positively, the majority of these readers said they were at least somewhat likely to make a report or provide feedback after reading exams to the committee overseeing preparation for ministry.

PCC members observed that the committee is enriched by diversity, but that it would benefit from more theological, geographical, racial, and ethnic diversity.

Recommendations for Future Improvement

The PCC offers the following recommendations:

1. Because the election of regional conveners is an important component of the PCC, members will work to strengthen communications with all readers about the election process. Future efforts will ensure that all readers enrolled by their presbytery receive multiple communications in the weeks before reading begins to inform them about the upcoming election. The PCC will place greater emphasis on the work of the nominating committee in each region, which encourages readers to stand for election. These communications will remind readers to visit their regional page on the online training site, to review the qualifications and responsibilities of a PCC member, review the materials submitted by readers standing for election, and to vote for a candidate for election to PCC membership.

2. PCC members will develop a system in which they will have increased, direct interactions with presbyteries in order to share information about (1) recruiting and preparing teaching and ruling elders for reading exams, and (2) the nature and purpose of the examinations, including changes that are made in the examination and evaluations process. Current and former PCC members can participate in these efforts. In addition to fostering continued effective communications with the larger church about the mandate of the PCC and the steps being taken to fulfill it, the committee aims to facilitate the elections of readers who are well-informed about the reading process and who will be equipped and committed to engaging in the preparations needed to read exams.

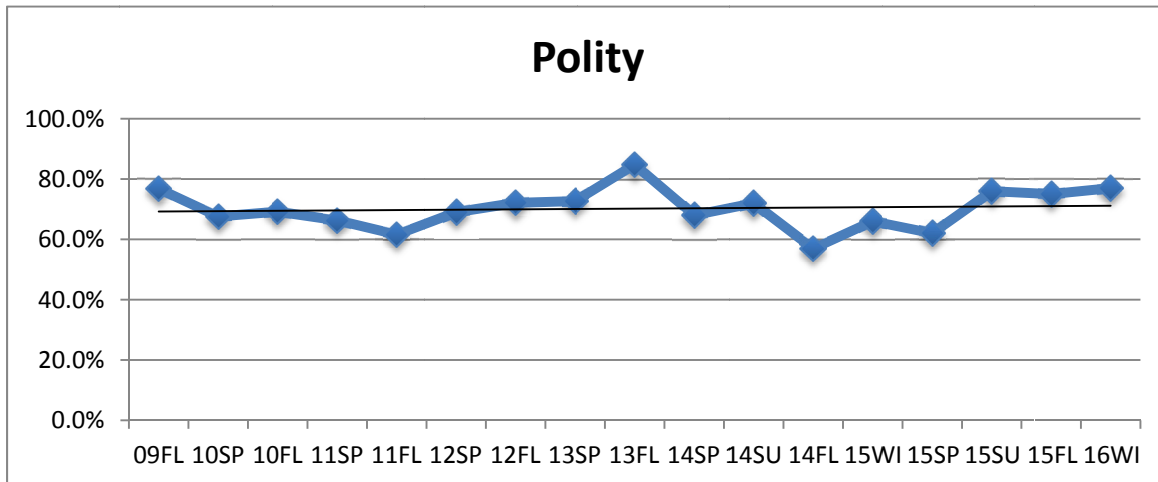
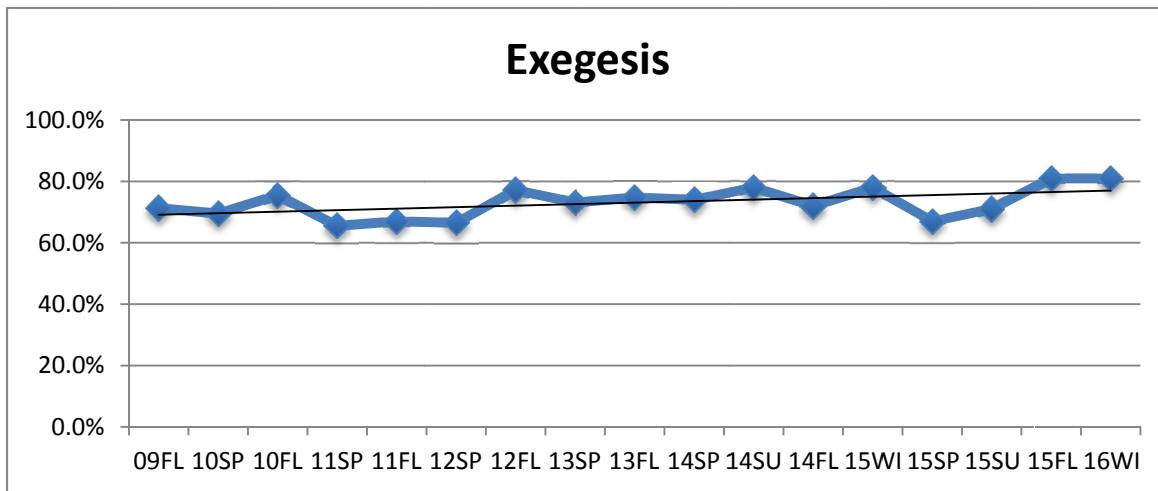
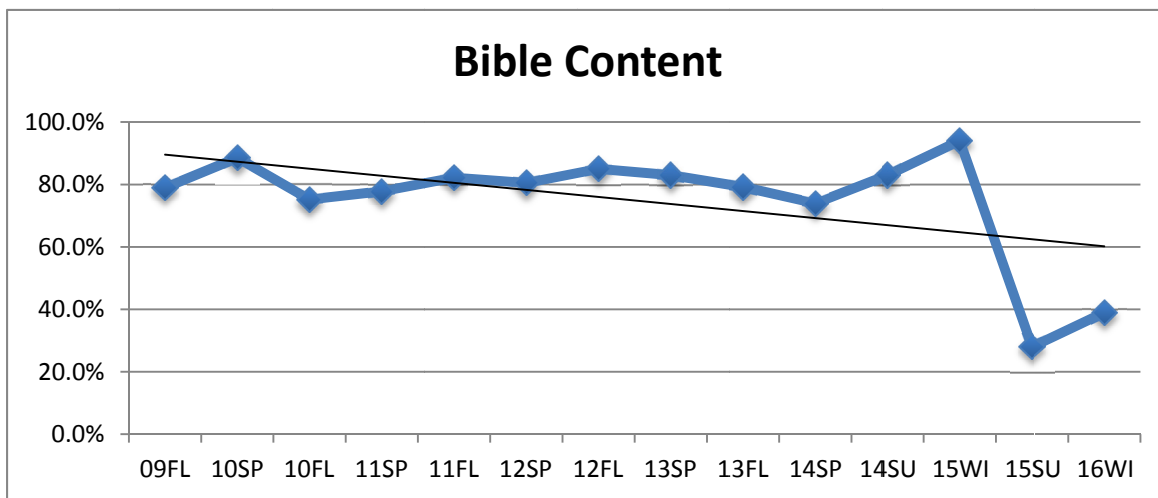
3. The PCC will continue to take steps to carry out its commitment to sensitivity to cultural diversity and racial ethnic concerns and to increasing cross-cultural accessibility through continued consultation with members of ACREC and through PCC members' efforts to create exam questions and reader resource materials that reflect identified racial ethnic concerns.

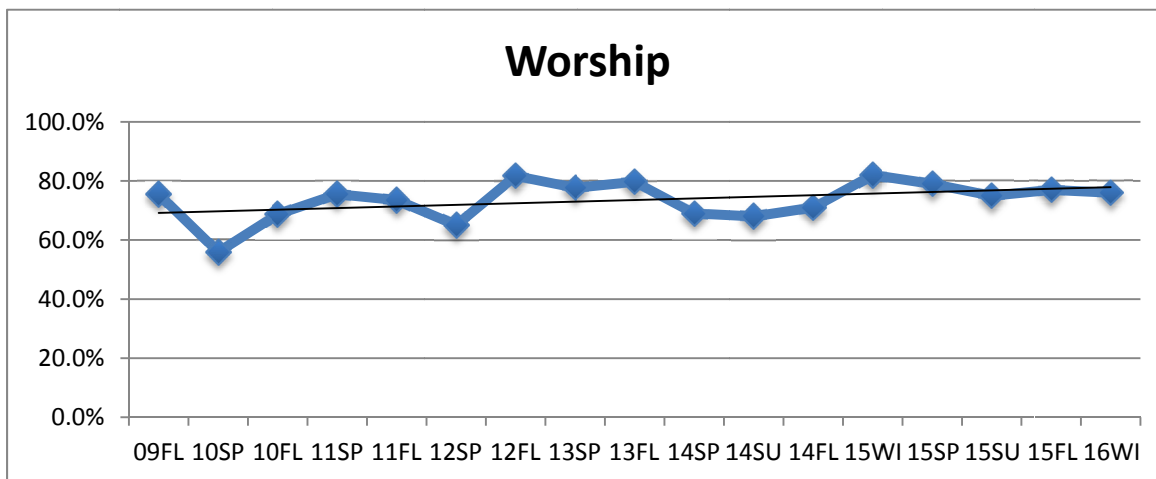
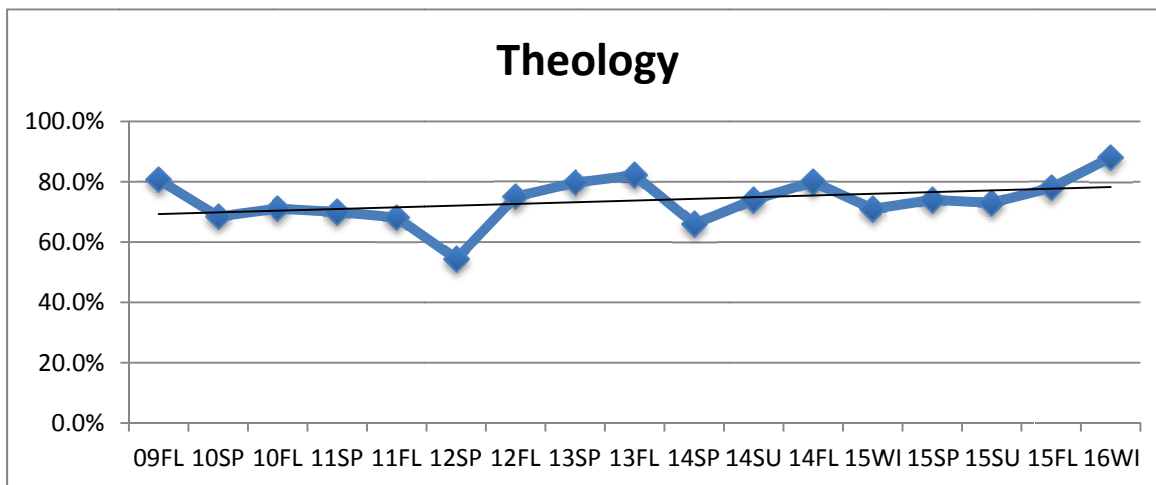
Endnotes

1. This description of exam principles is taken from the *Handbook on Standard Ordination Examinations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, release 2.2 (May 2015), Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly, 3-4.
2. Charles Foster, Lisa Dahill, Larry Golemon, Barbara Wang Tolentino, and William M. Sullivan, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Preparation for the Professions; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).
3. Information in this section regarding the membership and organization of the PCC is taken from “Guiding Principles: Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates,” *Manual of the General Assembly* (2016), 69-72.

Appendix A

“Satisfactory”-Rates for Standard Exams, Fall 2009 to Winter 2016





Appendix B

Procedures for Including an Oral Component in Ordination Exams

1. The CPM appoints a panel of at least three oral examiners who are either ruling or teaching elders, preferably with experience as readers of the standard examinations.
2. The candidate takes the standard examination(s), with any other special accommodations approved by the CPM, and those exams then undergo the usual evaluation process.
3. On the morning the exam results are released, the oral examiners meet to review together both the candidate's responses and the readers' evaluations, and to formulate their own questions based upon both the responses and the evaluations.
4. Following their review, the oral examiners meet with the candidate for the oral review phase (either the same morning or during the afternoon of the day the results are released, depending upon the number of exam areas for which the special accommodation was granted). This oral examination phase must be conducted regardless of whether the readers had found the exam "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory."
5. Up to one (1) hour is permitted for oral review of each exam. Either responding directly to the readers' comments or to questions from the oral examiners, the candidate elaborates or comments on the responses provided. During this oral phase, a candidate is permitted to explain the reasons for particular citations from the *Book of Order*, the *Book of Confessions*, or other resources provided as part of required responses, but the test taker is not permitted to substitute alternative citations for them. A candidate may, however, suggest further citations that would serve to clarify or support lines of argument already provided in the written responses. A candidate may also elaborate on points in the written response that he or she believes were either overlooked or misunderstood by the reader(s). The candidate will also be required to respond to any questions from the oral examiners even if those questions are unrelated to issues or concerns raised in the reader evaluations.
6. At the conclusion of the hour, the oral examiners meet separately from the candidate to deliberate and then vote on whether to "sustain" the readers' evaluation. This action is, again, required regardless of whether the readers had found the exam "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory." Thus, it would be within the oral examiners prerogative to recommend that an "Unsatisfactory" evaluation be set aside in favor of a "Satisfactory" one, or that a "Satisfactory" evaluation be set aside in favor of an "Unsatisfactory" one. A majority vote of the three oral examiners determines their recommendation.

7. The oral examiners will then notify the candidate, the CPM, and the PCC (through the manager for preparation for ministry in the Office of the General Assembly) of their recommendation.

a. If they sustain the readers' initial evaluation, then that result is finalized.

b. If their recommendation is that the readers' evaluation should *not* be sustained, they must file with the PCC a written explanation of their rationale providing specific references to either the candidate's written or oral responses in support of their recommendation. This report must be filed within forty-eight hours of the close of the oral examination phase or phases (if there is more than one examination area). The chair of the PCC task group for the examination area (or the chair's designated task group member) will review the candidate's written responses, the readers' evaluations, and the report from the oral examiners. The PCC member reviewing all these materials will determine whether or not to concur in the oral examiners' recommendation or to sustain the original evaluation of the readers. The decision by the PCC task group chair or designated member will determine the final result of each examination.

8. A task group chair's decision (or that of the task group member designated to review the materials) is subject to appeal only to the PCC Executive Committee, and must otherwise comply with all other requirements for the appeal of examination results.

This provision for a "special accommodation" to include "oral presentations" is available only for the standard examinations in the areas of Bible Exegesis, Church Polity, Theological Competence, and Worship and Sacraments. Because of the types of questions used on the Bible Content Examination, it is not available to inquirers or candidates taking that test.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 06-Self-Study

Advice and Counsel on Item 06-SS—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 06-SS.

As mandated by the 221st General Assembly (2014), representatives of ACREC were invited to participate in the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates' (PCCEC's) annual meeting in March, 2015. Prior to the meeting with the PCCEC, ACREC received past exams and were given the opportunity to review and identify any form of cultural bias. The ACREC offered cultural proficiency training to members of the PCCEC and participated in the mid-year exam development of the task groups.

The ACREC welcomed the striven efforts and commitment taken by the PCCEC to better equip and prepare the future leaders of our church, particularly in the area of addressing cultural proficiency in exam development and providing culturally diverse resources and references for exam readers. The ACREC would like to encourage greater diversity representation of the PCCEC members, as well as the exam readers as nominated and sent forth by the presbyteries. The ACREC stands committed in partnership and consultation with the PCCEC in the areas of cross-cultural accessibility and future exam development.

Item 06-Info

A. *Mid Councils Statements of Compliance with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions*

Section IV.B.2.d. of the *Organization for Mission* requires that when a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission contains an order directed to another council, the Stated Clerk report to the General Assembly a statement of the council's compliance. Below is a report of the statements of compliance received by the Stated Clerk from the councils for cases decided by the Permanent Judicial Commission during the year 2014–2016.

1. *GAPJC Remedial Case 221-08, Presbytery of New York City, Appellant (Respondent), vs.*

Ruling Elder Mildred McGee, Teaching Elder Flora Wilson Bridges, Ruling Elder Douglas Howard, Teaching Elder Lonnie Bryant, Ruling Elder Daniel Amiot Priso, Teaching Elder Phillip Newell, Ruling Elder Emmanuel Gouad Njayick, Teaching Elder George Todd, Ruling Elder Estella Taylor, and Ruling Elder Norita Chisolm, Appellees (Complainants)

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby sustained in its entirety and that the Gracious Dismissal Policy of The Presbytery of New York City be set aside and shall have no force or effect.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision to the Synod of the Northeast at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Northeast enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New York City report this Decision to the Presbytery of New York City at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of New York City enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the Northeast stated meeting on October 24, 2014, and the Presbytery of New York City stated meeting on May 20, 2014.

2. *GAPJC Disciplinary Case 2-01, Vern Richard Buck, Jr., Appellant (Complainant), v. Session of the Morrow Presbyterian Church, Appellee (Respondent).*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the South Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is upheld and this case is dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church report this Decision and Order to the Session at its first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the South Atlantic report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the South Atlantic stated meeting on September 17, 2015, and the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta stated meeting on November 11, 2014. The Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church has not complied with this order.

3. *GAPJC Remedial Case 222-02, Session, First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, California (DBA Horizon Community Church), Complainant, v. The 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee of the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Respondent.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission on this Decision on Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, California, report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The session of the First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale has not complied with this order.

4. *GAPJC Remedial Case 222-03, Cherokee Presbytery; The Session, First Presbyterian Church, Port Huron, Michigan; The Session, First Presbyterian Church, Ellsworth, Wisconsin; The Session, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan; and The Session, St. Timothy Presbyterian Church, Livonia, Michigan, Complainants, v. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Respondent.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission on the Decision on Challenge to Preliminary Order for Dismissal:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Cherokee report this Decision to the Presbytery of Cherokee at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Cherokee enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerks of Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Huron, Michigan; First Presbyterian Church of Ellsworth, Wisconsin; Calvary Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan; and St. Timothy Presbyterian Church of Livonia, Michigan, report this Decision to their respective Sessions at the first meeting after receipt, that the Sessions enter the full Decision upon their minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Cherokee Presbytery stated meeting on May 19, 2015. The Sessions of First Presbyterian Church of Port Huron, First Presbyterian Church of Ellsworth, Calvary Presbyterian Church, and St. Timothy Presbyterian Church did not comply with this order.

5. *GAPJC Remedial Case 222-04, Teaching Elder Robert Smith and Ruling Elder Edward Kappus, Appellants, Complainants, v. The Presbytery of the Peaks, Appellee/Respondent.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is affirmed and the case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Peaks report this Decision to the Presbytery of the Peaks at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of the Peaks enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the Mid Atlantic stated meeting on September 14, 2015, and the Presbytery of the Peaks stated meeting on July 25, 2015.

6. *GAPJC Remedial Case 2205, the Reverend James MacKellar, Complainant, v. The Synod of the Northeast, Respondent.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that those portions of the Synod bylaws allowing presbyteries to elect Synod Commissioners who are not ruling elders or teaching elders, and allowing such commissioners to serve on Synod commissions are declared null and void.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first stated meeting following the date of this Order, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from the Synod's minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Synod of the Northeast Assembly meets biennially and this decision will be entered at its meeting in October 2016.

7. *The Presbytery of Muskingum Valley, Appellant/Respondent, v. Robert A. Hauser, Appellee, Complainant.*

The following orders were entered by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission:

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant is affirmed in part and reversed in part, and the stay is lifted. This Decision only dismisses matters related to the modification of the disciplinary censure through this remedial case. This Decision does not address any other issues reserved by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant in its Decision dated March 16, 2015.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Covenant report this Decision to the Synod of the Covenant at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Covenant enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley report this Decision to the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

The decision was reported at the Synod of the Covenant stated meeting on November 6, 2015, and at the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley stated meeting on December 4, 2015.

B. General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

1. *Roster of Former Members (D-5.0206b)*

a. *Class of 2014*

Bradley C. Copeland, 7200 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside, CA 92504; Meta Shoup Cramer, 781 Lincoln Avenue, Salem, OH 44460; H. Clifford Looney, 292 Main Street South, Vale, OR 97918; Michael Lukens, 4549 Creek Valley Lane, Hobart, WI 54155.

b. *Class of 2012*

Susan Cornman, 10045 W. 73rd Place, Arvada, CO 80005; Gregory A. Goodwiller, 24 CR 231, Oxford, MI 38655; Yun Jin Kim, 954 Nicklaus Drive, Newport News, VA 23602; Tony Cook, 2120 E. Beautiful Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85042.

c. *Class of 2010*

Fred L. Denson, 789 John Glenn Blvd., Webster, NY 14580; Fane Downs, 206 Red Oak, Ingram, TX 78025; Mary Eleanor Johns, 1270 N. Negley Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206; Judy L. Woods, 111 Monument Street, Ste 2700, Indianapolis, IN, 46204.

2. *Final Decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission*

The Permanent Judicial Commission met in San Antonio, Texas, on May 3–7, 2014; in Louisville, Kentucky, on October 2–7, 2014; in Nashville, Tennessee, on February 12–16, 2015; in Indianapolis, Indiana, on April 30–May 4, 2015; in Jeffersonville, Indiana, on October 1–5, 2015; and in Louisville, Kentucky, April 7–11, 2016. Having received the final decisions from the commission from its clerk, Jay Lewis, the Stated Clerk now reports to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the final decisions received in the following cases and advises the General Assembly that they will be included in the minutes:

a. *Remedial Appeal 221-08*

Presbytery of New York City)	
Appellant (Respondent))	
vs.)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
Ruling Elder Mildred McGee, Teaching Elder Flora)	
Wilson Bridges, Ruling Elder Douglas Howard, Teach-	)	<i>Remedial Case 221-08</i>
ing Elder Lonnie Bryant, Ruling Elder Daniel Amiot)	
Priso, Teaching Elder Phillip Newell, Ruling Elder)	
Emmanuel Gouad Njayick, Teaching Elder George)	
Todd, Ruling Elder Estella Taylor, and Ruling Elder)	
Norita Chisolm)	
Appellees (Complainants))	

Arrival Statement

This filing before the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly (GAPJC or this Commission) is an appeal of a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast (SPJC) rendered on September 11, 2013. The Notice of Appeal was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on September 23, 2013.

Parties

Appellant/Respondent is The Presbytery of New York City (PNYC). Appellees/Complainants are Ruling Elder Mildred McGee, Teaching Elder Flora Wilson Bridges, Ruling Elder Douglas Howard, Teaching Elder Lonnie Bryant, Ruling Elder Daniel Amiot Priso, Teaching Elder Phillip Newell, Ruling Elder Emmanuel Gouad Njayick, Teaching Elder George Todd, Ruling Elder Estella Taylor, and Ruling Elder Norita Chisolm.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Appellants have standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Appellant/Respondent was represented by John Griem and Reade Ryan. Appellees/Complainants were represented by Tee Gee Wilson and Lisa Borge.

History

On February 13, 2013, the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast received a Remedial Complaint from Ruling Elder Mildred McGee, *et alia*, alleging that the action of the PNYC in adopting and implementing its Gracious Dismissal Policy (GDP) was irregular in regard to constitutional requirements of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)).

The development of the GDP by the PNYC began early in 2012, informed by Resolution 04-28, GA *Minutes* (2008, Part I, pp. 284–285) of the 218th General Assembly (2008) (GA) urging presbyteries to formulate a gracious and pastoral response to churches requesting dismissal from the PC(USA). This GA resolution, although not an authoritative interpretation, was used as the basis for the development of the GDP. Just after that Assembly, in October 2008, the PNYC through its Committee on Mission and Finance, which also served as the Board of Trustees (BoT), obtained a realtor’s opinion of value of the properties held by all its congregations. Almost four years later, in July 2012, the BoT created a draft GDP that was distributed to the PNYC for its meeting on July 28, 2012. There was no discussion of the draft at that meeting. A later draft was given a first reading and discussion at the December 6, 2012, meeting of the PNYC. After two open hearings on December 13 and 20, 2012, the present GDP was approved by the PNYC on January 29, 2013, by a vote of 56 in favor and 49 against.

The SPJC summarized the GDP in the following way:

[T]he PNYC GDP allows sessions to request initiation of the dismissal process following a 2/3 vote. Upon receipt of the notice, the stated clerk then calls one or more meetings between the Special Resolutions Committee of the presbytery and the session (or its representatives), as well as the BOT (or its representatives) during the 120-day period following receipt of the notice. If the filing notice is not withdrawn at the end of the period, a congregational meeting is called (50% quorum) and dismissal is approved if confirmed by a 3/4 congregational vote. Financial arrangements include payment of any arrears in per capita, five years of per capita payments on a declining scale, and compensation for church property of 10% of the assessed value that exceeds \$1,000,000, with a cap on the compensation of \$2,000,000.

In addition, the policy allows for a downward adjustment or waiver in the case of hardship.

With the remedial complaint, Complainant also requested a Stay of Enforcement. The Executive Committee (EC) of the SPJC answered the Preliminary Questions in the affirmative and the Stay of Enforcement was subsequently granted by the SPJC.

Respondent requested an extension of the deadline for filing its response and the SPJC granted this extension. Respondent submitted a motion to the SPJC on April 29, 2013, to refer the case to the GAPJC, to which Complainants responded on May 14, 2013. The SPJC denied the motion on May 23, 2013. Respondent filed a second motion on July 2, 2013, asking the SPJC to reconsider its decision to deny the earlier motion to refer the case to the GAPJC, to which Complainants again responded on July 16, 2013. The SPJC EC denied this motion on July 27, 2013.

Complainant filed for relief on February 13, 2013, and this remedial case was decided by the SPJC on September 11, 2013. In its decision, the SPJC sustained five of the seven specifications of error by Complainant and ordered that the GDP of the PNYC shall be set aside and shall have no force or effect.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation by holding that the Presbytery GDP conferred a unilateral right on a congregation to depart from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in violation of G-4.0207 and Sundquist v. Heartland Presbytery, GA PJC 219-03.

This specification of error is not sustained.

While it may be understandable for a presbytery to develop a policy dealing with congregations considering dismissal with the intention of avoiding costly litigation, the GDP at the center of this case breaches the bounds of the Constitution of the PC(USA). The PNYC GDP exhibits substantial constitutional flaws in at least three ways concerning this specification of error. First, the GDP establishes a dismissal process that, as the SPJC notes, is “self-executing,” whereby fulfillment of a series of steps and conditions automatically enacts dismissal upon their completion. A final vote by the PNYC is purposefully denied in the GDP in order to avoid divisive and argumentative response to a dismissal request, as admitted by the PNYC in the record and during arguments. Even though the process contains provisions for consultation with the PNYC and congregational input, it is in fact a predetermined and formulaic mechanism that replaces a final specific review and vote by the PNYC. The Constitution at G-3.0301a reserves as a direct act of the presbytery the authority to dismiss a church, a polity provision explicitly reasserted by G-4.0207.

As the SPJC noted, the PNYC does not need an independent policy in order to accomplish a just and effective dismissal:

The Respondent has asserted that an order by this Commission to set aside this GDP would leave the presbytery in limbo and render it unable to reach any agreements on dismissal agreements, leaving only the option of costly litigation. This is a seriously overreaching assessment. We are sensitive to the difficult situation in which the PNYC finds itself and appreciate its sincere desire to deal with that as well as it can....[A dismissal agreement] can be achieved, either through Administrative Commissions appointed in each case that presents itself and is empowered to do so, or, indeed, by a Special Resolutions Committee, preparing the proposal for presbytery action. Considering that the presbytery mustered a majority vote, however slim, for the GDP under consideration in this case, and with the case-by-case requirement satisfied in these cases, it ought to be possible for the PNYC to reach agreement on approval for such dismissal arrangements.

The second constitutional error in the GDP is its provision that the vote by a congregation effectuates the dismissal process. This vote terminates the process and has the authority to effect dismissal without any constitutional authority so to act. The final certification by the PNYC is merely perfunctory. Further, such a congregational vote is not authorized within the permitted functions of a congregation in G-1.0503 and is specifically prohibited in *Sundquist et al. vs. Heartland Presbytery*: “Withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not a matter that can be considered at a congregational meeting” and the consultations of presbytery with members of the congregation “are not meetings at which business of the congregation may be conducted.” *Sundquist 219-03, 2008*. [GA Minutes, (2010, Part I, pp. 362–367).] It should also be noted that the General Assembly in 1991 declared: “Nowhere is written that the congregation is permitted to make the decision that the presbytery commits itself in advance to confirm.” GA Minutes (1991, Req. 91-24, Part I, p. 411). In spite of this stream of clear constitutional interpretation, the GDP portrays a self-implementing dismissal rooted in a congregational decision in violation of the exclusive right and responsibility of a presbytery to dismiss a congregation.

The third constitutional error of the GDP is that a predetermined, formulaic mechanism runs counter to constitutional provisions for mutual dialogue and particular discernment. This Commission has previously rejected such approaches in matters related to ordination and membership *Larson 221-04, 2012*. The presbytery’s right and responsibility for specific review

and the necessity of individualized consideration on sensitive matters in the life of the church remain a core concept of PC(USA) polity.

Specification of Error No. 2: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation by holding that the GDP does not give effect to the Trust Clause (G-4.0203) as required by Tom v. Presbytery of San Francisco, GA PJC 221-03 and G-4.0204.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The *Book of Order* provides in G-4.0203 that “[a]ll property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), ...is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).” The Trust Clause was interpreted by this Commission in *Tom, et al., v. Presbytery of San Francisco*, as it related to that presbytery’s gracious dismissal policy, in the context of a number of factors including both spiritual and pecuniary aspects of the fiduciary responsibility. In *Tom*, this Commission said:

When a congregation seeks dismissal under G-11.0103i (now G-3.0301a), it is the responsibility of the Presbytery to fulfill its fiduciary duty under the Trust Clause. This fiduciary duty requires that the Presbytery exercise due diligence regarding the value of the property of the congregation seeking dismissal. Due diligence, of necessity, includes not only an evaluation of the spiritual needs of the congregation and its circumstances but also financial analysis of the value of the property at stake. Payment for per capita for missions obligations are not satisfactory substitutes for the separate evaluation of the value of the property held in trust. *Tom, et al., v. The Presbytery of San Francisco*, Remedial Case 221-03, 2012.

This Commission is again called upon in this case to clarify the parameters of the Trust Clause. The Trust Clause creates an express trust in favor of the PC(USA) as a whole and not for the presbytery, the congregation, or any other body. Therefore, the presbytery, acting in the role of trustee, must exercise due diligence such that its determination is both reasonable and evident in the record. While presbytery is entitled to deference in making the fiduciary decisions under the Trust Clause, such deference is limited by the fiduciary obligations owed to the whole church.

Under the facts of this case, the PNYC argues that the requirement of due diligence under the Trust Clause has been met by adopting a formula for determining the value of the property at the time of enacting the GDP by the PNYC. However, the fiduciary nature of the Trust Clause requires an individual determination of the facts and circumstances related to dismissal of any church rather than a set formula, which may not be appropriate to the particular circumstances of a congregation. As stated by the SPJC, there must be an “individual assessment and valuation of the church’s unique situation, finances, history, spiritual needs and financial needs” when considering dismissal.

In addition, the exercise of the fiduciary duty must be carried out during the course of discernment of a particular church’s request for dismissal. A formulaic predetermination fails to account for the individualized requirement demanded by proper application of the fiduciary duty incumbent upon a presbytery. The SPJC correctly determined that the PNYC, acting as a fiduciary, may not abdicate this role (G-4.0207 and G-3.0303b). The record shows that the PNYC sought to avoid conflict and litigation. However, concern about conflict and litigation cannot justify abandonment of constitutional mandates.

Thus, the presbytery, in exercising its authority to perform due diligence under the fiduciary duties required by the Trust Clause, is required to make an appropriately timed, individual, unique determination of the circumstances applicable to any church requesting dismissal. In accountability to the PC(USA) as the beneficiary under the Trust Clause, such determination must be reasonable and based on documented facts. The GDP enacted by the PNYC fails to meet these requirements and, therefore, is unconstitutional.

Specification of Error No. 3: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation by holding that the GDP did not provide specific guidance regarding discernment of theological differences as a basis for dismissal, in violation of F-1.0302a and F-1.0301.

This specification of error is not sustained.

The PNYC adopted the GDP “to provide for reconciliation and resolution within the Presbytery of New York City” and to permit their congregations to be dismissed to join another Reformed denomination for theological reasons. The policy did not seek reconciliation and resolution as the initial step in the process (G-4.0207). The policy accepts notice from a congregation of perceived theological differences as sufficient for dismissal without concern for mutual discernment and dialogue (*Sundquist*). It is the nature and weight of theological difference that is critical in a justification for dismissal. The mere presence of theological differences does not preclude coexistence within the PC(USA). As stated in F-3.0105 “there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.” The GDP contains no procedures to encourage early discussion with the PNYC about a congregation’s perceived differences. As indicated in F-3.0204 “Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ.” Without dialogue there cannot be a mutual understanding of the will of the people. Without joint discernment councils can misunderstand the will of Christ. The SPJC rightly concluded it was important that the PNYC “ensure that dismissal is the only viable remedy for the relevant theological differences.”

Specification of Error No. 4: *The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation by holding that the GDP did not provide an opportunity for the minority of a church in schism to retain the property of a congregation, in violation of G-4.0207.*

This specification of error is not sustained.

The PNYC GDP ignores the constitutional requirement under G-4.0207 to “determine if one of the factions is entitled to the property because it is identified by the presbytery as the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” The GDP process is initiated when the PNYC receives a written notice from the session. At that point, the PNYC automatically surrenders its constitutional obligation to determine whether a loyal faction exists and is entitled to the property. Under the GDP provisions, there is no attempt to identify the true church within the PC(USA). A fully implemented GDP effectively guarantees the property for those seeking dismissal.

It is clear what a presbytery must do when confronted with a property issue. Under G-4.0207, a presbytery is obligated to serve the interests and guard the rights of the “true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” regardless of who is in the majority of any session or congregational vote. The presbytery shall determine if one of the factions is entitled to the property because it is the “true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),” majority notwithstanding. Any negotiation and decision about the disposition of the property must consider this interest of the true church. The GDP failed to comply with G-4.0207.

Specification of Error No. 5: *The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation by holding that the GDP allowed a dismissed congregation to retain its records, in violation of G-3.0107.*

This specification of error is not sustained.

According to G-3.0107, when a congregation is dismissed to another denomination its session ceases to exist as a council of the PC(USA). The successor to a former church council is the presbytery and upon dismissal of the congregation the minutes and registers of the session become the property and responsibility of the presbytery. The presbytery may make provision for the departing congregation to retain copies of the records for historical purposes.

Decision

For the reasons set forth above, this Commission finds that the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast did not err and affirms its decision.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is hereby sustained in its entirety and that the Gracious Dismissal Policy of The Presbytery of New York City be set aside and shall have no force or effect.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision to the Synod of the Northeast at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Northeast enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New York City report this Decision to the Presbytery of New York City at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of New York City enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioner Mary Charlotte McCall did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 221-08, The Presbytery of New York City, Appellant (Respondent), v. Ruling Elder Mildred McGee, Teaching Elder Flora Wilson Bridges, Ruling Elder Douglas Howard, Teaching Elder Lonnie Bryant, Ruling Elder Daniel Amiot Priso, Teaching Elder Phillip Newell, Ruling Elder Emmanuel Gouad Njayick, Teaching Elder George Todd, Ruling Elder Estella Taylor, and Ruling Elder Norita Chisolm, Appellees (Complainants)*, made and announced at San Antonio, Tex. this 4th day of May 2014.

b. *Remedial Case 222-01*

Vern Richard Buck, Jr.,)	
Appellant (Complainant),	)	Decision and Order
)	
v.	)	<i>Remedial Appeal 222-01</i>
)	
Session of the Morrow Presbyterian Church,)	
Appellee (Respondent).)	

Arrival and Jurisdictional Statement

This remedial case comes to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on appeal from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the South Atlantic (SPJC) which dismissed Appellant’s complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted (D-6.0305d). This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this appeal, that Appellant has standing to appeal, that the appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Appellant, Vern Richard Buck Jr., did not appear. Appellee, the Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church, was represented by Robert N. Lukat.

History

This case arises from Appellant’s allegation of irregular and deficient responses by Appellee to alleged misconduct by Appellant’s former spouse.

Beginning in May 2012, Appellant filed with Appellee multiple statements of alleged offenses by his former spouse and other individuals. Appellee formed an investigating committee. Appellant’s former spouse notified Appellee of her decision to “pull/rescind [her] membership” by letter dated June 28, 2012. Appellee acted on her request. The investigation ended. The parties in their briefs agree that she is no longer a member. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta unsuccessfully urged the parties to mediate.

In March 2013, Appellant sent a letter to all members of Morrow Presbyterian Church setting forth various allegations against Appellee. By letter dated April 28, 2013, Appellee informed Appellant his membership and ordination would “be revoked” if he persisted in work which disrupted the peace and harmony of the Church. Appellant then filed this remedial action with the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (PPJC) alleging multiple irregularities by Appellee. Appellant contemporaneously sought a stay of any action to revoke his membership and ordination as a ruling elder, which stay was granted.

On July 9, 2013, the moderator and clerk of the PPJC dismissed Appellant’s remedial complaint, finding Appellant failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Appellant challenged the dismissal to the full PPJC. On September 29, 2013, the PPJC upheld the ruling of the moderator and clerk and dismissed the complaint.

On October 2, 2013, Appellant appealed the PPJC decision to the SPJC. On March 10, 2014, the SPJC affirmed the decision of the PPJC. Appellant filed a Notice of Appeal with the GAPJC dated April 16, 2014.

Specifications of Error

There are six (6) specifications of error raised by the appeal, most with sub parts. The SPJC correctly exercised proper authority in rewriting Appellant’s specifications of error pursuant to D-8.0404d. However, this Commission has elected to repeat below the specifications of error in substantially the same language drafted by Appellant.

1. *The SPJC erred with irregularities in its proceedings (D-8.0105a) by:*
 - a. *Failing to recognize the minimum standards necessary for the Appellant to state a claim upon which relief may be granted;*
 - b. *Failing to address each of the allegations of irregularities or deficiencies stated in the complaint and appeal;*
 - c. *Failing to abide with the duty to conciliate and mediate (D-1.0103);*
 - d. *Failing to allow the Appellant needed time to organize papers after the Stated Clerk of the Synod of South Atlantic dumped the Appellant’s materials;*

e. Failing to properly report about Appellant's oral argument regarding witnesses; and

f. Failing to properly support its finding that the Appellant was denied the final argument at the September 29, 2013 Presbytery PJC hearing.

This specification is not sustained. See Decision below.

2. *The SPJC erred by refusing a party reasonable opportunity to be heard or to obtain or present evidence D-8.0105b by:*

a. Failing to recognize the importance and relevance for Appellant to have a reasonable opportunity to present witness testimony;

b. Failing to properly report about Appellant's oral argument regarding witnesses; and

c. Failing to provide Appellant an opportunity to be heard within the guidelines and safeguards of a trial procedure permitting all facts and testimony to be heard and decided upon.

This specification is not sustained. See Decision below.

3. *The SPJC erred by receiving improper, or declining to receive proper evidence or testimony, hastening to a decision before the evidence or testimony is fully received (D-8.0105c and d) and by failing to allow Appellant an opportunity to present witness testimony.*

This specification is not sustained. See Decision below.

4. *The SPJC erred in the manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case D-8.0105e by:*

a. The failure of each member of the SPJC to carefully review and consider the record of appeal, briefs submitted by the parties, arguments and evidence;

b. Failing to apply the minimal standard of a stated claim to Appellant; and

c. Failing to properly characterize the motivation and intent of Appellant's actions.

This specification is not sustained. See Decision below.

5. *The SPJC erred through injustice in the decision D-8.0105f by:*

a. Failing to acknowledge the plain meanings of support, nurture, justice and dignity afforded offended members, and the purpose and process of church discipline;

b. Failing to acknowledge the inherent practical effect of denying an opportunity to resolve the fundamental issues contained within the original complaint and appeal;

c. Failing to provide specific or substantive justification determining how being denied rebuttal testimony was harmless;

d. Failing to comprehend how the session has adamantly resisted explaining to Appellant why neither discreet pastoral care, informal, nor formal charges were not pursued by the session in over three (3) years; and

e. Failing to address the PPJC's error that the conduct and behaviors of non-members may not be ministered and witnessed to under pastoral care.

This specification is not sustained. See Decision below.

6. *The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation D-8.1050g by:*

a. Erroneous interpretation and application of the duty to conciliate and mediate D-1.0103;

b. Failing to acknowledge and remedy the complaint's and appeal's plain irregularities and effects;

c. Failing to acknowledge that session restatements of the Constitution are inherently damaging and unlawful;

d. Erroneous interpretation and application of denying Appellant support, nurture, justice and dignity per the Book of Order;

e. *Erroneous interpretation and application because a false statement may be harmless in this specific case that the dishonest statement does not need to be addressed; and*

f. *Erroneous interpretation and application of the meaning “renunciation of jurisdiction.”*

This specification is not sustained. See Decision below.

Decision

After consideration of the record of the case, this Commission finds that Appellant does not state a claim upon which relief can be granted. In arriving at this conclusion, this Commission must assume the truth of all facts alleged in the complaint and then determine whether those assumed facts warrant any relief. See, *McKittrick vs. The Session of West End Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York, Minutes, 2003*, pp. 272-274.

Within our polity, certain responsibilities, and the power to implement those responsibilities, are assigned to councils. A council has the authority to act or not act in matters within its discretion. A delinquency may arise when a council fails to act when it is required to act under the Constitution. However, a council does not commit a delinquency when it refrains from exercising its power in discretionary matters, nor does a council commit a delinquency when it exercises its best judgment in a manner other than a member might wish. See, *Montreat vs. General Assembly Council, Minutes, 2002*, Part I, p. 346. The Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church was not delinquent in failing to act in accordance with Appellant’s directives. Appellant’s interpretation of the scope of the Rules of Discipline and the meaning of pastoral care do not create an obligation on the part of the Session to act as requested nor do they constitute a delinquency or irregularity if the Session fails so to act.

Appellant acknowledges that his former spouse is no longer a member of Morrow Presbyterian Church. Although there is some question in the record about how to characterize her departure, the resignation from membership was accepted by the Session. A former member of a congregation is no longer subject to either the jurisdiction of the Session or the Rules of Discipline, regardless of how the withdrawal from membership is characterized.

Further, although Appellant appealed from the April 28, 2013, letter from Appellee informing Appellant that his membership and ordination would “be revoked” if he persisted in work which disrupted the peace and harmony of the church, Appellant has, in fact, not been removed as a ruling elder or as a member of the Morrow Presbyterian Church. Because no such action has been taken, Appellant has failed to state a claim for which relief can be granted. Appellant’s other claims do not arise out of the delinquency of which Appellant complained: the April 28, 2013, letter.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the South Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is upheld and this case is dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church report this Decision and Order to the Session at its first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the South Atlantic report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Barbara Bundick and Maurice Caskey were not present and did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Appeal 222-01, Vern Richard Buck Jr. Appellant (Complainant), v. the Session of the Morrow Presbyterian Church, Appellee (Respondent)* made and announced at Louisville, Ky. this 4th day of October 2014.

Dated this 4th day of October 2014.

c. Remedial Appeal 222-02

Session, First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, California (DBA Horizon Community Church), Complainant,)	
	)	DECISION ON CHALLENGE TO PRELIMINARY ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
v.)	
	)	Remedial Case 222-02
The 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee of the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Respondent.)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case comes before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) as a matter of original jurisdiction from a Challenge filed by Complainant, Session, First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, California (Complainant or Palmdale), to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal issued by the Moderator and Clerk of the GAPJC on July 21, 2014.

Jurisdictional Statement

Under the provisions of D-6.0306, this Commission finds that Complainant’s Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal was properly and timely filed and that this Commission has jurisdiction to hear this Challenge.

Appearances

Complainant, Session of First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, appeared through its counsel, Jorg R. Largent. Respondents, the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues of the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), appeared through their counsel, James A. Wilson.

History

This case arises from the Complainant’s allegation of irregularity in the approval of the Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues (Committee) Item 10-03, Authoritative Interpretation of the *Book of Order*, Section W-4.9000 (AI) of the 221st General Assembly (June 14–21, 2014) (GA). The GA created the Committee, as an assembly committee, for the purpose of reviewing and rendering advice about civil union and marriage matters coming before that Assembly.

On July 17, 2014, the Complainant filed a Complaint and Request for Stay of Enforcement with the Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The Complaint alleged irregularities by the Committee and the GA in the GA’s acceptance during plenary session of the Committee’s recommendation and approval of the AI to affirm pastoral discretion in the performance of marriage ceremonies.

The GAPJC Moderator and Clerk reviewed the Complaint and Request for Stay of Enforcement and issued a Preliminary Order for Dismissal on July 21, 2014. The Order concluded that the GAPJC does not have jurisdiction over the GA; that the Complainant does not have standing to file the Complaint; that the Complaint does not state a claim upon which relief can be granted; and that as an assembly committee of the GA, the Committee had no power other than to make recommendations to the GA and that, therefore, neither the Committee nor its members are a party to this Complaint.

On July 21, 2014, the GAPJC Commissioners were informed of the Complainant’s Request for Remedial Action and Stay of Enforcement, the Preliminary Order of Dismissal and the requirements for a Stay pursuant to D-6.0103. The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly did not receive the required signatures to stay the AI; therefore, the Complainant’s Request for Stay of Enforcement was not granted.

The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly received the Complainant’s Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal on August 18, 2014. Under the provisions of D-6.0305, the GAPJC Moderator and Clerk reviewed the Challenge and determined that it was properly and timely filed. An Order Accepting Challenge was issued on August 20, 2014, and a hearing was scheduled on the Challenge for February 13, 2015.

Basis for Complainant’s Challenge

Complainant challenged the Preliminary Order of Dismissal of the Moderator and Clerk of the GAPJC asserting that the GAPJC did have jurisdiction to hear the Complaint, that the Complainant did have standing to bring the Complaint, and that the Complaint did state a claim upon which relief could be granted.

Decision

This Commission finds that it lacks jurisdiction over the GA and the Committee and, therefore, affirms the Preliminary Order for Dismissal.

Book of Order D-6.0202b(2) states that a complaint may be filed by a session against the Presbyterian Mission Agency or an entity of the General Assembly. There is no provision in the *Book of Order* permitting a complaint to be filed against the General Assembly itself. The Committee was an assembly committee and not an entity of the GA. The Committee did not have the power to act other than to make recommendations to the GA (*See*, G-3.0109). Upon adjournment of the GA, the Committee ceased to exist. Therefore, this Commission has no jurisdiction over the GA or the Committee.

D-6.0306(c) states, “If the permanent judicial commission determines that any point listed in D-6.0305 has been answered in the negative, the permanent judicial commission shall dismiss the case.” Since this Commission finds that it has no jurisdiction, it does not need to decide whether the Complainant had standing to bring this Complaint or whether the Complaint stated a claim upon which relief could be granted.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, California, report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Mary McClure and Flor Velez-Diaz did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 222-02, Session, First Presbyterian Church of Palmdale, California (DBA Horizon Community Church), Complainant, v. The 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee of the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Respondent*, made and announced at Nashville, Tenn. this 14th day of February, 2015.

d. *Remedial Case 222-03*

Cherokee Presbytery; The Session, First Presbyterian)
 Church, Port Huron, Michigan; The Session, First Pres-)
 byterian Church, Ellsworth, Wisconsin; The Session,)
 Calvary Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan; and)
 The Session, St. Timothy Presbyterian Church, Livonia,)
 Michigan,)
 Complainants)
)
 v.)
)
 The Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the)
 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),)
 Respondent.)

DECISION ON CHALLENGE TO PRELIMI-
 NARY ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
Remedial Case 222-03

Arrival Statement

This is a remedial case filed with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) as a case of original jurisdiction by Cherokee Presbytery; The Session, First Presbyterian Church, Port Huron, Michigan; The Session, First Presbyterian Church, Ellsworth, Wisconsin; The Session, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan;

and The Session, St. Timothy Presbyterian Church, Livonia, Michigan, Complainants v. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Respondent.

Jurisdictional Statement

Under the provisions of D-6.0306, this Commission finds that Complainants' Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal was properly and timely filed and that this Commission has jurisdiction to hear this Challenge.

Appearances

Complainants were represented by Mark Schneider and Complainants' Coordinator, Edward Koster, both of whom appeared by telephone conference call such that they could hear and be heard by all present. Respondent was represented by James A. Wilson and Paul K. Hooker.

History

Prior to the meeting of the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the GA), the Presbytery of Heartland transmitted to the GA an overture seeking an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) of the *Book of Order*, W-4.9000. This overture was subsequently identified by the GA as Item 10-03. The GA referred Item 10-03 to the Assembly Committee for Civil Union and Marriage Issues (the Committee). Pursuant to G-6.02, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (the ACC) provided timely written advice to the Stated Clerk of the GA on Item 10-03 as follows:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the 221st General Assembly (2014) disapprove Item 10-03.

This overture proposes an authoritative interpretation which would allow the exercise of pastoral discretion and freedom of conscience in conducting a marriage service for any couple as permitted by the "laws of the place where the couple seeks to be married." It suggests an interpretation contrary to the clear statement of W-4.9000.

Section W-4.9001 and related citations (W-4.9002a, W-4.9004, W-4.9006) limit marriage to couples who are "a woman and a man." Because these statements are clear and unambiguous, they can not [sic] be interpreted in a manner that is inconsistent with their plain and ordinary meaning.

The *Book of Order* is not based upon state and civil law, but the church's understanding of Scripture and Reformed theology. As noted in *Southard v Presbytery of Boston* (GAPJC 2012, 220-02), "While the PCUSA is free to amend its definition of marriage, a change in state law does not amend the *Book of Order*."

Freedom of conscience is a foundational principle of the PC(USA) (G-2.0105) but must be exercised within certain bounds. The exercise of freedom of conscience in and of itself is not necessarily a violation of polity or an obstruction of constitutional governance. Such freedom of conscience, however, is not freedom of action. All persons in ordered ministry have a duty to fulfill constitutionally mandated responsibilities.

If it is the will of the assembly to change the definition of marriage, such a change is better accomplished by amendment of W-4.9000 rather than by authoritative interpretation.

Following discussion on the plenary floor, Item 10-03, as amended, was moved for approval. A commissioner asked that the motion be considered out of order in view of G-3.0105, and lengthy debate followed. Several questions were referred to the ACC. According to the Complainants, the ACC's responses were at best confusing and at worst directly contradicted its written advice. The ACC's advice, in general, was that Item 10-03 was in order and when asked, said, "It is our opinion that it is within the rights of this Council to consider taking this action." The plenary went on to approve the following AI of W-4.9000:

Worship is a central element of the pastoral care of the people of God (W-6.3001, W-6.3010) in which a teaching elder's discernment of the leading of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. The necessity of ensuring the exercise of freedom of conscience in the interpretation of Scripture (G-2.0105) in the planning and leadership of worship has deep roots in our Reformed tradition and theology. Because a service of marriage is one form of such worship, when a couple requests the involvement of the church in solemnizing their marriage as permitted by the laws of the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage is to take place, teaching elders* have the pastoral responsibility to assess the capabilities, intentions, and readiness of the couple to be married (W-4.9002), and the freedom of conscience in the interpretation of Scripture (G-2.0105) to participate in any such marriage they believe the Holy Spirit calls them to perform.

Exercising such discretion and freedom of conscience under the prayerful guidance of Scripture, teaching elders may conduct a marriage service for any such couple in the place where the community gathers for worship, so long as it is approved by the session; or in such other place as may be suitable for a service of Christian worship. In no case shall any teaching elder's conscience be bound to conduct any marriage service for any couple except by his or her understanding of the Word, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The authoritative interpretation of this section by the 203rd General Assembly (1991) (*Minutes*, 1991, Part I, p. 395, paragraphs 21.124-128), and the subsequent authoritative interpretations of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission relying upon it, are withdrawn and replaced with this authoritative interpretation.

*As in other places in the Directory for Worship, the use of "teaching elders" in this paragraph should be understood to include ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service (*Minutes*, 2014, p. 30).

On September 8, 2014, the Complainants filed a remedial Complaint objecting to the ACC's actions, advice and comments to the plenary of the GA during the discussion of Item

10-03. The Complaint seeks to have the GAPJC set aside or otherwise declare irregular an act or acts of the ACC. The Complainants allege that certain statements or advice of the ACC to the GA plenary were conflicting or erroneous.

On October 27, 2014, the Respondent filed a Motion to Dismiss and Answer to Complaint, requesting that all claims and requests for relief against it or any other person or entity be dismissed.

By Preliminary Order for Dismissal dated October 29, 2014, the Moderator and the Clerk of the GAPJC found that the GAPJC had jurisdiction, the Complainants had standing, and the Complaint was timely filed. However, the Moderator and Clerk went on to find that the Complaint did not state a claim upon which relief could be granted, and the matter was dismissed.

The Complainants filed a Challenge to the Preliminary Order on November 21, 2014. By Order dated December 2, 2014, the Challenge was accepted and is now before this Commission.

Decision

This Commission finds that the Complaint does not state a claim upon which relief can be granted pursuant to D-6.0305d.

Under the *Book of Order*, the GAPJC does not act as the final arbiter of the Constitution in Presbyterian polity. This Commission's role is restricted and it has no jurisdiction to directly declare an action of the GA unconstitutional. Direct challenges to actions of the GA do not fall within the GAPJC's jurisdiction in response to a complaint filed pursuant to D-6.0202b(2).

Pursuant to G-6.02, authoritative interpretations of the *Book of Order* may be provided by the GA or through a decision of the GAPJC in a remedial or disciplinary case. This is not a remedial or disciplinary case challenging an action performed under the authority of an AI. Given the posture of this case, a constitutional issue is not before this Commission.

By filing against the ACC, the Complainants seek to do indirectly what cannot be done directly in an action against the GA. During oral argument before this Commission, counsel for the Complainants conceded that bringing an action against the ACC was the only way Complainants could find to challenge the AI.

Prior to the GA, the ACC advised in writing that Item 10-03 was "contrary to the clear statement of W-4.9000." The Complaint alleges that the oral advice from the ACC members during plenary conflicted with and/or was outside the scope of the ACC's written advice. In addition, the Complainants allege the oral advice was also contrary to the Constitution and thus out of order under *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. Implicit in the Complainants' argument is the assumption that different advice from the ACC would have led to a different result in the GA's vote on Item 10-03. This Commission does not know and must not speculate on how the GA would have responded had the ACC advised the GA differently. After the GA considered the advice of the ACC, that advice was superseded by the GA's action.

Assuming the facts in the Complaint to be true, given the case before this Commission, there is no relief that can be granted. Even if the ACC's advice during plenary was flawed or confusing, once the GA voted on Item 10-03, the Constitution does not allow the ACC's advice or the GA's action to be reviewed by the GAPJC.

This Commission upholds the decision in the Preliminary Order for Dismissal that the Complaint does not state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Cherokee report this Decision to the Presbytery of Cherokee at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Cherokee enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerks of Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Huron, Michigan; First Presbyterian Church of Ellsworth, Wisconsin; Calvary Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan; and St. Timothy Presbyterian Church of Livonia, Michigan, report this Decision to their respective Sessions at the first meeting after receipt, that the Sessions enter the full Decision upon their minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners Mary McClure and Flor Velez-Diaz did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

e. *Remedial Appeal 222-04*

Teaching Elder Robert Smith and Ruling Elder Edward Kappus,)	
Appellants/Complainants,	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.	)	<i>Remedial Case 222-04</i>
The Presbytery of the Peaks)	
Appellee/Respondent.)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case comes before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on appeal filed by Robert Smith and Edward Kappus (Appellants), from an October 30, 2014, Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (SPJC). The Notice of Appeal was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on December 2, 2014.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Appellants have standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Appellants were present and were represented by Parker T. Williamson. The Presbytery of the Peaks (Appellee or Presbytery) was represented by Archibald Wallace, III.

History

Beginning in 2011, the Presbytery received letters and calls from members of First Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia (Church). In an April 12, 2012, meeting with the Session, the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry (COM) learned that the Session was involved in a discernment process regarding dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). On December 13, 2012, COM appointed an Administrative Review Committee (ARC) to work with the Session. After concluding progress had not been made with the Session, the Presbytery voted at its May 9, 2013, stated meeting to change the status of ARC to an Administrative Commission (AC). In July 2013, the AC imposed five moratoria, including that no members would be added to, transferred out, or removed from the rolls.

No complaint was filed at that time to lift the moratoria under the Rules of Discipline. However, on or about October 22, 2013, the Presbytery received a Request for Remedial Action for consideration at its October 24, 2013, stated meeting. The Presbytery was asked to “remedy the irregularities committed in its name” by its AC through: (1) dismissing the AC; (2) declaring null and void the five moratoria; (3) repudiating various listed actions of the AC; (4) recommitting the Presbytery to both the spirit and the letter of its Gracious Dismissal Policy; and (5) electing a response team that would strictly adhere to the Gracious Dismissal Policy.

At the Presbytery’s October 24, 2013, meeting the Moderator announced that this Request for Remedial Action would need to be resolved by the SPJC. The Moderator nominated and Presbytery elected a committee of counsel according to D-6.0302.

The Presbytery, during its May 8, 2014, meeting, acting upon an order from the SPJC, addressed the Request for Remedial Action and then voted on each of the five requests. The Presbytery voted in favor of recommitting itself to the spirit and letter of the Gracious Dismissal Policy. The other four requests were not approved including the request to declare null and void the five moratoria imposed by the AC.

Following the Presbytery meeting, Appellants filed two nearly identical complaints with the SPJC. The first complaint was filed on May 21, 2014, alleging a delinquency occurred at the Presbytery’s May 8, 2014, stated meeting when the Presbytery failed to rescind the moratoria imposed by the AC. On July 3, 2014, Appellants filed a second complaint alleging an irregularity occurred at the May 8, 2014, Presbytery meeting when the Presbytery refused to rescind the five moratoria imposed on its behalf by the AC.

At the Hearing on October 30, 2014, receiving no objection from the parties, the SPJC ruled that the two virtually identical complaints be consolidated into one Complaint of an irregularity. It also ruled that the consolidated Complaint did not state a claim upon which relief could be granted. The case was dismissed.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

A Notice of Appeal from the Decision of the SPJC was received by the GAPJC on December 2, 2014. By Preliminary Order for a Hearing dated January 21, 2015, the Appeal to the GAPJC was accepted.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: (Appellants' Specification of Error No. A) The SPJC erred in finding that the complaints fail to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under D-6.0305d based on its assertion that the complaints "are now well past the timeliness requirements of D-6.0202a."

This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2: (Appellants' Specification of Error No. B) The SPJC erred in determining that it need not review the constitutionality of the AC's actions because it found that the Appellee committed no procedural errors.

This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3: (Appellants' Specification of Error No. C) The SPJC erred in dismissing the complaints because it declined to substitute its judgment for that of the Appellee.

This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 4: (Appellants' Specification of Error No. D) The SPJC erred in finding that the complaints fail to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under D-6.0305d based on its opinion that a party is forever barred from challenging the constitutionality of an action beyond 90 days of its first occurrence.

This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 5: (Appellants' Specification of Error No. E) The SPJC erred by overreaching the limits of inquiry under D-6.0305 because it addressed the merits of Appellants' claims in dismissing the complaints.

This specification of error is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 6: (Appellants' Specification of Error No. F) The SPJC erred in dismissing the complaints because it committed a procedural error in consolidating the complaints and thereby unjustly dismissing one of them without due process.

This specification of error is not sustained.

Decision

The act that forms the basis for the complaint was the imposition of a moratorium against the acceptance of new members, which occurred in July 2013. However, the sole issue before this Commission is the May 8, 2014, Presbytery decision to leave in place the moratorium on receiving new members or removing members from the roll. The Synod ruled that the Presbytery's decision was an exercise in discretionary judgment. This Commission does not reach that argument.

This Commission affirms the SPJC decision that there were no procedural errors at the May 8, 2014, meeting. Furthermore, the SPJC did not err in consolidating two nearly identical complaints for the sake of judicial economy, especially since Appellants did not object to the consolidation at the time.

Appellants argue that the Presbytery's failure to rescind the moratorium on May 8, 2014, provides an independent basis for reviewing the constitutionality of the AC's imposition of the moratorium on behalf of the Presbytery in July 2013. Because this was an action taken by an AC, it can only be classified as an irregularity under D-2.0202a. A complaint based upon an irregularity must be filed within ninety days of an occurrence under D-6.0202a. The Appellants did not file their complaint until well after the deadline for the July 2013 action.

Appellants further argue that the moratorium constitutes a continuing violation akin to a continuing tort, as borrowed from civil law. This Commission declines to adopt this theory for two reasons. First, the continuing violation theory is not contained within the *Book of Order*. Second, even if this Commission were inclined to adopt this theory, it would not do so in this case, as the enactment of the moratorium on membership is a discrete and completed act which could have been the subject of an immediate complaint. To do otherwise would be to nullify the 90-day deadline of D-6.0202a.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission is affirmed and the case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic report this Decision to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Peaks report this Decision to the Presbytery of the Peaks at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of the Peaks enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners A. Bates Butler III, and Ruth Goldthwaite did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Dissent

Commissioners Robin L. Roberts, Helen R. Heffington, Kevin L. Nollette, and Maurice R. Caskey

A Request for Remedial Action filed by Edward Bennett, a member of Session of the Church, and Robert Smith sought action by the Presbytery to rescind the actions of the AC which, among other things, prohibited the Session from making any change in the membership of the church, whether by confession of faith or transfer. Presbytery declined to docket or to act on the request. That refusal to act was appealed to SPJC.

On April 29, 2014, SPJC ordered the Presbytery to docket and consider the request, as it would a motion to rescind under G-3.0109b(6), not as a complaint for irregularity. Based on the SPJC’s ruling, the Presbytery then docketed and took up the matter at its May 8, 2014, meeting and declined by a majority vote to rescind the moratorium. The Appellant then filed its Complaint of delinquency to SPJC which dismissed the Complaint. SPJC’s ruling has been timely appealed to this Commission.

The question before this Commission is whether the Complaint stated a claim upon which relief can be granted.

The majority of the Commission declines to reach the question of whether the Commission’s judgment can be substituted for that of Presbytery. “A permanent judicial commission may not substitute its judgment for that of a lower governing body *unless the decision being reviewed is contrary to an express provision of the Book of Order, arbitrary, unreasonable or clearly erroneous.*” *Kuipers v. Elkton PC* 217-11 (2005) (emphasis added). In our opinion, the Presbytery was faced with a Constitutional issue. Membership is a fundamental matter, not a budgetary or administrative issue, in which a presbytery or synod should not meddle.

Even though the AC placed its moratorium on membership during a gracious dismissal process, a time in which membership and numbers can be manipulated, the record contains no evidence of manipulation of membership by the Session. The AC overreached in attempting to deal with the membership issues. The acceptance of membership is a non-delegable, essential and fundamental function of the Session lodged exclusively to that council in the *Book of Order*. A higher council, such as presbytery acting through an administrative commission, cannot proscribe or curtail a session’s duties concerning membership, as the AC did to the Church at Roanoke, without assuming original jurisdiction. The AC (having been given the authority by Presbytery) did not assume original jurisdiction, but usurped the Session’s right to determine membership. The failure by Presbytery, and/or the SPJC on the subsequent appeal, to rescind this moratorium prohibiting acceptance or dismissal of members by confession of faith or transfer was delinquent and violates the *Book of Order*. Thus, it falls within the exception articulated in *Kuipers, supra*.

On the basis of these findings, and there being other facts that should be more fully developed, in our opinion this matter should be remanded for trial before the SPJC.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 222-04, Teaching Elder Robert Smith and Ruling Elder Edward Kappus, Appellants (Complainants) v. The Presbytery of the Peaks, Appellee (Respondent)*, made and announced at Indianapolis, IN this 2nd day of May, 2015.

f. Remedial Appeal 222-05

The Reverend James MacKellar,)	
Complainant,)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER
v.	)	<i>Remedial Case 222-05</i>
)	
The Synod of the Northeast,)	
Respondent)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case of original jurisdiction came before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (this Commission or GAPJC) and was filed by the Reverend James MacKellar (Complainant), regarding action taken by the Respondent, the Synod of the Northeast (the Synod) at a meeting on October 25, 2014. The trial was held at the spring meeting of the GAPJC held in Indianapolis, Indiana on May 1, 2015.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Complainant has standing to file the Complaint, the Complaint was timely filed, and the Complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Appearances

Complainant represented himself and appeared by telephone conference call such that he could hear and be heard by all present. The Respondent was represented by Carlos Wilton, Warren McNeill, and Jenne Radak, the Committee of Counsel for the Synod of the Northeast.

History

The complaint was filed on January 12, 2015 and the Answer was filed on February 20, 2015. This Commission has original jurisdiction (D-6.0202), and the case was accepted on February 27, 2015, for trial

A pre-trial conference was held pursuant to D-6.0310. By agreement of the parties on April 22, 2015, the facts were stipulated as follows:

For the past several years, the Synod of the Northeast has been engaged in a process of self-study and missional reorganization, resulting in a plan called "A New Way Forward." The Synod Assembly adopted this plan in October, 2013 and formally implemented it through By-laws and Standing Rules that the Synod Assembly adopted in October, 2014. The members of two different Synod Assemblies concurred, adopting not only A New Way Forward, but also the By-laws and Standing Rules, by a substantial margin.

Those By-Laws and Standing Rules contain provisions that allow presbyteries, seeking to comply with Book of Order mandates for unity in diversity and openness, to elect church members who are neither ruling elders nor teaching elders as commissioners to the Synod Assembly. They also permit the Synod's Leadership Team to name, from among a group of individuals nominated by the presbyteries, church members who are neither ruling elders nor teaching elders as members of the Synod's Mission and Ministries Commission (a commission that is responsible for the operations of the Synod between biennial Synod Assembly meetings).

In accordance with G-3.0401, the Synod's presbyteries are currently voting on those portions of the By-laws and Standing Rules related to participation and representation. The voting results to date are 10 presbyteries in favor and none opposed, with a total of 12 presbyteries required (out of 22) to form the necessary majority.

The appellant, a former Stated Clerk of the Synod, was a commissioner to the Synod Assembly who spoke against this measure and who voted in the minority.

In addition to these stipulations, at the trial held on May 1, 2015, one witness appeared on behalf of the Respondent.

Alleged Irregularities

1. *The Synod of the Northeast erred in constitutional interpretation by adopting Bylaws and Standing Rules that allow presbyteries, seeking to comply with the mandates for unity in diversity and openness, to elect church members who are neither teaching elders nor ruling elders as commissioners to the Synod Assembly.*

This specification of error is sustained.

2. *The Synod of the Northeast erred in constitutional interpretation by adopting Bylaws and Standing Rules that permit the Synod's Leadership Team to name, from among a group of individuals nominated by the presbyteries, church members who are neither ruling elders nor teaching elders as members of the Synod's Mission and Ministries Commission (an administrative commission responsible for operations of the Synod between biennial Synod meetings).*

This specification of error is sustained.

Decision

This Commission commends the Synod's goal to hear the full diverse voice of the church as affirmed in F-1.0403; "The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction." In so doing, the Synod also honors the witness of Scripture "For God shows no partiality." (Romans 2:11).

Nonetheless, the Synod erred in the approach it adopted because by definition a synod is "composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries. ... The commissioners from each presbytery shall be divided equally between ruling elders and

teaching elders” (G-3.0104). This definition conforms to F-3.0202, which provides: “This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders.” Contrary to the Synod’s arguments, the adoption of the New Form of Government reaffirmed rather than diminished these principles. It is not intrinsically discriminatory to require presbytery, synod and General Assembly commissioners to have prior experience in the government of local congregations, the “basic form of the church” (G-1.0101). To the extent the Synod’s Bylaws and Standing Rules fail to give proper weight to the requirements of F-3.0202 and G-3.0401 by giving vote to members who are neither ruling elders nor teaching elders, they are unconstitutional.

The issue of broader representation in decision-making is significant to the wider church. For instance, this Commission notes that the 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to continue the discussion of how to include young adults in all levels of the life and ministry of the PC(USA), including encouraging sessions to affirm the call of young adults to the office of ruling elder (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, 12, 170, Item 303). We strongly encourage the wider church to continue this discussion.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that those portions of the Synod bylaws allowing presbyteries to elect Synod Commissioners who are not ruling elders or teaching elders, and allowing such commissioners to serve on Synod commissions are declared null and void.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first stated meeting following the date of this Order, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from the Synod’s minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Absences And Non-Appearances

Commissioners Patrick Notley, A. Bates Butler, III, and Ruth Goldthwaite did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Concurrence

While we concur with the opinion, we have reservations with the larger issue of how the *Book of Order* is interpreted. In the history of this denomination, there are instances in which GA, either through its Assembly or the GAPJC, has favored broad interpretations of certain *Book of Order* provisions that could arguably be construed to be quite specific in their language. It is disheartening to see inconsistency in the application of interpretive lens, depending on the issue being addressed. Whether or not a person agrees with any particular lens (or the product of those decisions), there is something to be said for consistency in the establishment of precedent.

The eyes of PC(USA) members are upon the actions of their leadership, more so now than ever before. Predominantly, the actions of the GA have come under the scope of the members due to the authoritative implication inherent in such actions. In times where councils are increasingly seeking guidance on how to face present and upcoming challenges, it is important to provide this guidance in an insightful and consistent manner. While the prayerful and faithful qualities that characterize GAPJC decisions cannot be denied, there are still some elements that get lost in translation. It may be that more global exposure is necessary; perhaps a look around at our neighbors might shed some light on the situations our churches and councils face in their endeavor to procure the peace, unity and purity of the body of Christ. And if those neighbors reflect a homogeneous society, look further away...as far as necessary.

Although never intended, it is an inescapable fact that GA actions can have hurtful results; especially when the actions under review were prayerfully and carefully implemented in an intentional effort to follow Christ. When one party rejoices, another party despairs. What cannot be overlooked, under any circumstance, is that all are part of the Church, all deserve to contribute in building up the Church, and the efforts of brothers and sisters in Christ to bridge gaps, overcome barriers, and build bridges in the interest of unity should not only be commended, but supported.

Flor Vélez Díaz
Kevin L. Nollette

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 2015-01, The Reverend James MacKellar (Complainant) the Synod of the Northeast (Respondent)*, made and announced at Indianapolis, Ind. this 2nd day of May, 2015.

g. *Remedial Appeal 222-06*

THE PRESBYTERY OF MUSKINGUM VALLEY,	)	DECISION AND ORDER
Appellant/Respondent,	)	<i>Remedial Case 222-06</i>
)	
v.)	
)	
ROBERT A. HAUSER,)	
Appellee/Complainant.)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case comes before the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (this Commission or GAPJC) on appeal from a Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant (SPJC) regarding action taken by the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley (the Presbytery or Appellant) with respect to Robert A. Hauser (Complainant or Appellee).

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission has jurisdiction, Appellant has standing to file this Appeal, the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and the Appeal states one or more of the grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Appellant was present through a member of the Committee of Counsel, Christopher Stewart, and was represented by James A. Wilson. Appellee and his counsel, Edward H. Koster, appeared by telephone conference call such that both could hear and be heard by all present.

History

This case arises from Appellant’s allegation of errors by the SPJC in its decision on a remedial complaint against the Presbytery for denying Appellee’s request to be restored from a censure of temporary exclusion from ordered ministry.

Appellee was granted honorably retired status on January 27, 2008. He was placed on the inactive roll of teaching elders by the Presbytery on April 28, 2010, after censure was imposed by the Permanent Judicial Commission of Muskingum Valley Presbytery (PPJC) pursuant to D-12.0104d (the PPJC Decision). The censure imposed was “temporary exclusion from the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament for a period of not less than four years, with credit for one year.” This effectively was a period of exclusion of no fewer than three (3) years. Neither party appealed this censure. Appellee remains a member of the Presbytery excluded from office.

Appellee requested on April 17, 2013, that the Presbytery consider restoring him to ordered ministry. The Presbytery voted at a special meeting on April 1, 2014, to deny Appellee’s request for restoration.

Appellee filed a remedial case against the Presbytery, with the SPJC, on April 23, 2014. The SPJC conducted a trial on March 16, 2015, on the issue of whether the Presbytery had the right to exclude the Appellee from the office of teaching elder for a period greater than four years under the terms of a censure that mandated a temporary exclusion for a period not less than four years. The SPJC noted that other issues would be examined in a trial on a future date, if necessary.

On March 16, 2015, the SPJC ruled that a temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry shall be for “a definite period of time” or for a defined period of supervised rehabilitation; that the Presbytery acted unconstitutionally in establishing a period “not less than 4 years” without an established period of rehabilitation; that the Presbytery violated its constitutional mandate in refusing Appellee’s request for restoration; that the Presbytery retains judicial jurisdiction; and that remedial action is appropriate (the SPJC Decision). It then remanded the matter to the Presbytery and directed that Appellee shall have the right to appeal for restoration.

The Presbytery appealed the SPJC Decision on March 23, 2015. The appeal included a challenge to the preliminary questions of the Complaint, as amended, before the SPJC. The Presbytery also filed a separate motion for stay pending appeal. This Commission issued a Preliminary Order for Hearing on March 25, 2015, and granted a Stay on March 27, 2015.

Specifications of Error

Specification of Error No. 1: The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant erred in the proceedings and in constitutional interpretation in finding that Appellee had standing to assert the claims contained in the Complaint and Amended Complaint in this matter.

This specification of error is not sustained.

Given his status as a member excluded from office, Appellee could speak on the floor of Presbytery, but only on matters relating to himself [see GA (1994, 197, 21.092, Req. 94-13)]. As a teaching elder member of the Presbytery, Appellee had standing to file a complaint. Enrollment at a particular meeting is not a requirement for a teaching elder.

Specification of Error No. 2: The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant erred in the proceedings and in constitutional interpretation in finding Appellee had stated a claim upon which relief could be granted insofar as his Complaint and Amended Complaint sought to modify the censure imposed upon him in a disciplinary case, which he had not appealed.

This specification of error is sustained.

Appellee argues that the PPJC Decision for an indefinite temporary exclusion was erroneous. While the PPJC Decision was not compliant with the language of D-12.0104, Appellee waived his right to have the order judicially modified by failing to file a timely appeal. The time limit for such appeals serves the compelling purpose of finality in disciplinary matters.

A remedial case may not be used to address an error committed in a disciplinary case. *Presbytery of East Tennessee v. Cook* (211-5, 1999); *Evans v. Presbytery of Lake Michigan* (207-4, 1995). “[T]he appellate process is the means by which a judicial commission’s alleged errors in constitutional interpretation are corrected.” *Presbytery of San Joaquin v. Permanent Judicial Commission, Synod of the Pacific, and Synod of the Pacific* (215-3, 2002). Pursuant to prior GAPJC decisions, this Commission will not revisit the PPJC disciplinary decision through this remedial appeal. Therefore, this specific claim is not one upon which relief can be granted.

Specification of Error No. 3: The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant erred in the proceedings and in constitutional interpretation in determining that it had the authority in this remedial action to modify the terms of censure imposed upon Appellee in a disciplinary case and not appealed by him in that disciplinary case.

This specification of error is sustained.

See the rationale for Specification of Error No. 2.

Specification of Error No. 4: The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant erred in the proceedings and in constitutional interpretation in finding that the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley acted unconstitutionally in following the express language of a censure imposed upon Appellee in a disciplinary case that was not appealed by him in that disciplinary case.

This specification of error is sustained.

See the rationale for Specification of Error No. 2.

Specification of Error No. 5: The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant erred in the proceedings and in constitutional interpretation in finding that the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley “retains judicial jurisdiction” in a disciplinary case in which a final judgment and censure have been entered and from which no timely appeal has been taken.

This specification of error is sustained in part and not sustained in part.

A presbytery has no authority to amend a censure. Insofar as the judicial process requires ongoing enforcement of a censure, that authority rests with the presbytery.

Specification of Error No. 6: The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant erred in the proceedings and in constitutional interpretation, assuming it has the jurisdiction to hear a challenge to Appellee’s censure, in not returning the case to the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley for a new determination of the appropriate censure to be imposed upon Appellee.

This specification of error is sustained.

Decision

The *Book of Order* grants authority to the council that imposed the censure to determine restoration to ordered ministry (D-12.0104h). The PPJC Decision does not set a definite period of time for temporary exclusion, however the PPJC clearly intended its order to be a temporary exclusion, not a permanent removal. Permanent judicial commissions must follow Chapter XII of the *Rules of Discipline*, which governs censure and restoration in disciplinary cases. In fact, D-12.0104 provides language to be used when a temporary exclusion is pronounced.

When a permanent judicial commission issues a decision in a disciplinary case that does not comply with the *Book of Order*, the remedy for the accused is direct appeal.

06 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH POLITY AND ORDERED MINISTRY

Nothing in this Decision should be read to prohibit the Presbytery from using any appropriate considerations in exercising its functions concerning its membership. The Presbytery must, in all respects, accord procedural safeguards and due process in considering restoration. The particular facts in this case require this Commission to clarify that this Decision does not create a new category of temporary exclusion.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant is affirmed in part and reversed in part, and the stay is lifted. This Decision only dismisses matters related to the modification of the disciplinary censure through this remedial case. This Decision does not address any other issues reserved by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant in its Decision dated March 16, 2015.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Covenant report this Decision to the Synod of the Covenant at the first meeting after receipt, that the Synod of the Covenant enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley report this Decision to the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley at the first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley enter the full Decision upon its minutes and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

Commissioners A. Bates Butler, III, and Terry Epling did not participate in the hearing or deliberations.

Concurring Opinion
of Robin L. Roberts, Mary McClure, Maurice Caskey, and Barbara Bundick

There is no clear procedural path to address the un-appealed PPJC Decision. The Book of Order does not contemplate a collateral attack on a closed judicial decision. Were a procedural path available, we would find that the order was unconstitutional, as it was neither for a definite time nor for a period defined for completion of supervised rehabilitation (D-12.0104). The PPJC Decision clearly could have been appealed by Hauser. His failure to do so, especially given his stated reason of attempting to take advantage of a non-appeal, has placed the GAPJC in the uncomfortable position of not reversing a plainly unconstitutional order.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 222-06*, The Presbytery of Muskingum Valley Appellant (Respondent), Robert A. Hauser Appellee (Complainant), made and announced at Jeffersonville, Indiana, this 3rd day of October, 2015.

h. *Remedial Case 222-07*

Sylvia Kuzmak)	
Appellant,)	
)	
v.	)	DECISION AND ORDER
	)	<i>Remedial Case 222-07</i>
The Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red)	
Bank, New Jersey)	
Appellee.)	

Arrival Statement

This remedial case comes before the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) on appeal filed by Sylvia Kuzmak (Appellant), from a May 19, 2015, Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Northeast (SPJC). The Notice of Appeal was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on July 15, 2015.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that Appellant has standing to file the Appeal, that the Appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the Appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D-8.0105.

Appearances

Appellant was present and was not represented by counsel. The Committee of Counsel for Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey (Appellee or Session), was represented by Kimberly Tsimbinos.

History

Appellant filed a complaint with Monmouth Presbytery (Presbytery) on November 18, 2013, alleging that the Session, at its August 20, 2013, meeting and in a letter to Appellant dated August 21, 2013, “did fail to take adequate corrective action to problems identified by [Appellant] after the June 9 [2013] congregational meeting.” The officers of the Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission (PPJC) dismissed the Complaint on March 4, 2014, finding that the PPJC did not have jurisdiction over two of the delinquencies, Appellant had standing to file the Complaint, the Complaint was timely filed only as to some of the delinquencies, and the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Appellant appealed this decision to the full body on March 20, 2014. After a hearing on the preliminary questions, the PPJC dismissed the Complaint on April 27, 2014, finding that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted.

Appellant appealed the decision of the PPJC to the SPJC on June 27, 2014. The SPJC Moderator and Clerk answered all of the preliminary questions for appeal in the affirmative. After a hearing, the SPJC issued its Decision and Order on May 19, 2015, upholding the Decision of the PPJC that the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted.

Specifications of Error

There are five (5) specifications of error raised by Appellant in the Notice of Appeal to the GAPJC dated July 11, 2015, most with sub parts. This Commission has elected to repeat below the specifications of error in substantially the same language used in the Notice of Appeal.

Specification of Error No. 1: The SPJC erred in constitutional interpretation of the fourth criterion to accept a remedial case (D-6.0305), namely “the complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted.”

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 2: Injustice in the process or decision, due to the SPJC failing to give the Appellant an opportunity to know and to respond to their grounds for dismissal of the case.

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 3: Hastening to a decision before evidence or testimony is fully received.

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 4: Irregularity in the proceedings concerning establishing and sharing the record.

This specification is not sustained.

Specification of Error No. 5: Injustice in the process or decision, due to the SPJC’s misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the complaint and the record of the case.

This specification is not sustained.

Decision

This Commission determines that Appellant failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. In arriving at this conclusion, this Commission must assume the truth of all facts alleged in the complaint and then determine whether those assumed facts warrant any relief. (See, *McKittrick vs. The Session of West End Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York, Minutes*, 2003, Part I, pp. 272–74).

As this Commission previously ruled:

Within our polity, certain responsibilities, and the power to implement those responsibilities, are assigned to councils. A council has the authority to act or not act in matters within its discretion. A delinquency may arise when a council fails to act when it is required to act under the Constitution. However, a council does not commit a delinquency when it refrains from exercising its power in discretionary matters, nor does a council commit a delinquency when it exercises its best judgment in a manner other than a member might wish. (*Buck vs. The Session of Morrow Presbyterian Church*, 222-01)

The disciplinary process is not suitable to resolve all issues (*See*, D-1.0103). Important operational matters often are most efficiently managed by the process of administrative review by contacting the appropriate presbytery officials (*See*, G-3.0108). Appellant conceded that Appellee responded to the issues she raised, but claimed they were not cured. Appellant does not cite any constitutional articles that the responses violated. Session’s responses to Appellant’s issues were within its constitutional discretion.

Appellant has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. The case is dismissed and the other specifications of error are not sustained.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Decision of the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission is upheld and this case is dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of the Session of First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey, report this Decision and Order to the Session at its first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Monmouth report this Decision and Order to the Presbytery at its first meeting after receipt, that the Presbytery enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision and Order to the Synod at its first meeting after receipt, that the Synod enter the full Decision and Order upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision and Order be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

The Synod of the Covenant commissioner position was vacant for this proceeding.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 222-07, Sylvia Kuzmak, Appellant (Complainant), v. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Red Bank, New Jersey, Appellee (Respondent)*, made and announced at Louisville, KY, this 9th day of April, 2016.

Dated this 9th day of April, 2016.

i. *Remedial Case 222-08*

The Session of the Rutgers)	
Presbyterian Church, New York, NY,)	
Complainant,)	
	)	DECISION ON CHALLENGE TO
v.	)	PRELIMINARY ORDER FOR DISMISSAL
	)	<i>Remedial Case 222-08</i>
The Presbyterian Foundation, The)	
Board of National Missions, and The Presbyterian)	
Mission Agency,)	
Respondents.)	

Arrival Statement

This is a remedial case of original jurisdiction filed with the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC or this Commission) by the Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York, NY (Complainant), against the Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of National Missions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Respondents). The matter before this Commission is a Challenge to a November 13, 2015, Preliminary Order of the Executive Committee of the GAPJC (GAPJC EC) for Dismissal of the Complaint filed by the Complainant.

The GAPJC EC issued a Preliminary Order dismissing this Complaint on the grounds that the GAPJC does not have jurisdiction to hear the Complaint, the Complainant does not have standing to file the Complaint, and the Complaint does not

state a claim upon which relief can be granted. With three of the four preliminary questions found in the negative, the GAPJC EC declined to reach the issue of timeliness.

Complainant's Notice of Challenge under D-6.0306 was received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on December 10, 2015.

Jurisdictional Statement

This Commission finds that Complainant's Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal was properly and timely filed under the provisions of D-6.0306.

Appearances

Complainant was represented by John M. Griem, Jr.; the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of National Missions were represented by Richard H.C. Clay; and the Presbyterian Mission Agency was represented by James A. Wilson.

History

The Jarvie Trust Agreement (Trust) was established in 1934 between The Jarvie Commonweal Fund (Jarvie Fund), a not-for-profit corporation formed to provide relief to older Protestants residing within fifty miles of New York City, and the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (BNM). The Jarvie Commonweal Service (Jarvie Service) was an operation supported solely by the Jarvie Fund. The BNM entered into an agreement with the Presbyterian Foundation (Foundation) to provide asset management of the Jarvie Fund. In accordance with the Trust, the BNM assumed oversight of the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee (Jarvie Committee) and the BNM retained fiduciary responsibility. In 2009, the BNM and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entered into a letter agreement in which their respective roles were defined, including the roles for staffing and administrative services for the Jarvie Service.

In November 2013, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), informed the BNM that it would not renew the letter agreement to provide staffing and administrative services for the Jarvie Service, as this program was no longer aligned with the mission and work of the PMA. The PMA granted the BNM additional transition time to make new arrangements for staffing.

On May 14, 2015, BNM and PMA officials met with the Jarvie Service Executive Director and Assistant Director, informed them of the transition plans to a new third-party provider for the Jarvie Service and that their employer, the PMA, would no longer provide Jarvie Service staff. In a letter dated May 27, 2015, the Jarvie Committee notified the Jarvie Service beneficiaries of the transition and that it would take place over the next month and be fully completed by July 1, 2015.

The Complaint dated September 14, 2015, alleged various irregularities on the part of the Respondents, including eliminating the Director and staff of the Jarvie Service, outsourcing the servicing of its beneficiaries, and not providing the administration of its grant-making program and other functions. Complainant particularly points to the language of paragraph 2 of the Trust as a basis for its allegations:

The Board of National Missions is, to the extent of the income of the Trust Endowment, to assume all obligations, both of money and service, under present commitments of the Jarvie Commonweal Fund to its beneficiaries and, to this end, it (the Board) is to organize a Committee to be known as the James N. Jarvie Commonweal Service, and shall charge said committee with the duty of administering the commitments above assumed and of adding thereto-and continuing as outlined-herein, in fact and in spirit, the Jarvie concept of Old-Age Relief and Service.

Complainant specifically alleges the actions of the Respondents were in violation of the Respondents' fiduciary duties as providers to and servicers of the Trust, in that the Respondents' actions usurped the authority granted to the full Jarvie Committee under the Trust. The Respondents disagree.

Complainant states it has standing, in part, because its congregation is located near the center of the outreach area of the Jarvie Service, and it believes parishioners of the Rutgers Church are among the past, present or future beneficiaries of the Jarvie Service, either directly or indirectly, as individual recipients of its grant-making program or as volunteers in support of the Jarvie Service, its grant recipients and the Jarvie Committee.

On November 13, 2015, the GAPJC EC issued a Preliminary Order for Dismissal of the Complaint stating the GAPJC did not have jurisdiction, the Complainant did not have standing, and the Complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. Because three of the four preliminary questions were answered in the negative, the GAPJC EC did not reach the issue of timeliness.

Complainant filed a Challenge, which was received on December 10, 2015. On December 18, 2015, the GAPJC EC issued an Order accepting the Complainant's Challenge to the Preliminary Order for Dismissal.

Decision

Trust agreements, including an alleged breach of fiduciary duty under such agreements, are typically interpreted under state law. Whether Respondents breached their fiduciary duties in this case rests on an interpretation of the Trust under New York law. Therefore, the Complaint does not state a claim upon which this Commission can grant relief. Consequently, it is unnecessary to reach the other preliminary questions (*See*, D-6.0306c). While a case could conceivably arise where an ecclesiastical determination of a trust provision falls within this Commission's purview, this is not such a case.

Order

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that this case is dismissed.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church of New York, NY, report this Decision to the Session at the first meeting after receipt, that the Session enter the full Decision upon its minutes and an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

Absences and Non-Appearances

The Synod of the Covenant commissioner position was vacant for this proceeding.

Certificate

We certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in *Remedial Case 222-08, The Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, (Complainants) v. The Presbyterian Foundation, The Board of National Missions, and The Presbyterian Mission Agency (Respondents)* made and announced at Louisville, KY, this 9th day of April, 2016.

Dated this 9th day of April, 2016.

C. Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary

I. Narrative

Assigned Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee on Litigation (ACL) is composed of six Presbyterian attorneys. Each year the General Assembly elects one member to a six-year term. Each member is eligible for reelection to an additional term, but in no case may a member serve for a period exceeding twelve consecutive years of service. The General Assembly Nominating Committee nominates persons for the ACL who fit the criteria for eligibility. The Advisory Committee on Litigation was established by the 200th General Assembly (1988) to advise the Stated Clerk on matters relating to litigation.

The consultations typically take place via telephone conference calls after committee members have been provided copies of all pertinent pleadings, orders, and information. The committee ordinarily meets face-to-face at least once each year. It is normally consulted whenever the Stated Clerk is asked to participate in litigation involving matters of civil and religious liberty, church and state relations, and other matters related to the mission and interests of the church.

The Advisory Committee on Litigation reviews each of the cases, amicus briefs, and General Assembly policy and constitution based on seventeen criteria and advises the Stated Clerk whether or not to file an amicus brief in the particular case.

II. Disposition of Cases Reported in (2012–2014)

*Episcopal Church Cases**Virginia Supreme Court*

On December 21, 2009, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners to the Virginia Supreme Court challenging an old Virginia statute on U.S. Constitution 1st Amendment issues. The 1867 Virginia statute that was challenged delineates a process by which a congregation may determine which branch of a denomination to which it will belong or how an independent congregation will organize itself to own and hold property.

The amici argued that the Virginia state statute violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in that it displaced a church's own rules of self-governance in determining property ownership and voting rights, it required civil courts to conduct an extensive inquiry into fundamentally religious questions, and it was neither "generally applicable," "neutral," nor was it the least restrictive means to serve a compelling state interest.

On June 10, 2010, the Virginia Supreme Court issued a decision that found that the state statute did not apply to the facts in the case and thus the court did not need to rule on the constitutionality of the state statute. The Virginia Supreme Court remanded the case to determine whether declaratory judgment in favor of the Diocese was final. On January 10, 2010, the Circuit Court of Fairfax County found for the Episcopal Church and Diocese in their Declaratory Judgment actions and, among other relief, ordered that all real property conveyed by forty-one deeds, as well as all personal property acquired by nine congregations up to the filing date of the Declaratory Judgment be promptly conveyed to the Diocese. The congregations have appealed the order and the execution of the order during appeal.

On January 22, 2013, Gradye Parsons, the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), joined the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia and Abingdon Presbytery, the Episcopal Diocese of Southern and Southwestern Virginia, the United Methodist Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urging the Virginia Supreme Court to hold the state statute unconstitutional but otherwise uphold their decision of June 10, 2010.

On April 18, 2013, the Virginia Supreme Court issued a decision that used neutral principals of law analysis to impose a constructive denominational trust on the property of the congregations withdrawing from the Episcopal Church.

On October 9, 2013, the congregations filed a petition for a writ of certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court. On March 10, 2014, the petition for certiorari was denied.

Town of Greece v. Susan Galloway and Linda Stephens

On September 23, 2013, Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), entered into an amicus brief with the Baptist Joint Commission on Religious Liberty arguing that the practice of opening town meetings with a faith-specific, communal prayer violates the Establishment Clause because it infringes the freedom of conscience guaranteed to each person. Although people of faith often pray collectively—for example, in churches, synagogues, and mosques—they make a voluntary decision to do so, exercising their constitutional right to form a congregation of persons who have the same approach to worshiping God. In contrast, attendees at a town meeting have not agreed to join a government formed congregation. They come to participate in local government, not communal prayer.

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision on May 5, 2014, in which it held that the town's practice of opening its town board meetings with a prayer offered by members of the clergy does not violate the Establishment Clause. The Court found that the practice is consistent with the tradition long followed by Congress and state legislatures, the town does not discriminate against minority faiths in determining who may offer a prayer, and the prayer does not coerce participation with non-adherents.

Holt v. Hobbs

On May 29, 2014, Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), entered into an amicus brief with a variety of faith entities as amici stating that religious liberty is a basic and therefore essential principle of human freedom codified in the right to free exercise of religion clause in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and by Congress in the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). The RLUIPA does this by ensuring that the core principle of religious freedom—i.e., that the government should not impose burdens that interfere with the religiously informed conscience of its citizens—is protected for even the least politically powerful. In this case, the religious liberty of an observant Muslim prisoner, who seeks merely to grow a one-half inch beard in accordance with his religious beliefs, is not overridden by security and safety concerns.

On January 20, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision holding that The Arkansas Department of Correction's grooming policy violated the RLUIPA insofar as it prevented the petitioner from growing a ½-inch beard in accordance with his religious beliefs.

III. Cases Joined (2014–2016)

Episcopal Church, et al v. Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, et al; Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas, et al v. Robert Masterson, et al

Petition for Certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court

On July 21, 2014, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners on behalf of petitioners petition for a writ of certiorari on the question of “Whether the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment requires courts resolving a property dispute within a hierarchical church to give legal effect to a pre-existing trust provision in the church’s canons.” The U.S. Supreme Court declined to accept the petition for a writ of certiorari on November 3, 2014.

*EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch**U.S. Supreme Court*

On December 10, 2014, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of faith based religious partners on behalf of petitioner, EEOC, agreeing that religious freedom in the workplace as specifically allowed under the religious accommodation provision of Title VII is as important to most believers as freedom from restrictions on religious practice imposed by the government. The case revolved around the denial of employment to a Muslim woman because she wore a headscarf during the interview and Abercrombie and Fitch had a policy against the wearing of head gear. There was no discussion of any needed accommodation during the interview, so the Court of Appeals stated that the respondent did not have actual knowledge of a need for accommodation. On June 1, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court found in behalf of petitioner, finding that the Title VII religious accommodation provision requires that an employer may not make an applicant's religious practice, confirmed or otherwise, a factor in employment decisions. There is no element of knowledge required on behalf of the employer to make a claim under the Title VII religious accommodation act.

*State of Texas, et al v. United States of America, et. al.**Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals*

On April 6, 2015, Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons entered into an amicus brief with a variety of denominational religious partners in *State of Texas, et al v. United States of America, et. al.* The amicus brief, following General Assembly social policy, called for the lifting of an injunction that put four to five million United States immigrants at risk of deportation. The injunction was on an Executive Action (referred to in the brief as Immigration Guidance) that, among other things, offered a legal reprieve to the undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents who have lived in the country for at least five years. It also expanded the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that allowed immigrants under thirty years old who arrived as children to apply for a deportation deferral. Neither of these programs gives undocumented persons legal status, but they do offer three years without the risk of deportation and the ability to work with authorization. Families would get to stay together and enjoy improved economic stability. On May 26, 2015, the Fifth Circuit denied the federal government's motion for a stay of the District Court's order of injunction. The federal government appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has agreed to hear the case.

D. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Agency Summary.1. *Assigned Responsibilities*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution ("ACC") is composed of nine voting members as established by the *Book of Order*, G-3.0501c and G-6.02. The nine voting members, teaching and ruling elders, are required by the current *Manual of the General Assembly* to be stated clerks or former stated clerks of synods or presbyteries, former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly, polity professors, or other qualified persons with knowledge of and experience with the Constitution and polity of the church. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is a member ex-officio without vote.

With regard to questions requiring an interpretation of the *Book of Order*, the ACC's responsibilities are set out in G-6.02 as follows:

All questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* arising from councils of the church shall be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such questions of interpretation to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, except those pertaining to matters pending before a judicial commission. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall communicate its report and recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly, no less than sixty days prior to the General Assembly.

With regard to proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the ACC's mandated responsibilities are set out in G-6.04b, as follows:

b. The Stated Clerk shall refer all such proposals to amend the *Book of Order* to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (G-6.02), which shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At least sixty days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, the advisory committee shall report its findings to the General Assembly along with its recommendations, which may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the committee. The General Assembly shall not consider any amendment until it has considered the report and any recommendations from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

2. *Process and Procedures, Responsibilities and Relationships*

The ACC does not interpret the Constitution. The role of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, as its title suggests and as its constitutional mandate clearly establishes, is to advise the General Assembly. The ACC's advice has no authority until and unless it is approved by the General Assembly. With respect to proposed amendments to the Constitution, the ACC focuses on clarity of proposed language and consistency of the proposed amendment with the Constitution. The

ACC occasionally finds that the intent of the proposal is already inherent in other provisions of the Constitution or that it could be achieved by slight changes in language, by placing the amendment in a different section, or by different language entirely. On occasion, the ACC has suggested such changes in order to avoid inconsistencies within the *Book of Order*, and also to make as few changes as possible in existing paragraphs and in section numbering. At least sixty days prior to each General Assembly, the ACC is required to report its findings to the assembly, which findings may include advice for amended versions of any proposed changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the ACC.

With respect to requests for interpretation, as well as advice on overtures, the ACC seeks to provide advice that is based on constitutional issues, not on the substance of the issues at hand. In many circumstances, the question has been answered by earlier interpretations and does not require action by the General Assembly. In these cases, the inquirer is notified of the standing interpretation. In order to make clear the questions raised, the ACC has modified its past practice of reprinting the entire request received (which in some instances contained material not germane to the question itself), and has focused the presentation of the request on the question presented, together with the ACC's findings and advice. If the question was not clear from the request received, the ACC has sought clarification from the individual transmitting the request.

All overtures and reports containing proposed amendments and all requests for interpretation of the *Book of Order* by the General Assembly must be communicated in writing to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G- 6.02, G-6.04a). This 120-day time period allows the ACC time to consider and research carefully each proposed amendment and request. Those requests that the ACC brings to the General Assembly are those that it believes meet this constitutional criterion.

The ACC completed its preparatory work for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) during four meetings: Dallas, Texas, December 5–7, 2014, a GoToMeeting on March 20, 2015, an October 7–9, 2015, meeting in Portland, Oregon. At a five-day meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, March 11–15, 2016, the ACC concluded its work of preparing responses to constitutional issues to be considered by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

After it has received and considered the advice of the ACC, the General Assembly is free to take whatever action it deems wise on proposed amendments, requests for interpretations, and referrals.

The primary focus of the ACC is to fulfill its constitutional function to provide advice to the General Assembly concerning overtures that seek to amend the Constitution, and concerning requests for interpretation of the Constitution.

3. *Editorial Corrections*

The *Organization for Mission* provides, at Section IV.B.2.c., that the Stated Clerk shall prepare editorial changes in the *Book of Order*, which should be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, provided the changes do not alter the substance of the text approved by the presbyteries. The following editorial changes have been made by the Stated Clerk and approved by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution:

a. *Editorial Change to G-3.0106*

“Each council above the session shall prepare *and adopt* a budget for its operating expenses, including administrative personnel, and may fund it with a per capita apportionment among the particular congregations within its bounds.”

Rationale: The request for this editorial correction to G-3.0106 is to make it consistent with the wording of G-3.0113 which reads, “Each council shall prepare and adopt a budget to support the church’s mission within its area.”

4. *ACC Membership and OGA Staff Support*

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution reluctantly received the resignation of Ruling Elder Fred Denson, Class of 2018 (Synod of the Northeast). Once the position was declared vacant by Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, Moderator Heath Rada appointed Daniel Saperstein, Class of 2018 (Synod of the Covenant) to serve the remainder of this term.

On behalf of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), the Advisory Committee on the Constitution expresses its thanks and appreciation to Ruling Elders Theresa Howell and Julie MacLemore Wells and Teaching Elder Steve Plank for their dedicated service to the church and through their work on the ACC. Each has brought profound gifts and deep dedication to the work of the ACC.

The ACC is grateful for the staff assistance of the Reverend Joyce Lieberman, director, Constitutional Interpretation; Ruling Elder Laurie Griffith, manager, Judicial Process and Social Witness; and Diane Minter, Mid Council Ministries senior administrative assistant.

Finally, the ACC is deeply grateful for the wisdom and counsel of Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons, who serves as an ex officio member of the ACC. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve with him.

E. Vote of Presbyteries on Proposed Amendments.**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Approved By The 221st General Assembly (2014)

Approval of Belhar requires 114 affirmative votes;
all other amendments require 86 affirmative votes.

		Affirm.	Neg.	No Action
14-1	Confession of Belhar: Amending the <i>Book of Confessions</i>	144	25	2
14-A	Renunciation of Jurisdiction: Amending G-2.0509	113	56	2
14-B.1.	Final Assessment: Amending G-2.0607	166	4	1
14-B.2.	Accommodations: Amending G-2.0610	165	5	1
14-C	Child Protection Policy: Amending G-3.0106	170		1
14-D	Minimum Composition of Presbytery: Amending G-3.0301	170		1
14-E	Interreligious Stance: Amending G-5.0102	160	10	1
14-F	Marriage: Amending W-4.9000	121	48	2

From the 221st GA (2014) to the 222nd GA (2016)

	14-1			14-A			14-B.1.			14-B.2.			14-C			14-D			14-E			14-F		
	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA	A	N	NA
Abingdon	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		N
Albany	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Arkansas	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Atlantic Korean-	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		N
Amer	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Baltimore	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Beaver Butler		N			N		A			A			A			A			A			A		N
Blackhawk	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Boise	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Boston	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Carlisle	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Cascades	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Cayuga-Syracuse	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Central Florida		N			N		A				N		A			A			A			A		N
Central Nebraska	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Central Washington	A			A			A			A			A			A				N		A		N
Charleston-Atlantic	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Charlotte	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Cherokee	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Chicago	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Cimarron	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Cincinnati	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Coastal Carolina	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		N
Dakota			NA			NA			NA			NA			NA			NA			NA			NA
de Cristo	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Denver	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Des Moines	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Detroit	A				N		A			A			A			A			A			A		
Donegal	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
East Iowa	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
East Tennessee	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
Eastern Korean	A			A			A			A			A			A				N			N	

	14-1	14-A	14-B.1.	14-B.2.	14-C	14-D	14-E	14-F
Eastern Oklahoma	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Eastern Oregon	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Eastern Virginia	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Eastminster	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Elizabeth	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Flint River	N	N	N	A	A	A	A	N
Florida	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	A
Foothills	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Genesee Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Geneva	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Giddings-Lovejoy	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Glacier	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Grace	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Grand Canyon	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Greater Atlanta	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Great Rivers	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Heartland	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Holston	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Homestead	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Hudson River	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Huntingdon	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Indian Nations	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Inland Northwest	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
James	A	N	N	N	A	A	A	A
John Calvin	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
John Knox	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Kendall	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Kiskiminetas	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Lackawanna	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Lake Erie	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Lake Huron	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Lake Michigan	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Lehigh	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Long Island	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Los Ranchos	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N

	14-1	14-A	14-B.1.	14-B.2.	14-C	14-D	14-E	14-F
Mackinac	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Maumee Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Mid-South	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Miami Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Middle Tennessee	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Mid-Kentucky	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Midwest Hammi	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Milwaukee	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Minnesota Valleys	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Mission	A	N	N	A	A	A	A	A
Mississippi	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Missouri River Valley	A	N	A	N	A	A	N	A
Missouri Union	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Monmouth	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Muskingum Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
National Capital	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Nevada	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
New Brunswick	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
New Castle	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
New Covenant	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
New Harmony	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	N
New Hope	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
New York City	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Newark	NA	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Newton	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
North Alabama	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
North Central Iowa	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Northeast Georgia	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Northern Kansas	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Northern New Eng.	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Northern New York	A	NA	A	A	A	A	A	A
Northern Plains	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Northern Waters	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Northumberland	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N

	14-1	14-A	14-B.1.	14-B.2.	14-C	14-D	14-E	14-F
Northwest Coast	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Northwest PR	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Ohio Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Olympia	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Pacific	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Palisades	A	A	A	N	A	A	A	A
Palo Duro	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Peace River	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Peaks	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	N
Philadelphia	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Pines	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Pittsburgh	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Plains and Peaks	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Prospect Hill	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Providence	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Pueblo	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Redstone	N	N	A	A	A	A	N	N
Redwoods	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Riverside	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Sacramento	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
St. Andrew	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
St. Augustine	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Salem	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
San Diego	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
San Fernando	N	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
San Francisco	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
San Gabriel	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
San Joaquin	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
San Jose	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
San Juan	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Santa Barbara	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Santa Fe	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Savannah	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Scioto Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Seattle	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

	14-1	14-A	14-B.1.	14-B.2.	14-C	14-D	14-E	14-F
Shenango	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Shenandoah	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Sheppards/Lapsley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Sierra Blanca	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
South Alabama	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
South Dakota	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	N
South Louisiana	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Southeastern Illinois	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Southern Kansas	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Southern New Eng.	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Stockton	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Suroeste	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Susquehanna Valley	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Tampa Bay	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Transylvania	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Tres Rios	A	N	A	A	A	A	N	A
Trinity	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Tropical Florida	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Twin Cities Area	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Upper Ohio Valley	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	N
Utah	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Utica	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A
Wabash Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Washington	N	A	A	A	A	A	N	N
West Jersey	A	A	N	N	A	A	A	A
West Virginia	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Western Colorado	N	A	A	A	A	A	A	N
Western Kentucky	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	NA
Western New York	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Western NC	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Western Reserve	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Whitewater Valley	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Winnebago	A	N	A	A	A	A	A	A

	14-1			14-A			14-B.1.			14-B.2.			14-C			14-D			14-E			14-F		
Wyoming	N			A			A			A			A			A			A			N		
Yellowstone	A			N			A			A			A			A			A			N		
Yukon	A			A			A			A			A			A			A			A		
	144	25	2	113	56	2	166	4	1	165	5	1	170		1	170		1	160	10	1	121	48	2

**Attachment 2: Synopsis of the
Application from the Administrative Personnel Association**

**Application to be Recognized
National Certifying Body**

1. Organization information:
 - a. Administrative Personnel Association (PCUSA)
 - b. 426 Blue Jay Lane, Apollo, PA 15613
 - c. The organization is a not-for-profit organization and a membership organization.
 - d. We are ecumenical in our membership, because the PCUSA governing bodies have ecumenical staffs.

2. Organization's Primary Contact/Information
 - a. Rennie Rhodes
 - b. National President
 - c. 2014-2016
 - d. 426 Blue Jay Lane, Apollo, PA 15613
 - e. Renniesue1946@comcast.net
 - f. 724-727-7416 or 724-594-3563
 - a. Angie Palmer
 - b. National President =Elect
 - c. 2014-2016; President from 2016-2018
 - d. Presbytery of Central Nebraska, 4111 4th Avenue, Suite 28, Kearney, NE 68845
 - e. office@centralnepresby.org
 - f. 308-236-6996

3. Narrative
 - a. APA members are eligible to become certified in different levels of Church Administration. Please see **Document A the bound booklet** – for more information. The certification program is available to all employees of a church, presbytery, synod, Board of Pensions and Offices of the General assembly in all administrative and financial positions. It supports these employees in their daily work, and provides information for Personnel Committees to better evaluate their employee's performance through continuing education. Employees are up to date on church polity and changes. Classes are pertinent to the Presbyterian Church theology, polity, PMA, History Society, administrative skills, financial and accounting procedures, computer skills and social media, etc.
 - b. The benefits to the life and mission of PCUSA are similar to above. The certification program keeps them current on church policies and changes and, thus keeps their members/churches in their positions current. Point of contact for church members can answer questions or know where to find answers. This is especially true for those of other denominations (ecumenical) to be more knowledgeable in their position. Prepares for

possible PCUSA service since you are aware of what is occurring in the denomination.

- c. APA began in 1976 during a business administrators meeting in Richmond Virginia as the attendees realized a need for a professional organization for church secretaries/administrators. There was a need and desire for an association for lay employees in the offices of the governing agencies of the PC (USA) denomination. Thus, the Administrative Personnel Association (PCUSA) was founded by Joyce Bauer as the Presbyterian Secretarial Association of the Southern Church (PCUS). Within two years, the UPCUSA church staff joined the organization.

In subsequent years, APA proposed to the General Assembly that Certified Lay Employees be recognized by presbytery and be invited to presbytery meetings and given privilege of the floor (without vote) which was a part of the Book of Order section G-14.0740. APA had been associated with the Office of Vocation. Certified APA members were listed in the Directory and Book II of the General Assembly minutes until that service was discontinued.

The Association continues to grow and has members across the country in nine regions (Florida, Greater Midwest, Heartland, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-South, Northeast, Pacific, Rocky Mountain and Southwest.) Annual regional and national conferences are held.

APA's mission is to offer the opportunities for professional development and personal growth for those called by God to serve as support staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We accomplish this by providing continuing education events for certification and occasions for fellowship, worship, spiritual nurture and prayer at national and regional conferences as well as at seminary sponsored training events.

The purpose of the organization is to improve the quality of professionalism in those offices that are usually the first point of contact with congregations, governing bodies, boards and agencies of the denomination. To affirm the ministry of the lay church professional and recognize the importance of efficient office procedures and competent personnel who strive to provide a deeper commitment and understanding of the issues, polity, history and theology of the Presbyterian Church.

- d. We propose transmitting the names of those certified to the Office of the General Assembly, because that is the body that is requesting recognition of those certified.

4. Required Attachments:

- a. Administrative Personnel Association bound Bylaws, Guidelines, Certification Manual and Membership Handbook – green bound

- b. See Document G
- c. See Document H
- d. See Document B – Leadership Roster
- e. See Document C – Recently approved Bylaws; Document D Articles of Incorporation, Document F – Financial Documents

Attachment 3. Application Form from the Educator Certification Committee

National Certifying Body

222nd General Assembly (2016)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Persons may be certified and called to service within congregations, councils, and church-related entities, serving in staff positions. These individuals endeavor to reflect their faith through their work and to strengthen the church through their dedication. They should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the certification requirements in a handbook provided by a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. Names of those who have earned certification through a national certifying body shall be transmitted to the appropriate body of the General Assembly, which will forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor.

G-2.1101

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s *Book of Order* calls for the General Assembly to approve national certifying bodies in order for those individuals achieving certification to be recognized in the church. The Office of the General Assembly has developed this application process for organizations wishing to be recognized as national certifying bodies.

Approved National Certifying Bodies are approved for the period of time starting at the close of the General Assembly where the approving action was taken to the close of the next General Assembly. These organizations must apply every two years (for consideration at the biennial General Assemblies) to maintain their status as an Approved National Certifying Body.

Applications are due to the Office of the General Assembly by January 15, 2016. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will review the applications and transmit appropriate applications to the General Assembly for action.

Please address any questions to:

Ordered Ministries and Certification
Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville KY 40202-1396
kerry.rice@pcusa.org
502.569.5412 or 888.728.7228 x5412

1. Organization Information:

- a. **Educator Certification Committee**
- b. **100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202**
- c. Organizational status (check all that apply):
 not-for-profit organization membership organization
 committee/group/unincorporated association
- d. **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (denominational certification only)**

2. Organization's Primary Contact/Information:

- a. **Martha Miller, Manager for Ruling Elder Resources and Educator Certification**
- b. **Office of the General Assembly Staff to Committee**
- c. **Term of office – n/a**

**Application to be Recognized
National Certifying Body
222nd General Assembly (2016)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

- d. 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202
- e. martha.miller@pcusa.org
- f. Office: (502)569-5751; Cell: (502)432-3674

3. Narrative:

- a. What certification(s) does your organization oversee? What church workers benefit most from your certification program(s)?

Christian educators are persons called by God to a ministry of education who demonstrate their faith in and love for Jesus Christ, are dedicated to the life of faith and are serious in purpose, honest in character and joyful in service. It is expected that Christian educators be persons with skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, human development, religious education theory and practice, and the polity, programs and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The educator certification process provides this training.

- b. How does your organization's certification process support the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? If your organization is ecumenical, how does the certification specifically prepare those seeking certification for service in the PC(USA)?

The Reformed Tradition has always raised up the importance of educated leaders going back to the era of John Calvin and other reformers. Continuing that emphasis, the educator certification process offers an opportunity for those serving in educational ministries to engage in coursework, peer support, vocational discernment, and an examination of the integration of learnings and skills culminating in a confirmation of demonstrated knowledge. The Educator Certification Committee establishes educator certification standards, designates Educator Certification Advisors in consultation with presbyteries, evaluates certification examinations, and grants certification.

- c. Brief History of Organization and Certification Process

Throughout the late 1800's and through the early and mid-1900's, the PCUS had an informal educator certification process as a way of recognizing the vocation of those serving in educational roles in the church. During the mid-1900's the UPUSA also had a process of recognizing educators through the Commissioned Church Workers (which also included musicians, board members, etc.). At the time of reunion in 1983, the certification process continued and directed studies were added. Throughout the years since, the process has been divided into levels based on an educator's educational background, with differing requirements at each level. While previously focused only on professional church educators, the process was adjusted within the past three years to also include faithful volunteers serving in these roles but not receiving remuneration for their service. General guidelines are included within the Book of Order with the specifics of the process being included in the Educator Certification Committee's Handbook which is revised annually. 2016 will mark the third General Assembly which has elected

10/27/2015

**Application to be Recognized
National Certifying Body
222nd General Assembly (2016)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

members of the Educator Certification Committee to serve in their role through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

- d. To what “appropriate General Assembly body” do you propose transmitting “names of those who have earned certification,” so that the body may “forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor?” (G-2.1101) Why do you propose the body that you do?

Because the Educator Certification Committee falls under the budgeting and program of the Office of Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly, the names of certified educators should be reported through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. This has been the practice of the office for several years and is the most direct reporting body as staff to the committee reports to this body.

4. Required Attachments:

- a. Certification Standards/Manual

The Educator Certification handbook 2015 is attached. The 2016 version will have minimal revisions for clarification and will be available at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/christianeducators/educator-certification-handbook/> in late January 2016.

- b. Report on those within the PC(USA) certified in 2014 and 2015* (the last two full calendar years prior to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). Please list each person by name and presbytery, certification achieved, as well as the aggregated numbers for each of the following categories**:

- i. racial ethnic status: **Asian = 0, African= 0, African American/Black= 0, Hispanic= 0, Middle Eastern= 0, Native American= 0, White= 11, Other= 0**
- ii. Age Distribution: 25 and under, 26-45, 46-55, 56-65, 65 and over = **unknown**
- iii. Persons with a Disability: Hearing Impairment, Mobility Impairment, Sight Impairment, Othe) = **unknown**
- iv. Gender: **Female = 10; Male = 1**

2014:

Joanne Ahearn	CEA; Tampa Bay Presbytery
Kathy Gillmore	CCE; Presbytery of Chicago
Joanne Glaser	CCE; Presbytery of West Virginia
Elizabeth Lovell Milford	CCE; Baltimore Presbytery
Brittany Porch	CCE; Scioto Valley Presbytery
Kevin Starcher	CCE; Presbytery of West Virginia
Jenny Thagard	CCE; Sheppards and Lapsley Presbytery
Tami Voyles	CCE; Grace Presbytery
Karen Wagner	CCE; Heartland Presbytery

2015:

Nancy Myer	CCE; Presbytery of New Hope
Paula Zavitz	CCE; South Dakota Presbytery

**Application to be Recognized
National Certifying Body
222nd General Assembly (2016)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

- c. Six year numerical history of those seeking certification and achieving certification (if applicable)

Apps Submitted in 2015		Apps Submitted In 2014		Apps Submitted in 2013*		Apps Submitted In 2012		Apps Submitted in 2011		Apps. Submitted in 2010	
CCE	8	CCE	10	CCE	11	CCE	1	CCE	12	CCE	10
						CACE	9	CACE	2	CACE	5
CEA	2	CEA	4	CEA	2	EEA	0	EEA	2	EEA	4
Total	10	Total	14	Total	13	Total	10	Total	16	Total	19

Educators Certified in 2015		Educators Certified in 2014		Educators Certified in 2013*		Educators Certified in 2012		Educators Certified in 2011		Educators Certified in 2010	
CCE	2	CCE	8	CCE	8	CCE	4	CCE	8	CCE	8
						CACE	0	CACE	4	CACE	6
CEA	0	CEA	1	CEA	0	EEA	1	EEA	0	EEA	2
Total	2	Total	9	Total	8	Total	5	Total	12	Total	16

*2013 was the first year that the two levels of certification were merged into one level and was the year that the Enrolled Educational Assistant (EEA) became the Christian Education Associate (CEA)

- d. Organization leadership roster, with contact information, including roles and denominational membership
Educator Certification Committee membership list is attached. All ECC members are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- e. Key organizational documents, including by-laws (if applicable), articles of incorporation (if applicable), and annual budget and other appropriate financial documents
The Policy document of the Educator Certification Committee is attached although it does not reflect all of the current practices of the Committee. It is in the process of being revised/updated and will be finalized in April 2016. The Educator Certification Committee does not have financial budget. All committee expenses occur through the budget of the Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly.

* -- Please note – it is understandable that organizations may not have previously captured and reported this type of demographic data on those certified. Starting in 2016, please make arrangements for capturing and reporting this data on those certified

** -- Please note – categories for racial ethnic status, age distribution, and persons with disabilities are based upon categories approved by the General Assembly for congregational statistical reporting

10/27/2015

Attachment 4. Narrative Section

From the Application from the Presbyterian Association of Musicians



**ATTACHMENT A
RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3 a, b, c, and d**

NARRATIVE

ATTACHMENT A

APPLICATION TO BE RECOGNIZED NATIONAL CERTIFYING BODY PRESBYTERIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSICIANS

3. Narrative:

- a. What certification(s) does your organization oversee? What church workers benefit most from your certification program(s)?

Certified Church Musician (CCM)

Certified Associate Church Musician (CACM)

Certified Colleague in Church Music (CCCM)

Church workers engaged as church musicians serving congregations will benefit most from this program.

- b. How does your organization's certification process support the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? If your organization is ecumenical, how does the certification specifically prepare those seeking certification for service in the PC(USA)?

The certification process offered by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians allows persons engaged in the practice of church music the opportunity to receive recognition for the continuing refinement and enriching of skills, abilities, and knowledge. By continuing to learn, professional church musicians bring depth, thought, and fresh ideas to the church's liturgical activities, as well as to the training of musicians and liturgical leaders of all ages within congregations. Persons certified through this process are recognized as leaders in their local communities, and provide a valuable resource to the church at all levels.

Because many congregations will not allow persons employed by them to be members of their particular congregation, we find that we have members whose long-term employment and liturgical orientation is with the PC(USA), however, they remain members of other worshiping traditions. Since church musician membership in presbyteries is not possible under our polity, our certification process allows for church musicians who are not members of the PC(USA) to participate and be certified. Our certification materials and guidelines make clear to those who are not members of the PC(USA) that presbyteries are not able to grant voice to certified people in any field who are not also members of the PC(USA).

c. Brief History of Organization and Certification Process

The idea of an association of Presbyterian church musicians was conceived in The Presbyterian Conference on Church Music, a gathering sponsored from 1956-1969 by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) at the Montreat Conference Center. In 1969, an announcement that the Board of Christian Education was being disbanded and the conference on church music would no longer be presented caused leaders of previous Montreat church music conferences to join forces to assure continuation of these events. An *ad hoc* group of leaders, chaired by Jerry Black and including James Rawlings Sydnor, Richard Peek, Herbert Archer, William Whitehead, Mabel Boyter, David McCormick, and Adele Diekmann McKee met during the 1969 conference to begin strategizing the future of a not-yet-named organization. From its beginnings, the organization envisioned itself as serving and welcoming both southern and northern Presbyterians who had not yet reunited to form the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The new organization held its first meeting July 26, 1970 in Anderson Auditorium at Montreat. At that meeting, the organization named itself Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) and elected Adele Diekmann McKee its first president.

Since 1970, PAM has presented weeklong conferences on worship and music led by nationally and internationally recognized preachers, conductors, organists, and clinicians at the Montreat Conference Center. In 1979, in response to more demand than the Montreat facilities could accommodate, a second week of the Montreat conference was initiated. In addition, PAM presented weeklong conferences in the Montreat model at Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA from 1988-2006, and in Albuquerque, San Francisco, and other locations in the western United States from 1978 - 2008. In 2009, PAM partnered with Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly in Hunt, TX to present annual worship and music conferences at that location. Since 2005, PAM has also held biennial four-day Professionals Gatherings in cities where PC(USA) seminaries are also located, including Louisville, KY; Austin, TX; Princeton, NJ; and Charlotte, NC.

In addition to sponsoring these conferences on worship and music, PAM offers an online job referral service; provides seed money grants to support worship and music events organized by its members; funds conference scholarships for approximately 20-30 individuals with financial need; and sponsors a PAM chapter in Pittsburgh, PA.

In cooperation with the PC(USA) Office of Theology & Worship, PAM co-publishes the print and online journal *Call to Worship*. PAM also publishes a quarterly online newsletter and resource guides for church musicians on topics including: guidelines for employment of church musicians, guidelines for professional conduct in adversity, resource guides for weddings and funerals, and an ever-evolving guide to print and online resources on various subjects important to church musicians.

PAM collaborates with Morningstar Music Publishers in the publication of a PAM anthem series and recently launched both a choral anthem composition competition and an internship program for aspiring church musicians. Since 1979, PAM has also provided a process for its members to earn certification as Certified Church Musician (CCM), Certified Associate Church Musician (CACM), or Certified Colleague in Church Music (CCCM).

PAM was an active participant in the development of both the 1990 and 2013 Presbyterian hymnals, as well as the widely influential liturgical study, *Invitation to Christ*, published by the PC(USA) in 2006. Currently, PAM is partnering with Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and the PC(USA) Office of Theology and Worship in a revision of the 1993 *Book of Common Worship*, scheduled for publication in 2018.

PAM first began offering certification opportunities for its members in the mid-1970s with the first persons completing the process and being recognized in 1979. Since that time more than 80 individuals have earned certification. 25 persons certified through this process are currently active in service to PC(USA) congregations and 4 individuals are currently pursuing initial certification. In 2014 several changes were made to the certification process. These changes included the addition of a video requirement for all applicants, and the requirement that an application be filed prior to beginning the certification process. Prior to that point, individuals began the process unbeknownst to us, and were on their own to gather materials and prepare certification essays prior to submitting the application. The application requirement now allows us to better track those in the process, as well as to offer mentors and other assistance.

d. To what “appropriate General Assembly body” do you propose transmitting “names of those who have earned certification,” so that the body may “forward them to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which those persons labor?” (G-2.1101) Why do you propose the body that you do?

We propose that notice of PAM certification completions be transmitted to the Director of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism in the Presbyterian Mission Agency for forwarding to the stated clerk of the presbyteries in which these persons labor. Since PAM is in formal Missional Relationship with PMA through this office and works closely with it in numerous projects and activities, this seems the most logical conduit.

Item 07-01

[The assembly approved Item 07-01. See pp. 13, 23.]

Delegation to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations nominates the following persons to be elected as PC(USA) delegates to the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches: Stated Clerk of the General Assembly (by virtue of office); Associate Stated Clerk and Director of Ecumenical Relations (by virtue of office); Christian Ho Choi; Bruce Gillette; Gun Ho Lee; Emily McGinley; Michelle Sanchez; Anne Weirich; and Whitney Wilkinson.

Rationale

The World Communion of Reformed Churches will hold its General Council June 27–July 7, 2017, in Leipzig, Germany. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been allotted nine delegates.

Item 07-02

[The assembly approved Item 07-02. See pp. 13, 23.]

Churches to Invite to Send Ecumenical Advisory Delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)—From the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) invite the following ecumenical advisory delegates to the 223rd General Assembly (2018):

International: Assembly of Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Iraq, Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger, China Christian Council, Iglesia Reformada Presbyteriana de Guinea Ecuatorial, National Evangelical Church of Guatemala (IENPG), Presbyterian Church of Colombia (IPC), Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, United Protestant Church of France, Waldensian Evangelical Church of Rio de la Plata (IEVRP).

United States and/or Canada: Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of God in Christ, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Moravian Church in North America, United Church of Christ

Rationale

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations nominates to each General Assembly churches to be invited to send ecumenical advisory delegates to the subsequent assembly (Standing Rule B.2.g.). Ten overseas churches and five churches from within the United States are recommended. Of the overseas churches, we recommend at least one church from each area staffed by Worldwide Mission. Of the churches within the United States, we recommend at least two churches from Full Communion and or Covenant Relationships, and at least one church in our conciliar relationships.

Item 07-03

[The assembly approved Item 07-03. See p. 23.]

Recommendation to Approve the Confession of Belhar.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approves and enacts the Confession of Belhar, to be included in the *Book of Confessions*, starting with the 2016 printing.

Rationale

In accordance with G-6.03e, this final action is brought before the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as the next ensuing General Assembly. The voting by presbyteries regarding inclusion of the Confession of Belhar in the *Book of Confessions* was 144 affirmative, 25 negative, and 2 no action.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 07-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 07-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval with a comment worded as follows:

“The Confession of Belhar comes with a four paragraph ‘Accompanying Letter,’ reflecting considerations at its initial adoption in South Africa in 1986. Because racial justice concerns are very much before the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) today, and are the subject of a number of proposed educational and listening processes before the 222nd General Assembly (2016), such conversations and studies might develop their own versions of an accompanying letter, written to help apply the confession to the United States in 2016 and 2017. Persons involved in developing antiracism conversations and other programs could be designated to review any proposed versions submitted by congregational and presbytery study groups and select several as part of an educational resource for the church.”

In order to strengthen the application of the Confession of Belhar to the current context of the United States and to stimulate conversations among Reformed Christians in this country, this Advice & Counsel memorandum advises that PC(USA) presbyteries and congregations consider what a short (1,130 word) U.S. “accompanying letter” would look like. This could be done in cooperation with the training, education, and listening programs described in Items 11-12, 11-22, and 11-24. Our church might also partner with other Reformed partner churches; the Christian Reformed Church has long used Belhar as part of its cultural competence training. Developing a letter to introduce the Confession of Belhar would stimulate interest in the confession and help the church confess its faith in our context, contributing to the church’s witness against racism.

Much good work has been prepared interpreting Belhar, and much current debate is occurring on race and the church, including in the pages of the online Christian social justice journal, *Unbound* (www.justiceUnbound.org, March-May 2016 issue.). Thus Belhar remains very timely and deserves broad understanding and application across the church by many means, perhaps including this proposal.

Item 07-04

[The assembly approved Item 07-04 with amendment. See p. 23.]

Commissioners’ Resolution: “Prayer for the Persecuted Church.”

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms the importance of prayer for the persecuted church by:

- 1. Encouraging all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations and councils to make prayer for the persecuted church around the world a regular part of their common life;**
- 2. Engaging in a time of corporate prayer for the persecuted church around the world during its plenary meeting[s], ~~[lasting no less than five minutes,]~~ during the report of the committee that considers this resolution, to ~~be led by~~ [include] ecumenical advisory delegates, missionary advisory delegates, mission co-workers, and ecumenical guests who are participants in this General Assembly.**

Rationale

The New Testament portrays the early church as a community of prayer. Sometimes believers engaged in concerted prayer for fellow church members who were imprisoned by hostile rulers (Acts 12:6–16). Several passages call for prayer specifically on behalf of those who are suffering imprisonment or torture because of their faith in Christ. For instance, “Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak” (Eph. 6:18–20, NRSV) and “Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured” (Heb. 13:3, NRSV).

The Christian church in many parts of the world is living through a season of intense pressure. Worship services have been disrupted when church facilities have been vandalized and burned. Church leaders are especially vulnerable to imprisonment, torture, and even death. Reports of persecution are not limited to one nation or region, but are coming from a variety of settings.

When God’s people come together to pray in agreement on matters of great importance, those who are prayed for are encouraged because they are reminded that they are not alone. Further, when we pray for the persecuted church, we are calling upon the redemptive power of God to work for the well-being of those who suffer.

Gale Watkins, Presbytery of Grand Canyon
Sandra Gandolfi, Presbytery of Kiskiminetas

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 07-04

Comment on Item 07-04—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

World Mission shares a great concern for situations in which religious freedom is constrained. Many of our global partners face such realities and urge us to pray and to advocate for observance of human rights. But they have cautioned us that the phrase “persecuted church” may have unintended negative consequences, particularly in the context of their efforts to establish good interfaith and governmental relationships.

A more neutral wording may be “to pray for the church facing adversity”

Item 07-05

[The assembly approved Item 07-05. See pp. 13, 24.]

Commissioners’ Resolution. Recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

In recognition of the 500th anniversary of the traditional starting date of the Protestant Reformation on October 31, 2017, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) invites all Presbyterians, congregations and worshipping communities, presbyteries and synods, colleges and seminaries, and agencies within the General Assembly to do the following:

- 1. Use 2017 as a time to study the historical significance of the Reformation and the people that contributed to this movement.**
- 2. Find occasions to emulate the zeal that early reformers brought to their study of Scripture, their practice of personal and corporate worship, their re-invention of the structures of church governance, and the expansion of the mission of the church.**
- 3. Recognize those places where Reformed churches fell short in their task of reform and perpetuated or created error and abuse.**
- 4. Invite the Presbyterian Mission Agency to suggest existing resources to aid in study that accurately reflects both the contributions and errors of the early reformers.**
- 5. Encourage scheduled events in theology, worship, spirituality, polity, and mission to consider—where feasible—adding a component to their programming that reflects on the changes and insights of the Reformation.**
- 6. Recommend that local congregations seek opportunities for ecumenical study and worship with other Protestant congregations, especially those in the Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, and Anabaptist traditions; and that we seek ways to celebrate our common heritage with Roman Catholic and Orthodox congregations.**

Rationale

October 31, 2017, marks the 500th anniversary of the traditional start of the Protestant Reformation. While the Reformation took many forms and grew over centuries, Martin Luther’s creation of *95 Theses on the Sale of Indulgences* in the fall of 1517 is recognized as a key event in the reform of the church.

In the Reformed branch of the Protestant Reformation, there were thorough-going changes in the life of the church. In addition to the theological reforms inspired by Martin Luther and extended in the work of John Calvin and other reformers, major changes occurred in the practice of worship and the understanding and celebration of the sacraments, the spiritual practice of individual Christians—including a new emphasis on personal study of the Scriptures—the organization and governance of church structures, and the way the church interpreted its duty to reflect the kingdom of God in the world and to live out its mission to all of humankind.

The changes in theology, worship, spirituality, polity, and mission that emerged from the Reformation can continue to nourish the life of the church. Enacted in a time of social upheaval and in response to a dramatically changing role for the church, the Reformation can serve as a model and inspiration to members, congregations, and ministries seeking the courage to bring dramatic change to the church.

In the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity section of the *Book of Order* (F-2.02), we find this reminder about our Reformation heritage “The church affirms *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*, that is, ‘The church reformed always to be reformed according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit.” May this celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation be an occasion when Presbyterians, congregations and worshipping communities, presbyteries and synods, colleges and seminaries, and agencies within the General Assembly eagerly pursue reformation for our era.

Blake Richter, Presbytery of Blackhawk
Allen Kitchen, Presbytery of Beaver-Butler

Item 07-06

[The assembly approved Item 07-06 with comment. See pp. 23, 24.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms and celebrates the work of the GACEIR and encourages their continued gracious hospitality, faithful imagination, and patient perseverance, as they reach out to welcome, to listen to and learn from, and to partner with the world's ecumenical, interfaith and emerging partners. This commitment is particularly important and timely in a world fraught with ignorance and fear, discrimination and violence; and is to be supported, strengthened, and cherished. As the committee moves forward, we would like to see them emphasize the following Moving Forward items (in the GACEIR self-study report):

- #5, collaborating ecumenically and interreligiously in addressing the crucial issues listed in the item, adding a commitment to standing in solidarity with individuals and groups targeted by a context of xenophobia that fosters disrespect and foments violence;

- #10, including the development of educational tools and materials that will assist members of our congregations to formulate faithful Christian responses to people of other faiths that reflect both integrity and respect. We request that the Confession of Belhar be considered for use in these materials.]

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations 2016 Self-Study.

Introduction

As an old ecumenical consensus document on mission and evangelism states, “The mission of the Church ensues from the nature of the Church as the body of Christ, sharing in the ministry of Christ as Mediator between God and his creation.”¹ And, as a new ecumenical consensus document on mission and evangelism puts it, “Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation.”²

The self-understanding of the Church, in essence, is based on the nature and mission of the Church as a go-between doubly related to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1) and to the world that God so loved and still loves (John 3:16). The Church does not exist for itself, but for God's all-loving mission in the world. Anything less than a real encounter of the gospel with the world belies the nature and mission of the Church.

For this encounter to happen, the Church has to do mission and evangelism “in Christ's way”: with humility and respect in love.³ And yet churches, self-centered and divided, have often betrayed the highest calling of humility and respect in mission and evangelism and, therefore, are in dire need of repentance by “[seeking] the unity for which Jesus prayed on the eve before he offered his life for the salvation of the world (cf. John 17:21)” among Christians and “[expressing] respectful love” to people of other faiths and ideologies.⁴

According to its self-understanding expressed in the *Book of Order* (Part II of its Constitution), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is, among others, a church that “seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone.”⁵ Both committed to its Head, Jesus Christ,⁶ and open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit,⁷ the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) attempts to be an inclusive community of faith in Christ that seeks “at all levels” to have positive relations with other Christian entities,⁸ non-Christian entities,⁹ and secular organizations and agencies¹⁰ through conversation, cooperation, and common action. Accordingly, the purpose of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) is “to give a high profile to the vision of the ecumenical and interreligious involvement and work as central to the gospel and key to the life of the church.”¹¹

The ecumenical and interreligious visions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are laid out in its two General Assembly policy statements: “The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and “The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). The current name of the committee (General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations) was approved upon the recommendation of the 2010 Self-Study of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations (GACER) to highlight both the ecumenical and interreligious vision of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is the task of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with the guidance of the GACEIR, to live out visibly this vision “at all levels.”

The Changing Ecumenical and Interreligious Landscapes

As ecumenical bodies were conceived and developed in the last century, there was great hope of unity that “they all be one.” Presbyterians were leaders of this ecumenical world—committed to seeking God's kingdom among us. The denomination's leadership included both active representatives and financial support. Different ecumenical agencies grew and developed,

such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC), Church World Service (CWS), World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and their related agencies. All have undergone significant transitions in recent decades. Part of this is due to a reduction in funding as supporting denominations have had to revisit their own funding sources. This loss of funding has led to reduction in staff and in myriad restructurings through recent years. One result of this change is the capacity of what can be accomplished together. Ecumenism is not dead, but it is in transition.

Leadership in the various ecumenical bodies has shifted from the north to the global south, providing a richer and more inclusive voice. This global pattern of shifting influence matches that of local communities, as communities become more diverse in terms of national origin, race, religion, and ethnicity. Dialogue “at all levels” now has the potential to transcend boundaries of nation states and religious difference. These changes bring new forms of influence and renew conversations that challenge the status quo.

On a local level, new worshipping communities are developing, composed of new immigrants who bring traditional notions of worship, leadership, and ecclesiology. This introduction to other ways of being church is transforming congregations and mid councils.

Changing relationships across many denominations have shifted from the larger ecumenical agency motif to an increase in bilateral and multilateral dialogues and relationships. These smaller gatherings allow for deeper understandings and richer conversations at local and regional levels as to how we live together as one body. There is divergence from making big statements on a global scale to being in serious relationships on a smaller scale.

“Full Communion” guides us toward finding new pathways of ecumenical relationships. The *Book of Order* describes Full Communion in this way:

G-5.0202 Full Communion

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion with those churches so recognized by the General Assembly. Full communion shall include the mutual recognition of baptism and the orderly exchange of ministers, as defined by ecumenical agreement. Councils of this church are encouraged to engage in opportunities to minister together in mutual affirmation and admonition with churches with which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion.

With denominations focused on their own survival, it is challenging and all the more necessary to find ways to be in Full Communion. One question for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through GACEIR is, “As communions confer with one another, how will resources and membership sizes influence the conversations?” Historically the church has turned to the Lund Principle,¹² which offers the guidance and challenge that churches should do together all that is possible in good conscience. This has been and continues to be a guiding principle. Discerning a way forward is a defining motif.

A more recent change is not only an increase in dialogues, but also “who” is now at the ecumenical dialogue table.¹³ This enlarged table offers space and place for Communion who once were neither interested in the dialogue nor invited to be participants. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been at the forefront of these engagements.

The Shifting Ground of Interreligious Relationships

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has previously established itself as being a willing partner in interreligious conversation and dialogue. Statements from General Assembly’s in 1987 (“A Study on Islam”) and 1992 (“Guidelines for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Participation in Interfaith Bodies”) affirm that willingness and an understanding of the importance of these relationships.

Though Presbyterians recognize the importance of such relationships, it is not often an easy path to tread. For example, at recent General Assemblies the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Middle East peace initiatives generated strong conflicting opinions within the denomination and from other Christians, Jews, and Muslims around the world.

Conflict does not minimize the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s commitment to be in relationship with people of different faiths—a commitment that comes from our Reformed heritage and our biblical understandings. The Interreligious Stance notes that “the Israelites found themselves dwelling with Canaanite, Moabite, Babylonian, and Persian peoples among others and influenced by their religious understandings.”¹⁴ God’s grace moved among the peoples throughout history, and even at the beginning God created all people in God’s image. Paul, in his missionary message, expressed commitment to both Christian conscience and Christian hospitality.

Self-Study Process

The GACEIR Self-Study Committee began its work in February 2015 and worked primarily via conference call and Skype.

In preparation for writing the report, the committee:

- Reviewed GACEIR minutes over the past five years;

- Reviewed additional pertinent documents, including
 - *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*,
 - 2010 GACEIR Self-Study,
 - The Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),
 - The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),
 - GACEIR Mandate,
 - Self-Study Manual;
- Convened conversations with assigned staff;
- With the help of Research Services, developed online survey instruments that were sent to two constituencies: (1) members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (including members of congregations, and staff in congregations, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly agencies as identified by the self-review committee), and (2) ecumenical and interreligious partners as identified by the self-review committee.

The committee would like to thank its self-study staff resource, the Reverend Melissa Davis, coordinator, Ecumenical Networking and Resources, for her competence, efficiency, and grace.

Survey Results

The GACEIR Self-Study Committee, with the assistance of Research Services, conducted a web-based survey in summer 2015 of GACEIR's two primary constituencies: members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and ecumenical and interfaith partners of the denomination.

Specific results of the survey can be found in the Executive Summary included as an appendix to this report.

Highlights of the study:

1. An overwhelming majority of Presbyterian respondents stated that they are aware of the central mandate of the denomination to be in ecumenical relations with other Christians and concur with the statement that "the church should have an ecumenical policy that helps guide it when working and ministering with other denominations."
2. According to Research Services' Executive Summary, most Presbyterian respondents are aware of both the Ecumenical Stance and the Interreligious Stance, and yet less than a third are even moderately familiar with GACEIR.
3. Among ecumenical and interfaith partner respondents, most are familiar with both the Ecumenical and Interreligious Stances. Approximately half of the respondents believe that the PC(USA) carries out the values lifted up in the stances moderately well.

Overall, the survey suggests that awareness of and commitment to the denomination's ecumenical and interreligious relations are high, as is familiarity with the Ecumenical and Interreligious Stances. However, there is less consensus related to GACEIR's effectiveness in achieving its work in nine distinct areas (as laid out in its mandate and mentioned in the survey). It appears that this may be in some part to a significant lack of awareness by the respondents of GACEIR and its mandate.

That GACEIR is known through its work first (as with the visibility of the stances) is an achievement to be recognized. Also important is that both constituencies (within and outside the denomination) are aware of GACEIR as it guides the denomination to live out its ecumenical and interreligious mandates. And yet, at this time, GACEIR is mostly known at the General Assembly agency level, not locally, regionally or across denominational and religious lines.

The comments of both Presbyterian and ecumenical/interreligious partners suggest that there is much meaningful ecumenical and interreligious work taking place at the local and regional levels, and by synods, presbyteries, congregations and individuals. Local congregations are engaged in mutual bible studies, worship, global mission projects, and social justice programming around issues of race, poverty, hunger and housing. Individual respondents are members of local and state councils of churches; clergy cohort groups; federated congregations and pulpit exchanges; disaster chaplaincy; interfaith conversation groups; and larger institutions such as the Desmond Tutu Center for Peace; the Pacifica Institute; the CHARIS Ecumenical Institute; Metropolitan Churches United Sacred Conversations About Race; and the Mosaic of Peace Conference.

A number of respondents indicated the development of new relationships with Jewish and Muslim partners in response to powerful current events and ecclesiastical decisions. Catalyzing events include recent actions by the General Assembly related to divestment, the increase in hate crimes against the Muslim community, the intractability of racism (and the perpetuation of white privilege), and the horrifying damage done to black communities in Ferguson, Charleston, Chicago and elsewhere.

GACEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations operates in four key areas: (1) ecumenical involvement nationally and globally; (2) interreligious involvement; (3) advice and counsel to the General Assembly; and (4) engagement with mid councils.

Accomplishments in the area of *ecumenical involvement* during the reporting period include:

1. The continuation of and involvement with various conciliar ministries, e.g. Christian Church Together; National Council of Churches; World Communion of Reformed Churches,¹⁵ the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC),¹⁶ and World Council of Churches. These conciliar fellowships are supported with the appointment of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) representatives/delegates to committees and dialogues, as well as ongoing financial support.¹⁷
2. Representation at and participation in the 2010 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica. The convocation was the culmination of work during the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence (2001 to 2010).
3. Representation at and participation in the 2013 World Council of Churches 10th General Assembly in Busan, Korea.¹⁸
4. The General Assembly's approval of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s four-year membership in Christian Churches Together (CCT) in 2010. At that time it was agreed that membership would be reviewed in four years. At the 221st General Assembly (2014), a review of CCT was presented. The report found that the PC(USA) would continue to hold membership in the fellowship with the goal of working to increase participation and leadership of women and African Americans.
5. Continuation of and new participation in ecumenical dialogues and partnerships,¹⁹ e.g. the Catholic-Reformed Dialogue, Seventh-Day Adventist,²⁰ African Methodist Episcopal, and Episcopal-Presbyterian Dialogue.²¹
6. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and its antecedents, has participated in the multilateral dialogue Churches Unit-ing in Christ since 1960. The participants in this covenant relationship are committed to working for the elimination of racism as a barrier to unity. GACEIR appoints a delegation to attend plenary sessions and take leadership roles in addressing racism within the church and in the broader society.
7. During the reporting period, GACEIR oversaw the process that resulted in the entering of covenant relationships with both the Korean Presbyterian Church in America and the Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Provinces). These covenant relationships are grounded in mutuality and facilitate the orderly exchange of ministers.

Accomplishments in *Interreligious Relationships* during the reporting period:

In 2013, an Interreligious Consultation was held at Stony Point Center in New York. Out of this consultation, a report was written and presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014). The General Assembly voted to accept the report as the Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The stance was referred to churches and mid councils for study and reflection.

After completion of the Interreligious Stance and its approval by the General Assembly, GACEIR sought to explore ways the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) might live into its interreligious commitments more fully at the congregational and mid council levels, and through theological education. With the help of a new national staff person who will coordinate inter-religious resources, ongoing intention of the committee is to provide congregations and presbyteries with helpful assistance and guidance as they respond to interfaith neighbors in multiple contexts, including interfaith marriages and families, local community concerns, and global peacemaking and justice. Similarly, the committee will continue to connect with theological educators and seminaries to discern together how seminary students can be better prepared for ministry in a religiously diverse world.

A Presbyterian-Muslim Dialogue occurred between 2007 and 2011. The dialogue was envisioned to bring African American Muslims and Presbyterians of various ethnic backgrounds together, in order to: (1) build and begin to heal relationships between the two groups, and (2) enable Presbyterian and African American Muslim leaders to work together to address needs and issues of common concern. A core group of individuals comprised the dialogue but the series of conversations took place at various locations across the United States to enable Presbyterians and Muslims in those particular communities to join. A final report, *The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Muslim Community of Warith Deen Mohammed: Five Years of Friendship and Conversation* was released in 2014 and commended the dialogue group on nurturing relationships and understanding, as well as recommended that encounters continue so that the conversations may bear fruit and begin much needed healing.

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations also *provides guidance to the General Assembly* in the form of comments on matters of business before the General Assembly. GACEIR is responsible for recommending churches for participation as ecumenical delegates, as well as selecting three religious traditions for invitation as interfaith representatives to the General Assembly. The General Assembly approves and makes the invitations.

Finally, GACEIR operates as a *resource to mid councils*. To that end, during this reporting period, GACEIR accomplished:

1. The expansion of the Ecumenical Liaisons network to incorporate the interreligious work happening locally and nationally. The *Ecumenical and Interreligious Liaisons* are presbytery-based volunteers with ecumenical and interfaith

engagement in their local community and who communicate with other Presbyterians to share resources, successes, and struggles. GACEIR depends on liaisons to provide feedback of ecumenical and interfaith partnerships and how the larger church can better support the ecumenical and interreligious formation of clergy and lay leaders.

2. *The Ecumenical and Interreligious Service Recognitions.* The recognitions are a public affirmation of the importance of local engagement in ecumenical and interfaith partnerships. They were reinstated at the 221st General Assembly (2014). GACEIR accepts nominations for individuals, congregations, and presbyteries, and make awards where the nominee grows the ecumenical and/or interreligious vision of the church, bridges gaps in the ecumenical and interreligious movements, or revitalizes ecumenical and/or interreligious formation. The recognitions are awarded in conjunction with an event at the General Assembly attended by our ecumenical and interreligious partners and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
3. The resource, “God’s Unity, Our Journey,” was approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010). The resource is designed to introduce the Ecumenical Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and assist congregations in deepening their commitment to ecumenism. It is available for download on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) website.

GACEIR Structure and Communication

Currently, GACEIR is diverse and inclusive with respect to gender, age, race, geography, ordination status, theological perspective, ecclesiastical council, congregational, institutional, and ecumenical representation.

GACEIR is unique in that it reports directly to the General Assembly and is staffed by representatives from both the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The work of GACEIR is not directly programmatic, but speaks to ministries of the church encouraging engagement on all levels. The Stated Clerk (or his/her designees) and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (or his/her designees) sit on the committee as ex-officio members.

On the organizational principle of “form follows function,” GACEIR’s committee, relational, and staffing structures may require renewed clarity in light of its future strategy. Its organizational design and membership should reflect its priorities and intended outcomes. Strategic relationships are critical toward making its intended impact, relational influence being indispensable to effectiveness.

As results of GACEIR’s recent survey suggest, there is a significant lack of familiarity with GACEIR’s identity and role. Its visibility is essential, because so much of mission and governance is initiated and sustained through relationships. Collaboration is highly valued in an interconnected institution such as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), so utilizing appropriate communication and media technology will likely advance GACEIR’s visibility, relationships, and future outcomes.

Ecumenical and Interreligious Formation

Even though the ecumenical movement has been in existence since the beginning of the last century, it is clear that the universal church has yet to, in the words of Jesus, “all be one” (John 17: 21). The work of GACEIR includes the importance of ongoing formation in ecumenism not instead of being Reformed and Presbyterian but alongside the recognition that we are called to be “one body” (Ephesians 4, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12), so that to be Presbyterian is to be ecumenical.

The purpose of the work of ministry of formation has three dimensions:²²

1. Keep a unity of vision that includes the ecclesiastical, programmatic, ecumenical, and denominational (organizational) parts of our ministries and commitments.
2. Articulate the Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our ecumenical commitments.
3. Promote a vision of the unity of all humankind in the search for the unity of the church.

One of the major challenges for the GACEIR is to articulate to the denomination (“all agencies of the General Assembly and governing bodies”) that engagement in ecumenical and interreligious work is not only for one office with such a title. Instead, it is part of every ministry and mission, program and process. This focus is with both General Assembly agencies and programs as well as with congregations and mid councils. The Ecumenical Stance (2008) offers both the theological basis for such action and guidance for all Presbyterians through all aspects of ministry.

The Interreligious Stance (2014) grew out of the self-study of 2010 whereby recognition of a changing world, deeper awareness of different religions through international and local events, easier travel across the globe, all precipitated the need for a more developed stance. Increasingly, congregations are sharing physical space with people of different religions. Communities have formed interfaith councils and other gatherings to learn and grow with and from each other. With the growth of real-life interreligious encounters and relationships, GACEIR must focus on connections between existing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resources, networks, and tools being created and formed by GACEIR and staff, and questions that arise from

local and regional situations. The question is not, “if the landscape changes, what will we do?” but “How can we be a vital and connected part of the landscape as it changes in front of us?”

According to GACEIR’s Operations Manual, its Interreligious subcommittee has some of the same responsibilities as its Ministry and Formation subcommittee. The purpose and functions are listed as following:

1. Clarify, promote, and sustain interreligious engagement as an integral part of Christian discipleship and central to the life of the church.
2. Provide ongoing review and guidance, in consultation with the agencies and mid councils of the church, to the involvement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in interreligious relationships and work.
3. Support the articulation of Reformed and Presbyterian identity in the midst of our interreligious engagements.
4. Promote a vision of the unity of all humankind in the search for Christian unity.
5. Provide guidance to the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, for our churches “at all levels will be open to and will seek opportunities for respectful dialogue and mutual relationships with entities and persons from other religious traditions” (*Book of Order*, G-5.0102).

A challenge for GACEIR is to develop a plan that will guide the church through the agencies of the General Assembly, the mid councils, and congregations to understand, as with our ecumenical relationships, that our interreligious relationships matter. Any interreligious relationships, documents, conversations that happen fall under the umbrella of GACEIR and the Interreligious Stance. The Interreligious Stance is not a “once done” on-the-shelf document, but a living document.

Key Questions

As we, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, consider our priorities for the next six years, we face some time-relevant and crucial questions for the discernment of our future work.

1. In this season of denominational transformation, how do we understand the process of change in the ecumenical and interreligious engagements of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)?
2. How do the ecumenical and interreligious priorities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) engage, in particular, individuals who identify as spiritual but not religious? Where are the possible intersections?
3. How can the divide between academic and practical approaches to ecumenical and interreligious relations be bridged?
4. How can GACEIR be instrumental in the ecumenical and interreligious/interfaith formation among individuals, families, congregations, mid councils, and General Assembly entities?
5. How, in the current structure of GACEIR meetings, will all this work be accomplished?

Moving Forward

With the approval of the Ecumenical Stance in 2008 and the Interreligious Stance in 2014, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has affirmed the work of GACEIR and the denomination’s commitment to living out the principles of its ecumenical and interreligious mandates.

To the end that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) attempts to be an inclusive community of faith in Christ that seeks “at all levels” to have positive relations with other Christian entities, non-Christian entities, and secular organizations and agencies through conversation, cooperation, and common action, we, the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, affirm the following suggestions to guide the work of GACEIR moving forward.

1. Continue GACEIR’s commitment to engage all six agencies of the General Assembly regarding ecumenical and interreligious opportunities and challenges within their respective roles and responsibilities.
2. Collaborate with other General Assembly entities, as appropriate, for the production and promotion of educational resources to activate churchwide ecumenical and interreligious life, including, specifically, the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
3. Encourage all agencies of the General Assembly to increase collaboration wherever appropriate as the General Assembly plans for decreasing budgets and downsizing structures.
4. Develop a strategy for the ecumenical and interreligious formation of staff at all levels of the church, so that they may be empowered to work ecumenically toward the unity of Christ’s church and interreligiously toward the common good of all humanity.

07 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

5. Collaborate with councils at all levels of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work ecumenically and interreligiously in addressing such crucial issues as violent conflict between states, climate change, transnational terrorism, global economic system, global persecution of Christian minorities and LGBTQ persons, and extremist interreligious violence.
6. Collaborate with councils and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agencies at all levels to work ecumenically and interreligiously to address racial injustice, including strengthening and prioritizing antiracism training at every level of the church.
7. Encourage mid councils to enter into consultancies with neighboring ecumenical councils regarding shared administrative tasks.
8. Collaborate with the Office of Ordered Ministries and Certification to work together to increase the utilization of relationships with our Full Communion partner churches to connect pastors and churches in processes of filling pastoral vacancies.
9. Explore new strategies for communication and consultation with General Assembly agencies, theological seminaries, mid councils, and congregations, for the purpose of increasing ecumenical and interreligious awareness, expanding ecumenical and interreligious relationships, and advancing future outcomes for the unity of Christ's church and the common good of humanity.
10. Consider practical steps that can be taken through communications and social media opportunities toward strengthening ecumenical and interreligious awareness and relationships, including collaboration with other General Assembly entities toward the production and promotion of educational resources to activate churchwide ecumenical and interreligious life.
11. Affirm and celebrate the Office of the General Assembly's commitment to ecumenical and interreligious relationships through the roles and responsibilities of the Stated Clerk position.
12. Affirm the priority of continuing a full-time interreligious staff position as a crucial resource to the work of GACEIR and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
13. Declare that ecumenical and interreligious engagement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a priority for the position of the next Executive Director of the Presbytery Mission Agency and seek to hold a consultative role in the search and selection process.
14. Explore ways in which our ecumenical and interreligious priorities engage with those who identify themselves as spiritual but not religious, collaborating with interested presbyteries to connect with such groups in local communities.
15. Commit to further reflection on the nuanced definitions of "interfaith" and "interreligious" for the purpose of clarity in communications.
16. Enlarge the diversity of interfaith communities represented at the General Assembly beyond Abrahamic faiths, which have typically been our denominational focus.
17. Develop and recommend to the next meeting of the General Assembly (2018) a theological rationale for interreligious/interfaith relationships of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Endnotes

1. "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation," §6, 1982.
2. "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes," §2, 2013.
3. "Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation," §§28–30 and "Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes," §§86–92.
4. "The Church: Towards a Common Vision," §8, §60, 2013.
5. *Book of Order*, F-1.0302a.
6. *Book of Order*, F-1.02.
7. *Book of Order*, F-1.04.
8. *Book of Order*, G-5.0101.
9. *Book of Order*, G-5.0102.
10. *Book of Order*, G-5.0103.

11. “General Assembly Mandate for the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations” in the 2012 *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.*
12. The third world conference on Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden (1952) issued this challenge, “should not our churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other churches, and whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?” This principle has been adapted in many forms as the Lund Principle and often is formulated as “we should do together all things except those in which deep differences of conscience demand that we do separately.”
13. See below in the section, “GACEIR Accomplishment.”
14. “Biblical Backgrounds and Teachings” in *The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*
15. The World Communion of Reformed Churches was created by the merger of the former World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in 2010.
16. A delegation was “appointed/commissioned” by GACEIR to represent Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the regional gathering in 2011.
17. The 212th General Assembly (2000) directed GACEIR to design a process and review the participation of the PC(USA) in conciliar fellowships. Within this reporting period, GACEIR reviewed participation in all conciliar fellowships.
18. The theme of the assembly, “God of Life, Lead Us to Justice and Peace,” provided a rich platform for addressing peace and justice concerns in worship, plenary, Bible study, ecumenical conversations, and through the pilgrimage that took participants to a number of locations on the Korean peninsula, including the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea and nuclear power plant sites. The location of the assembly in Busan served as a constant reminder of the need for peace in the Korean Peninsula and raised awareness about the continued militarization of the Asia Pacific region.
19. Dialogues are an important “tool” in the process to reconcile for past harms and build mutual understanding for stronger relationships in the future. These dialogues are undertaken at the direction of the General Assembly between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and another church, a bilateral dialogue, or by a conciliar fellowship in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has membership with several churches participating, a multilateral dialogue.
20. The 219th General Assembly (2010), together with the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, commissioned a formal dialogue between the two communions. The purpose was to promote understanding, remove stereotypes, explore possible areas for cooperation, and discover what the churches might learn from one another. The members of the dialogue group unanimously affirm each other as true Christians and that their respective churches were part of the one church of Jesus Christ. Both churches made recommendations for continued local and national relationship building, including extending invitations to attend national gatherings as observers, urging seminaries to invite representatives from the other denomination to lecture on campus, and urging local pastors of each denomination to make special efforts to gather regularly with one another for prayer, mutual learning, and table fellowship.
21. At the 221st General Assembly (2014), the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church presided at the communion table together during the Ecumenical Worship Service.
22. General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, Operations Manual.

Item 07-A

[The Assembly Committee on Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations approved Item 07-A with comment. See pp. 23, 24.]
Minutes, General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

[Comment: Minutes Review for the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) 2014–2015, Approved with exceptions as shown below:

Jan 9, 2014: None.

Jan 22–24: Only 8 of 18 members present (quorum?); marginal headings suggested, no start time (Jan 22).

Feb 3: None.

Feb 14: No closing prayer.

June 5: None.

September 24–26: No opening prayer; no start time.

Jan 23, 2015: None.

June 10–12: No opening prayer for executive meeting; no closing prayer for regular meeting.

Aug 26: None.

Sept 30–Oct 2: No opening prayer; “The following attendees were present for all or portions of the meeting” (Quorum present at beginning, but was quorum present for all votes?)

Respectfully Submitted, Steven M. Marsh, Timothy P. Pollock

Item 07-Info

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Agency Summary

Purpose

The General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) is composed of twenty-four members who are either elected or appointed. Sixteen elected are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These elected members are active in local ecumenical and/or interfaith efforts and possess an understanding of Presbyterian and Reformed theology, as well as how this perspective impacts denominational responsibilities toward ecumenical and interfaith partners. Four members are appointed by our ecumenical partners at the invitation of the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), two each are appointed by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the remaining members are the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Executive Director of Presbyterian Mission Agency, or their designees. All members have voice and vote in matters before the committee.

The GACEIR work is rooted in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the *Book of Order*, and General Assembly action, including the Interreligious and Ecumenical Stances of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Together, these documents and policies charge the committee with serving as a point of connection for Presbyterian ecumenical and interfaith efforts, as well as with other ecumenical and interreligious bodies. The GACEIR undertakes many tasks to keep Presbyterians abreast of ecumenical and interreligious involvement and encourage the use of resources developed by our church and our partners. In addition, GACEIR advises the General Assembly to help ensure that policy reflects the hopes and aspirations outlined in the Interreligious and Ecumenical Stances.

In addition to working within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), GACEIR monitors dialogues with other churches and ecumenical bodies in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has membership, such as World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reform Churches. These dialogues serve various purposes, including but not limited to, reconciliation, determining official relationships with churches that allow for the orderly exchange of ministers, finding common points of ministry, and articulating a unified position on matters of importance in the church and around the world.

The GACEIR is responsible for nominating and inviting interfaith guests and ecumenical representatives and advisory delegates to the General Assembly. At each General Assembly three representatives from non-Christian religious bodies and approximately seventeen representatives from our partner churches attend and participate. This participation serves two purposes: it provides insight and new perspectives on specific business that the assembly may be considering, and it facilitates understanding of Presbyterian polity and governance among the larger community. While guests, advisory delegates, and representatives do not vote at the General Assembly, their feedback and commentary on issues before the assembly is invaluable in helping commissioners consider the full impact of some policy decisions. Often these leaders bring greetings to the assembly or, when appropriate, participate in worship through the offering of prayer or liturgical assistance.

Interreligious Activities

During 2014–2015, following the approval of the Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR) sought to explore ways PC(USA) might live into its interreligious commitments. Building on the foundation of the Interreligious Stance, the GACEIR will continue to coordinate resources for use by Presbyterians as they respond to neighbors in multiple contexts, including interfaith marriages and families, local community concerns, and global peacemaking and justice.

During the past two year cycle, the GACEIR chose to suspend its bylaws and committee structure in order to experiment with approaches toward implementing the Interreligious Stance, exploring in particular how theological institutions, mid councils, and congregations might deepen engagement with the Interreligious Stance. This temporary structure has reinvigorated the work of GACEIR and will end in summer 2016 for discernment and strategic planning.

Ecumenical Activities

Councils

Part of GACEIR's mandate is the support of and participation in national and international ecumenical councils and dialogues, including the National Council of Churches of Christ (U.S.A.), the World Council of Churches, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Christian Churches Together. Representatives from the PC(USA) have attended councils and events, engaged in dialogues, served as resource persons, and monitored the ministries of various ecumenical bodies.

The National Council of Churches (NCC) underwent a leadership and structure change during this reporting season. Organizationally, there were many staff reductions and the national office moved to Washington, D.C. PC(USA) members are a part of the convening tables and provide feedback and guidance on policy and programs.

The headquarters of the World Communion of Reformed Churches moved from Geneva, Switzerland, to Hanover, Germany, in 2014. The move was announced ahead of the newly elected general secretary's visit to the PC(USA) in October 2014, where the general secretary visited with staff members to gather information and nurture relationships.

Historically the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its antecedents have had a leadership or founding role in ecumenical councils and agencies. In order to ensure that participation in these bodies continues to be shaped by a Reformed understanding of Scripture and the church, the 212th General Assembly (2000) was asked to design a process "for review of councils and other ecumenical alliances to which the PC(USA) belongs." The GACEIR undertakes review of ecumenical councils on a rolling basis.

Dialogues

In addition to engagement with these and other ecumenical bodies, the PC(USA) also participated in the following multi-lateral dialogues: Churches Uniting in Christ and Catholic/Reformed (Christian Reformed Church in North America, Reformed Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and United Church of Christ). The bilateral dialogue with the Episcopal Church and the PC(USA) has continued, building on a report approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008). Even in the midst of changes in leadership and dialogue participants, both churches remain committed to further discussing theological and missional issues.

Full Communion Relationships

The PC(USA) finalized the Full Communion Covenant Agreements with the Moravian Church of North America (Northern and Southern Provinces) and the Korean Presbyterian Church in America. These agreements formalize several years of dialogue and facilitate the orderly exchange of ministers. GACEIR will monitor the agreements and continue to communicate with our Full Communion partners about implementation.

In general, the changing ecumenical landscape, which is described in more detail in various reports, has led to fairly dramatic reorientations for our ecumenical endeavors over the last four years. While much remains in flux (such as the restructuring of the NCC), more change is anticipated and there is a need to continue to reimagine and re-envision how to live out ecumenical commitments in the midst of the transformation of denominations and councils. The means and modes of engagement in ecumenism institutionally in the last century may be changing, but the call and commitment to the unity of Christ's church remains strong and unwavering.

Item 08-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 08-01. See pp. 59, 61.]

On Boycott of All HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Products—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Call for the boycott of all products manufactured and sold by HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise until the companies cease to profit from all non-peaceful pursuits and violations of human rights in Israel/Palestine.
2. Direct the Stated Clerk to
 - a. communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils and entities and strongly encourage these groups and organizations to endorse this boycott, calling upon all Presbyterians to be led by their conscience in the face of human rights violations, ongoing oppression, violence, and injustice; and
 - b. inform our ecumenical partners of this action, both nationally and globally, encouraging them to do the same.

Rationale

Summary

A significant portion of Hewlett Packard (HP)'s business activities includes non-peaceful pursuits and human rights abuses, particularly in Israel/Palestine.¹ Indeed, Hewlett Packard is deeply integrated into Israel's military, serving as the exclusive provider of its computer hardware and the manager of "all Information Technology (IT) including its operational communications, logistics and planning," according to research conducted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI).²

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history of boycotting products made by companies engaged in violence and human rights abuses. As in previous cases, boycotting Hewlett Packard would be an opportunity to exercise Christian non-violent pressure to induce the company to move its practices away from violence and human rights abuses. An HP boycott would also be an answer to the call from our Palestinian Christian partners, who have urged Christians worldwide to boycott products that are used to perpetuate the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and other human rights abuses.

Hewlett Packard's Involvement with the Israeli Military in "Operation Protective Edge"

Hewlett Packard was a key component of Israel's war in Gaza during the summer of 2014, otherwise known as "Operation Protective Edge." Launched as a means to protect Israeli civilians from attacks by Hamas, this military operation resulted in the deaths of 2,205 Palestinians, of whom 1,483 were civilians and 521 were children, according to the United Nations.³ Palestinian rocket fire and attacks on invading Israeli soldiers killed 5 Israeli civilians, 1 foreign national civilian, 1 security coordinator, and 66 Israeli soldiers.⁴ At least 13 Palestinians were killed by "friendly" Palestinian fire, according to a report by Amnesty International.⁵

Hewlett Packard directly contributed to the Palestinian death toll, providing, among other things, the "command and control system" utilized by the Israeli Defense Forces, as it coordinated attacks by the Israeli Navy and Army. As *The Jerusalem Post* reported during the war,

The navy's missile boats and fast patrol boats have played a key role in assisting IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] ground forces that entered Gaza, providing them with close support. The vessels share a command and control system with battalion and company commanders on the ground. This enables them to fire sea-to-surface guided missiles at enemy targets that threaten ground forces, share real-time intelligence and integrate fully into operations underway in the [Gaza] Strip.⁶

¹ Hewlett Packard has recently split itself into two corporations: HP Inc., which focuses on computer hardware, and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, which deals with business services and software. Both entities of Hewlett Packard are involved in widespread violence and human rights abuses and thus both should be boycotted. The two companies are referred to as the singular HP or Hewlett Packard by this overture.

² MRTI (2014) *Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report and Recommendations to the 221st General Assembly (2014): Engagement with Corporations on Israel-Palestine Issues from 2004–2013*. See also, American Friends Service Committee (2015) "HP Boycott." <http://www.afsc.org/hp>.

³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2015) "Gaza Crisis: Facts and Figures." <http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361>.

⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2015) "Gaza Crisis: Facts and Figures." <http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361>.

⁵ Amnesty International (2015) "Unlawful and Deadly: Rocket and Mortar Attacks by Palestinian Armed Groups During the 2014 Gaza/Israel Conflict." <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde21/1178/2015/en/>.

⁶ Lappin, Y. (2014) "On Patrol with the Israel Navy off the Gaza Coast." *The Jerusalem Post*. July 29. <http://www.jpost.com/Operation-Protective-Edge/On-patrol-with-the-Israel-Navy-off-the-Gaza-Coast-369223>.

Hewlett Packard's Involvement in the Israeli Blockade on Gaza

An Egyptian-brokered ceasefire has not stopped Israeli Naval attacks on Palestinians, particularly Palestinian fishermen. As the MRTI report reveals, Hewlett Packard is an essential component in “the ongoing naval blockade of the Gaza Strip.”⁷ Indeed, Hewlett Packard’s management of the Israeli Navy’s communications, logistics, and planning is central to the ongoing enforcement of the Israeli- and Egyptian-imposed blockade of the Gaza Strip, which has been in place since 2007.

The blockade has strangled the Gazan economy, preventing Palestinians from working or traveling outside Gaza, blocking nearly all Palestinian goods from export, and limiting imports to the bare necessities for Palestinians in Gaza to survive.⁸ As the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July 2015, “1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza are ‘locked in,’ denied free access to the remainder of the occupied Palestinian territory and the outside world.”⁹ Hewlett Packard’s cooperation with the Israeli Defense Forces plays an essential role in enforcing these restrictions. The Israeli Navy, for instance, utilizes Hewlett Packard technology and services to block all international access, including humanitarian aid ships, from Gaza’s coast.¹⁰

Israel’s HP-equipped Navy also restricts Palestinian fishermen to six nautical miles from the Gaza coast. When the Israeli Navy deems fishermen too close to this limit, they often fire upon the boats. Mohamed Baker, a Palestinian fisherman injured in such an attack in May 2015, explained:

At around 6:30 a.m. on Monday, 25 May 2015, we headed to the northwestern area of the fishermen’s port located west of Gaza City, by a fishing boat (Hasakah). We stopped the boat about three nautical miles from the shore. We started fishing. After about half an hour, we were surprised by two Israeli naval boats approaching us and shooting heavily at us. We quickly left the area for the shore. After approximately half an hour, we returned to fish. We stopped the boat about 300 meters away from the illuminated buoys positioned to the north. The buoys form a line demarcating a no-go zone for Palestinian fishermen. We resumed fishing and stayed for almost one hour, during which the current drifted a little nearer to the illuminated buoys. Suddenly, at around 9:00 a.m., I saw two Israeli gunboats approaching us again very quickly. I then turned on the boat’s engine and quickly steered towards the south. The two Israeli boats continued to pursue us and fire at us. When they were about two meters away from us, I heard an Israeli soldier insulting us using a loudspeaker. I heard the sound of shooting and I felt pain in my right elbow. I also heard both Emad El Deen and Ziyad [his fishing companions] screaming. Then the two Israeli boats left the area, heading to the north. We reached the fishing port and were taken to Al Shifa’ Hospital in Gaza City by an ambulance.”¹¹

These near daily attacks on Palestinian fishermen have resulted in at least three deaths since September 2014, numerous injuries, dozens of destroyed fishing vessels, a decimated Palestinian fishing industry, and a diminished Gazan food supply.¹² Hewlett Packard is an essential component of the military technology that enables the Israeli Navy to carry out these attacks.

Impact of the Hewlett Packard-Equipped Blockade on the Gaza Economy

The ongoing results of the war and blockade are alarming. The World Bank reports that these conditions, along with poor governance by Hamas, have created one of the worst economic disasters on the planet.¹³ The unemployment rate in Gaza is 43 percent, the highest in the world. As Steen Lau Jorgensen, World Bank Country Director for West Bank and Gaza, said, “The ongoing blockade and the 2014 war have taken a toll on Gaza’s economy and people’s livelihoods. Gaza’s exports virtually disappeared and the manufacturing sector has shrunk by as much as 60 percent. The economy cannot survive without being connected to the outside world.”¹⁴

Impact of the Hewlett Packard-Equipped Blockade on Public Health in Gaza

The HP-embedded blockade has had a debilitating impact on the health of Gazans. The World Health Organization stated, “the blockade and the recent conflict pushed an increasing number of people [in Gaza] into poverty making them dependent on in kind distribution of food by [World Food Program] and [United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refu-

⁷ MRTI (2014) *Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report and Recommendations to the 221st General Assembly (2014): Engagement with Corporations on Israel-Palestine Issues from 2004–2013*.

⁸ Israeli Ministry of Defense (2008) *Food Consumption in the Gaza Strip—Red Lines*. Unofficial translation by Gisha—Legal Center for Freedom of Movement. <http://www.gisha.org/UserFiles/File/publications/redlines/red-lines-presentation-eng.pdf>.

⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory (2015) *The Gaza Strip: The Humanitarian Impact of the Blockade, July 2015*. <http://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-blockade-july-2015>.

¹⁰ Gisha—Legal Center for Freedom of Movement (2015) *The Gaza Cheat Sheet: Real Data on the Gaza Closure*. <http://gisha.org/publication/1656>. MRTI (2014) *Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report and Recommendations to the 221st General Assembly (2014)*.

¹¹ Al Mezan Center for Human Rights (2015) “Press Releases: IOF Open Fire Inures 3 Fishermen in Northern Gaza, Al Mezan Condemns the Israeli Attacks against Fishermen and Calls for International Protection for Them.” May 25. <http://www.mezan.org/en/post/20255>.

¹² Ma’an News Agency (2015) “Israeli forces open fire at Palestinian fishing boats.” June 12. <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=765927>.

¹³ The World Bank (2015) *Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2015/05/24525116/economic-monitoring-report-ad-hoc-liaison-committee>.

¹⁴ The World Bank (2015) “Gaza Economy on the Verge of Collapse, Youth Unemployment Highest in the Region at 60 Percent.” Press Release. May 21. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/05/21/gaza-economy-on-the-verge-of-collapse>.

gees in the Near East].”¹⁵ Moreover, the blockade and its “restrictions to movements of persons and goods is continuing to restrict the access to health care.”¹⁶

Exacerbating these conditions, approximately 108,000 Gazans are still homeless, as the Israeli military last summer—utilizing HP technology—destroyed approximately 18,000 Palestinian homes in Gaza.¹⁷

In sum, Hewlett Packard is directly involved in widespread human rights abuses and military violence in the Gaza Strip.

Hewlett Packard’s Involvement with the Occupation of the Palestinian West Bank

Hewlett Packard (HP) also contributes to and profits from the Israeli military’s occupation of the Palestinian West Bank. As the sole provider of computer hardware for the Israeli military, Hewlett Packard manufactures the biometric scanning equipment used at Israeli checkpoints in the occupied West Bank. The scanning equipment is used exclusively on Palestinians, as Israelis and foreigners are able to easily pass through the checkpoints or circumvent them altogether.

The HP-equipped checkpoints, in conjunction with Israeli-only roads and Jewish-only settlements, fragment the occupied Palestinian territory into separate enclaves. Traveling between these secluded territories within the West Bank (much less, traveling between the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, or Israel) can take hours for Palestinians and, in any case, is completely controlled by the Israeli military.

Indeed, the Israeli human rights group, B’Tselem, reports that the checkpoints “constitute the most severe restriction on movement of Palestinians.”¹⁸ The checkpoints thus make the holy sites in Jerusalem—as well as family members, jobs, and other social and economic opportunities—entirely inaccessible for the vast majority of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

HP also produces the Tadiran Communications ruggedized personal digital assistants, which are issued to every Israeli soldier. “The equipment is used to enforce the occupation,” according to the MRTI report.¹⁹ In addition to patrolling the HP-equipped checkpoints, Israeli soldiers use these HP digital assistants to help protect and expand the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and to conduct regular invasions of Palestinian property across the occupied territory.

Boycotts as Prophetic Christian Practice

Left alone, Hewlett Packard would continue to profit from the perpetuation of these human rights abuses and acts of militarized violence. After ten years of fruitless shareholder engagement, the 221st General Assembly (2014) voted to divest its shares of Hewlett Packard, which was profiting from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. This prophetic action has served as a witness to the human rights abuses that contravene our Christian values.

By boycotting HP, we can exercise additional nonviolent, moral pressure to help make human rights abuses and military aggression no longer profitable. Boycotting HP would also serve as a prophetic witness to the aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis to live in freedom, peace, and equality.

Mission-minded boycotts have a long history in the body of Christ in general and in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in particular. A report received and commended for study by the 191st General Assembly, for instance, articulated the essentially Christian nature of boycotts: “The church considers boycott activity in light of God’s requirement of justice and because of the existence of alleged injustice.”²⁰ Accordingly, Presbyterians have participated in boycotts of goods produced by child labor (1937), gambling establishments (1952), businesses that discriminate against African Americans (1956, 1960, 1964, and 1966), American companies invested in South African apartheid (1967), grapes from enterprises that exploited farmworkers, Nestle products when the company deceptively pushed its infant formula on new mothers in developing countries, Taco Bell restaurants (2002) for exploiting farmworkers, and products made in illegal Israeli settlements (2012), among other examples.²¹

Kairos Palestine: The Palestinian Christian Call for Boycott

Our Palestinian Christian partners have given us clear and unequivocal guidelines as to what we can do to be in partnership with them as they seek to nonviolently resist the Israeli occupation, blockade, warfare, and other human rights abuses. The *Kairos Palestine* document, which the 219th General Assembly (2014) commends for prayerful study, states

¹⁵ Goyet, C., Manenti, A., Carswell, K., Ommeren, M. (2015) *Report of a Field Assessment of Health Conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 22 March to 1 April*. World Health Organization.

¹⁶ Goyet, et al, *Report of a Field Assessment*.

¹⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2015) “Gaza Crisis: Facts and Figures.” <http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361>.

¹⁸ B’Tselem (2015) “Restriction of movement: Statistics on checkpoints and roadblocks.” Retrieved from http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/old/copy%20of%20checkpoints.

¹⁹ MRTI (2014) *Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report*.

²⁰ General Assembly Mission Council, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (1979) *Boycotts: Policy Analysis and Criteria*.

²¹ General Assembly Mission Council, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (1979) *Boycotts: Policy Analysis and Criteria*.

[W]e call for a response to what the civil and religious institutions have proposed, as mentioned earlier: the beginning of a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel. We repeat once again that this is not revenge but rather a serious action in order to reach a just and definitive peace that will put an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and will guarantee security and peace for all.²²

As a targeted boycott of Hewlett Packard, this overture can serve as a partial response to this call, and thus, an essential component of our mission in partnership with Palestinian Christians.

Boycotting HP as Mission in Partnership

While many of us in the West may have our own ideas as to how to best liberate Palestinians from the occupation and other human rights abuses, the Presbyterian church has been engaged for more than fifty years in mission work that relies upon the “recognition and respect” of our mission partners rather than the presumptions of Western missionaries. In order to do “God’s work for the sake of the world God loves,” Presbyterian “mission in partnership” listens to, and works with, our partners rather than speaking to, and working for, them.²³ Therefore, as a matter of appropriate Christian fellowship and mission in partnership, we must respect the Palestinian Christian call for the use of boycotts as a nonviolent tool rooted in faith, hope, and love.

Boycotting HP as Response to Confession of Belhar

Moreover, the Confession of Belhar, which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will soon add to the *Book of Confessions*, states, “that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.”²⁴

It is therefore imperative that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) calls for a boycott of all Hewlett Packard products.

The Time to Boycott HP Is Now

The time for Presbyterians to stand up against a U.S. company that is seriously violating the rights and lives of Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank is upon us. As seen on its own website, HP takes pride in making statements about its global citizenry and corporate ethics in our nation and in the world. As a Church of Jesus Christ, seeking to be a moral agent in, and prophetic voice to, a fallen creation, it is our great responsibility to call upon HP to make good on its own moral and ethical claims. HP has been a great American company since 1938 and we can be proud of its innovation throughout the decades. Hardly any of us are able to do business, personal or otherwise, without exposure to and usage of HP products, which makes this particular boycott so challenging. We acknowledge that this is a hard decision to make because large numbers of us like their products and even have them in our homes, including the author of this overture. In that way, HP has been like a corporate friend to American businesses and households for a long time. It is now time, however, to tell our corporate friend that it is violating human rights in terrible ways and that we can no longer purchase its products until such time that it ceases to profit from these violations that are causing and continuing the hardship, suffering and pain, and even death of innocent Palestinians.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises disapproving Item 08-01.

The rationale for this overture is essentially the same as for the 2014 decision to divest from these firms (previously under the one name, Hewlett-Packard), namely, because they supply specialized equipment and technical support for the Israeli military’s occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza. The ACSWP supports the divestment decision and agrees with a key rationale for that: not to profit from non-peaceful pursuits and violation of human rights in Israel-Palestine. This is an integrity argument about the nature of the church as an investor. The divestment decisions also included concerns for effectiveness, or impact on the companies collaborating in the colonizing settlements, and solidarity with those most affected, Palestinian Christians and Muslims deprived of freedom, land, and water.

The question at stake in this overture, however, is whether the PC(USA) should call for a boycott of all products from a firm that is put on the divestment list. [The products in question, of course, are those that do not violate human rights or contribute to non-peaceful pursuits, since we do boycott (not buy) the offending product lines described in the overture.] For

²² Kairos Palestine (2009) *Kairos Document: A Moment of Truth, A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering*. <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/content/kairos-document>.

²³ General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2003) *Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership: 2003 General Assembly Policy Statement*. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/mission-partnership/>.

²⁴ Office of Theology and Worship (2015) *Confession of Belhar*. Translated from the original Afrikaans text. https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/belhar.pdf.

instance, the 2014–15 divestment list of forty-five firms includes Boeing and Saab, as well as Caterpillar and Motorola Solutions (http://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/mrti/pdfs/2014-2015_ga_divestment_list-long_form_final.pdf). Decisions to boycott involve similar moral considerations of integrity, effectiveness, and solidarity, but Presbyterian policy distinguishes between these two important strategies of nonviolent economic witness based on several factors, including the nature of our participation and influence.

Do commissioners believe the PC(USA) should boycott all HP products as well as divest from their securities? (Individual members may boycott or not; this concerns the corporate social witness of the church.) The overture does not cite evidence that buying the peaceful products from HP cross-subsidizes the products for the Israeli military.

One might even ask whether purchasing more peaceful or non-harmful products from the firms would make it easier for them to get out of the offensive product lines.

The PC(USA) has advocated boycotts of products from firms with unfair labor and marketing practices and from firms taking advantage of populations without rights, such as Palestinians under occupation. The ACSWP explicitly endorses the latter boycott of settlement products in its latest report on Israel-Palestine (see Item 08-05; for a listing: <http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/israeli-products-from-the-west-bank>.) Item 08-01 does not claim, however, that HP's non-offensive products, which would be boycotted, were produced in an illegal location or with unfair labor practices.

Clearly, in any purchase, there is some reinforcement of a company's name as its overall brand, and both divestment and boycott impact a company's reputation. In this case, the rationale for divestment focuses on Hewlett-Packard's participation in the oppression of Palestinians and sends a continuing message to management: you have crossed a line, literally and morally. We can understand and appreciate the position of those Christians for whom solidarity means a consistent opposition to all activities of the companies involved.

The item does not, however, make a case for boycotting the products of all firms that are on our divestment list, nor for treating these two HP companies differently from others on the divestment list. Thus, ACSWP does not see a compelling case for this boycott at this time.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-01.

The rationale for this overture is well-written and amply demonstrates the ways in which Hewlett Packard Enterprises profits from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories—an occupation that has been deemed illegal under international law.

The act of boycott has been demonstrated to be a successful nonviolent means to bring about change. This overture is consistent with the church's past records of successful boycotts. This boycott will provide our church and its members an opportunity to act in a constructive way to end the occupation of Palestinian territories—an action that has been called for by our church repeatedly.

That Hewlett Packard equipment is used to perpetuate human rights abuses against Palestinians and its use in military aggression is amply and clearly demonstrated by the rationale of this overture. It is time that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adds its voice and actions to counteract these abuses.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-01

Comment on Item 08-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

This overture calls for a boycott of HP Inc. and HP Enterprises due to violations of human rights in Israel/Palestine.

The General Assembly has historically supported boycotts as a nonviolent economic strategy to counter unjust practices and/or promote social change. These efforts have included boycotting table grapes and fast-food companies on behalf of farm workers, Nestle for selling infant formula in the developing world, and J.P. Stevens sheets and towels to support textile workers.

Most recently, the 220th General Assembly (2012) endorsed the consumer boycott of all Israeli products coming from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Item 08-02

[The assembly approved Item 08-02 with amendment. See pp. 59, 61.]

On Advocating for the Safety and Well-being of Children of Palestine and Israel—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Affirm the support of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as expressed by the 202nd General Assembly (1990), and for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as expressed by the 211st General Assembly (2014).

2. Calls, once again, upon the United States Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and directs the Stated Clerk to communicate this call to all members of the United States Senate, the president, and the vice president.

3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Office of Public Witness, to advocate and witness for the human rights of the children of Palestine and Israel until there is an amendment in the practices of the state of Israel so that they are in compliance with international humanitarian laws, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In particular, mobilize Presbyterians everywhere to communicate with their senators, congresspersons, and the president of the United States their concern for the safety and well-being of the children of Palestine who suffer widespread and systematic patterns of ill treatment and torture within the Israeli military detention system, including but not limited to

- the use of physical violence (beatings, blindfolding, position abuse are examples) and psychological pressure (solitary confinement, threats of sexual assault and rape, verbal abuse, strip searching, threats, denial of food, water, and access to a toilet) to compel children and youth to give testimony, to confess guilt, or to provide otherwise incriminating statements against their family, friends, and communities;
- denial of due process guarantees, including denial of the right to prompt access to legal counsel and other appropriate assistance, particularly the presence of a parent or family member during interrogation;
- psychosocial effects and obstacles to reintegration when released from the Israeli military prisons, loss of educational opportunities while in detentions, and lack of access to education following their release from custodial detention;
- the discriminatory legal framework in force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory involving separate laws governing children based on religion or ethnicity (no Israeli child comes into contact with the military court system); and
- violent, late-night raids and arrests by heavily armed soldiers who invade their homes while they and their family members are asleep.

4. Call on the government of Israel to change its military detention system to

- stop night arrests;
- stop blindfolds and restraints;
- stop separation from parents and legal counsel;
- stop physical abuse and verbal threats; and
- stop isolation and coerced confessions.

[5. Call on the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and the government of Israel to denounce and cease the incitement of violence against children or at the hands of children.]

Rationale

According to Addameer (Arabic for conscience), the Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (www.addameer.org), “approximately 700 Palestinian children under the age of 18 from the occupied West Bank are prosecuted every year through the Israeli military courts after being arrested, interrogated, and detained by the Israeli army. The most common charge levied against children is throwing stones, a crime that is punishable under military law by up to 20 years in prison. Since the year 2000, more than 8,000 Palestinian children have been detained.”¹

In practice, there are no special interrogation procedures for children detained by the Israeli military, nor are there provisions for an attorney or even a family member to be present when a child is questioned. The majority of children report being subjected to ill treatment and having forced confessions extracted from them during interrogations.²

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Defense for Children International—Palestine (DCI-Palestine), the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories, and the U. S. Department of State Reports on Human Rights Practices have “repeatedly condemned Israel” for its widespread and systematic ill treatment of Palestinian children under Israel’s military detention system.³ “During 2013, 76.5 percent of Palestinian children detained by the Israeli military in the occupied West Bank endured some form of physical violence during arrest, transfer, or interrogation, a slight increase from 2012.”⁴ The tabulation below indicates some but not all common violations collected by DCI-Palestine during 2013.

Below are common violations raised in the affidavits collected by DCI-Palestine during 2013:

Table 1: Common complaints and areas of concern between 1 January to 31 December 2013

Complaints and areas of concern		West Bank	
		Number of cases	Percentage
	Total affidavits collected	98	
1	Hand ties	98	100.0%
2	No lawyer present during interrogation	94	95.9%
3	Not informed of right to silence	91	92.9%
4	Blindfolds	92	93.9%
5	Not informed of reason for arrest	96	98.0%
6	Physical violence	75	76.5%
7	Verbal abuse, humiliation and intimidation	73	74.5%
8	Strip searched	78	79.6%
9	Denial of adequate food and water	76	77.6%
10	Threats or inducement	39	39.8%
11	Denial of access to toilet	68	69.4%
12	Night arrest	55	56.1%
13	Position abuse	32	32.7%
14	Transfer on vehicle floor	49	50.0%
15	Shown or signed paper in Hebrew	21	21.4%
16	Solitary confinement for more than two days	21	21.4%
17	Detained with adults	3	3.1%
19	Threat of sexual assault	2	2.0%
20	Electric shock	1	1.0%

The Israeli military uses a procedure called “administrative detention” to imprison Palestinians, both children and adults, indefinitely on secret information without charging them or allowing them to stand trial.

Israeli children living in the occupied Palestinian territories live under Israeli civil laws and are treated very differently than Palestinian children. Excerpts from a Christian Science Monitor article⁵ demonstrate the disparity between the treatment of Israeli and Palestinian children in the Israeli justice system. The article tells the story of two, fifteen-year old boys who lived “just a few minutes away from one another in the West Bank.”

Both were accused of throwing stones at vehicles, one day after the other. But there was a crucial difference that helped to shape each boy’s fate: One was Israeli, and the other Palestinian. The tale of the two teens provides a stark example of the vast disparities of Israel’s justice system in the West Bank. The results can ripple for years.

“Jail destroyed his life,” said the Palestinian boy’s father.

Critics accuse Israel of dismissing Israeli crimes as youthful indiscretions, while treating Palestinian youths like hardened criminals. Both boys engaged in stone throwing in separate incidents where there was some property damage but no injuries.

On Feb. 20, 2012, the Israeli boy joined a group of youths pelting a bus with rocks at the entrance to Bat Ayin, according to police reports. The settlement, located in the southern West Bank between Jerusalem and the biblical city of Hebron, is known for its hardline population.

Police said they targeted the bus because the driver was Arab. The rocks damaged the bus but did not harm the driver.

The boy, whose name cannot be published under local law because he is a minor, was brought to the Hebron region police station at 9 p.m., with his father by his side. In his interrogation, the boy invoked his right to remain silent. He spent a night in the station and four days under house arrest. Then he was freed without charge.

The following day, according to police reports, the Palestinian boy lobbed rocks at Israeli cars zipping past his hometown of Beit Umar, a farming town of 14,000 people perched near an Israeli military tower.

The rocks shattered the front windshield of a white Mazda and damaged three other vehicles on a busy highway. There were no injuries.

Two weeks later, at 3:30 a.m., Israeli soldiers kicked down the door to the Palestinian boy's bedroom, carried him to a jeep, blindfolded him and tied his hands behind his back with plastic handcuffs. He was slapped by soldiers, kept awake all night and placed in a military jail cell with 10 other Palestinian youths, he said.

It would be more than nine months before he could go free.

An Israeli psychological exam conducted in prison found the boy showed signs of anxiety and depression. He told the prison's clinical psychologist and social worker that he looked at a photo of his family to help him sleep, and had nightmares about soldiers killing his relatives. The exam also found he was short-breathed and had a cough, which he said was from soldiers hitting him in the chest during his arrest.

Another story is that of a Palestinian-American from Tampa, Florida, who was visiting his relatives in Jerusalem. Earlier in the week his cousin, "16-year-old Muhammad Abu Khudair, was kidnapped from the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Shuafat and burned alive by Israelis who have yet to be convicted for the slaying more than a year later".⁶ The story relates the brutal beating of the Tampa teen and the U.S. rebuke of Israel for the light sentence received by the officer responsible for the beating, which was forty-five days of community service.

There are numerous other sources of relevant information. The ones listed below are but a few.

- Defense for Children International Palestine, *Solitary Confinement for Palestinian Children in Israeli Military Detention*, May 2014, http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/report_doc_solitary_confinement_report_2013_final_29apr2014.pdf.
- Defense for Children International Palestine, *Palestinian Children in the Israeli Military Court System*, June 2013, http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/un_sp_doc_opt_detention_2012_final_25jun2013.pdfDCI-Palestine.
- Defense for Children International Palestine, *Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children Held in Military Custody*, April 2012, http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/report_0.pdf.
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the second to fourth periodic reports of Israel*, July 4, 2013, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC-C-ISR-CO-2-4.pdf>.
- Delegation of independent UK lawyers, *Children in Military Custody*, June 2012, <http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org/>.
- UNICEF, *Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations*, March 2013, http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf.
- Amnesty International, *Trigger-Happy: Israel's Use of Excessive Force in the West Bank*, Feb. 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/002/2014/en/349188ef-e14a-418f-ac20-6c9e5c8d9f88/mde150022014en.pdf>.
- B'Tselem, *No Minor Matter: Violation of the Rights of Palestinian Minors Arrested by Israel on Suspicion of Stone-Throwing*, July 2011, http://www.btselem.org/download/201107_no_minor_matter_eng.pdf.
- Human Rights Watch, *Separate and Unequal, Israel's Discriminatory Treatment of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, Dec. 2010, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/12/19/separate-and-unequal>.
- Yesh Din, *Backyard Proceedings: The Implementation of Due Process Rights in the Military Courts in the Occupied Territories*, Jan. 2007, <http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/Reports-English/BackyardProceedingsfullreportEng.pdf>.

International Law

- Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. Res. 44/25, U.N. Doc. A/RES/44/25 (Nov. 20, 1989), <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, G.A. Res. 54/263, U.N. Doc. A/RES/54/263, (May 25, 2000), <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCRC.aspx>.
- UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment or Treatment, G.A. Res. 39/46, U.N. Doc. A/RES/39/46, (Dec. 10, 1984), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/39/a39r046.htm>.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), U.N. Doc. A/6316, (Dec. 16, 1966), <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>.
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention)*, (Aug. 12, 1949), 75 UNTS 287, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36d2.html>.
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)*, 8 June 1977, 1125 UNTS 3, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36b4.html>.
- International Court of Justice, *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, (Jul. 9, 2004), <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/131/1671.pdf>
- UN **Other Resources** (available on the web)

Israeli Military Law

- Military Order 1651—General Provisions
- Military Order 1591—Administrative Detention
- Military Order 1644—Juvenile Courts
- Military Order 1676—Age of Majority
- Israeli High Court of Justice—human shields
- Israeli High Court of Justice—torture
- Israeli High Court of Justice—transfer of prisoners (Art. 76)

Palestinian Law

- Palestinian Child Law (OPT)

United Nations Agencies and Offices

- Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC)
- Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG-VAC)
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA-OPT)
- UNICEF
- UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

International Organizations:

- Defense for Children International—International Secretariat
- Child Rights Information Network—CRIN
- NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Human Rights Watch
- Amnesty International
- Save the Children International

Palestinian and Israeli NGOs:

- Al-Haq
- Addameer
- Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights
- Defense for Children International Palestine
- Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
- Public Committee Against Torture in Israel—PCATI
- B'Tselem - Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
- Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions—ICAHD
- Adalah
- Association for Civil Rights in Israel—ACRI
- Peace Now
- Breaking the Silence
- Yesh Din

Endnotes

1. Refer to the Addameer web site at: http://www.addameer.org/the_prisoners/children. Web. 19 Oct. 2015.
2. Ibid.
3. See UNICEF: Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations (2013), http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf; Defense for Children International-Palestine: Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted Children held in military detention

(2012), http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/report_0.pdf; The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/25/67 (Jan. 13, 2014), <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/101/98/PDF/G1410198.pdf>; and U. S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013: Israel and the Occupied Territories (2014), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/220568.pdf>.

4. See Defense of Children International-Palestine, *Palestinian Children Detained in the Israeli Military Court System* (2013), https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/339/attachments/original/1437406651/solitary_confinement_report_2013_DCIP_final_29apr2014.pdf?1437406651.

5. Estrin, Daniel and Federman, Josef. Do West Bank Israelis, Palestinians live under different set of laws: A tale of two rock throwing teens, highlights disparities in Israeli justice system in the West Bank, where Israelis live under civilian rule and Palestinians are governed by military law. *Christian Science Monitor*, April 20, 2014.

6. Khalek, Rania. US rebukes Israel over light sentence for officer who attacked Tampa Teen. *Electronic Intifada*, November 20, 2015. Accessed at: https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/rania-khalek/us-rebuked-israel-over-light-sentence-officer-who-attacked-tampa-teen?utm_source=EI+readers&utm_campaign=77272c6083-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e802a7602d-77272c6083-299153561.

Concurrence to Item 08-02 from the Presbyteries of Cimarron, Palisades, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 08-02 be approved.

The recommendations and rationale are fully consistent with and expand on the some of the material in the ACSWP report on Israel-Palestine (Item 08-6).

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-02.

International human rights organizations along with the U.S. Department of State have long been aware of and have repeatedly condemned Israel for its widespread and systematic ill treatment of Palestinian children under its military detention system.

Item 04-12 (<https://pc-biz.org/#/search/5099>) passed at the 221st General Assembly (2014) reaffirmed the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the human rights of all children, particularly the children of Palestine and Israel. This overture requests that the church continue its advocacy strongly both as an organization and through its community of members on behalf of the children of both Palestine and Israel within the United States Congress and the Executive Branch.

It is only through knowledge and a strong expression of public disapproval that we can convince the Israeli military system to cease these abuses against and ill treatment of Palestinian children.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-02.

The ACWC fully supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as expressed by the 202nd General Assembly (1990). We also support the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as expressed by the 211th General Assembly (1999). We urge that the General Assembly advocate that Israel come into compliance with international humanitarian laws and that Israel especially support the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The armed conflict between Israel and Palestine has caused staggering numbers of serious injuries and fatalities among children. The children are the innocent victims sometimes killed by mistake, but often intentionally targeted by soldiers in this continuing conflict; and there are no modified interrogation procedures for children in this brutal, ongoing war.

It is appropriate for the PC(USA) to support the correction of these human rights violations that devastate families and severely diminish hope for the survival of future communities.

Resources

- Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/news/pfjp_two_state_final_w_map.pdf).
- United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/about/dpko/>).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-02

Comment on Item 08-02—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is engaged in addressing the issues related to the safety and wellbeing of children in Palestine and Israel in response to the 221st General Assembly (2014) action, “On Reaffirming the Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine”: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/5099>.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has posted resources related to the human rights of Palestinian and Israeli children on www.presbyterianmission.org/un. Speakers from Defense for Children International—Palestine have led workshops at Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Days in 2015 and 2016.

The Office of Public Witness helped coordinate a Congressional Briefing on the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. The Office of Public Witness has also done an action alert inviting Presbyterians to contact their legislators about Palestinian children in Israeli military detention.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations advocates within the UN system for the human rights and safety and wellbeing of the children of Palestine and Israel.

Item 08-02 affirms and supports the work on advocating for the safety and wellbeing of the children of Palestine and Israel currently being done by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 08-03

[The assembly approved Item 08-03. See pp. 13, 61.]

On Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the United States—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

- 1. Recognize the importance of the continued presence of Christians and churches in the Middle East.**
- 2. Affirm and encourage the Christian presence in the area through strengthened ties between the PC(USA) and the historic and reformed churches of the region.**
- 3. Call for expanded partnership relationships between PC(USA) congregations and those of our partner churches in the Middle East.**
- 4. Direct the Stated Clerk and other appropriate staff to foster consultation and joint action with partner churches of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to address ways of increasing the respect and protection of Christians and other minorities in the Middle East.**
- 5. Direct the Stated Clerk and all appropriate staff to consult with our Christian partners in the Middle East to determine how religiously based radical thought and action in the region can best be thwarted. This should include seeking insights from our partners about appropriate and inappropriate policies and actions in the region of the United States and other governments.**
- 6. Call upon the United States government, the United Nations, and other international organizations to support and fund activities of peace-building; institutions nurturing civil society; and promoting strategies for broadly inclusive economic development—all essential for long-term stability in the Middle East.**
- 7. Call on agencies of the General Assembly, mid councils, church sessions, and pastors of the PC(USA) to seek ways for Muslims, Christians, Jews, and persons beyond the Abrahamic family to work collaboratively in resisting bigotry and extremist thought and actions in communities across the United States—and especially those groups and individuals cloaking themselves in religious language and ideology.**

Rationale

The Christian church has been part of the Middle East fabric since Pentecost.

Christians, however, have been leaving the Middle East in growing numbers for decades. Some observers fear that soon there will be few Christians left in the area of Jesus' historical presence among us. The witness of the gospel calls Christians to be engaged in the countries and cultures where they live. Creating incentives that encourage them to leave should be avoided. Likewise, even well-intentioned suggestions that Christians, for their own protection, be taken to safe zones within the region are unacceptable.

Two factors are preeminent in the diminished Christian presence in the Middle East: religious radicalism and economic pressures.

Religious Radicalism

The departure of Christians from the Middle East is a deep concern not only for the church but for the region as a whole. The "Report of the Middle East Study Committee" to the 219th General Assembly (2010) (comprised of former assembly Moderators) noted: "This dwindling presence of Christians in the Middle East is a deep concern due to the role that Christians have played in being a mediating, reconciling presence. Without that presence, we fear a more religiously polarized Middle East, more prone to extremism" (*Minutes*, 2010. Part I, p. 1044).

While the Christian presence must be maintained in the Middle East, other religious minorities are also threatened by extremist groups that seek to dominate the area. Thus, side-by-side with Muslims and others, Middle East Christians desire to build civil societies that value human rights, respect international law, and model the vision that people of different historical, cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions can live together peacefully.

The United States has not been spared the trauma of radical extremism—sometimes in the guise of religion, often as naked racism, and increasingly as bigotry against Arabs and Muslims. A 2014 survey showed that only 36 percent of Americans viewed Arab Americans favorably and just 27 percent viewed Muslim Americans favorably, while more than half of Americans held a negative view of Islam. Indeed, a Pew Research Center study reported that Americans regard Muslims more negatively than atheists (Reported in *Huffington Post*, July 29, 2014, and April 10, 2015).

Since Muslims constitute less than one percent of the U.S. population, it seems likely that such views are fostered less by personal contact than by bias and misinformation. The way media and ordinary people use language has an effect on how people—and especially minorities—are perceived. Wrong and biased information about Syrians, Arabs, Muslims, refugees, migrants, people of color, and other vulnerable groups shapes public attitudes. This is especially true when it comes from politicians and lawmakers. In the United States, whether persons are characterized as illegal versus undocumented; as an "anchor baby" versus a citizen; or as a migrant versus refugee affects how they are perceived and even their legal rights.

But there is also power in the Christian language of the faith community—brother, sister, child of God, and neighbor—that nurtures a different relationship to people near at hand and far away whom we are beginning to know and understand and appreciate.

Economic Development

War has brought economic desperation to the people of Syria and Iraq, including Christians. Relief efforts of governments through the United Nations are supplemented by those of religious organizations like Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. However, long-term economic development strategies will be required to restore functioning societies in these countries.

The dramatically changing petroleum economy creates new opportunities to access and reorient western economic and political relationships with the Middle East. That could bode well or ill for ordinary people in the region. The biblical tradition of calling for economic equity should have a place in the debate that almost surely lies ahead in the face of clashing economic interests and crumbling political structures in the region. The 1978 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States declared, "... every society has the obligation to provide for all people the opportunity for meaningful work, adequate food, clothing, shelter, and health care ... [and] a share in formulating and responsibly implementing economic policies" (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1978, p.204). Two years later, the General Assembly spoke specifically about its perspective on economic development: "On the basis of the concerns which Christians bring to political and economic life ... we support the call for both a reordering of the international economic system and a major change in national development strategies ..." (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1980, pp. 196–97.) Those are still sound principles for the church's participation in both international and domestic arenas—for crafting just policies of trade, aid, and investment linking countries globally and for seeking a fair sharing of economic benefits within each country.

Concurrence to Item 08-03 from the Presbyteries of Cascades, Grace, Los Ranchos, Muskingum Valley, and Providence.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of this item.

Peacemaking and promotion of economic restoration and development are long-time objectives of the PC(USA). The rationale of the item notes “War has brought economic desperation to the people of Syria and Iraq, including Christians.” To this, we might add that the war in question has resulted in no small degree from the ill-advised invasion of Iraq by the United States. Thus our nation and our government have an obligation to help repair the damage and aid the victims. These matters were considered by the General Assembly in 2012 in this resolution, For Human Rights and Civic Freedom: Movements for Democratic Change in the Arab World: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/human-rights-and-civic-freedom-movements-democrati/>.

We see a similar concern in the Stated Clerk’s recent statement on the designation of ISIS or ISIL as perpetrating genocide on Christians and other groups: <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2016/5/2/stated-clerk-issues-statement-acts-genocide-global/>. That statement addresses some of the ways that groups may be protected and tolerance restored in countries at war, sometimes in “proxy wars” involving larger nations seeking spheres of influence, and not only in the Middle East. In the implementation of this resolution, the word, “extremism,” may be preferred to “radicalism,” which has a broader and non-pejorative meaning. Religious nationalism and racial ethnic tribalism may threaten immigrants as well as long-settled religious minority communities, in which case defending equal rights and religious freedom for all is the radical and just thing to do.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-03.

The Middle East is the cradle of Christianity, and it would be a tragedy indeed if the Christian presence in the Middle East would dwindle to the point of vanishing. Arab Christians have been living for centuries with their Muslim countrymen and can show the West the way to reconciliation and acceptance of Muslims in their midst.

Christians are leaving their homes and countries in the Middle East due to occupation by harsh regimes and by violence due to occupation or war. This overture attempts to consider some of the causes leading to the stress of the Christian community in the Middle East and its efforts should be strongly approved and acted upon.

STATED CLERK COMMENT ON ITEM 08-03

Comment on Item 08-03—From Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk.

The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly signed the Atlanta statement with many other ecumenical leaders. It is especially important to note that many ecumenical leaders in Israel/Palestine are also principal signers and contributors to the statement. We offer the Atlanta Statement to you for your information. See 08-03-stated-clerk-comment.pdf for Atlanta Statement.

Item 08-04

[The assembly approved Item 08-04 with amendment. See pp. 13, 61.]

On Calling for the RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements—From the Presbytery of the Redwoods.

The Presbytery of the Redwoods overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

- 1. Acknowledge that RE/MAX, LLC, is an American company headquartered in Denver, Colorado, that has real estate franchises involved in the sale and rental of Jewish-only housing in Israeli settlement colonies in the occupied West Bank of Palestine.**
- 2. Acknowledge that RE/MAX, LLC, is profiting from franchises that support the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.**
- 3. Acknowledge that RE/MAX is participating in housing discrimination because non-Jews are restricted from purchasing housing in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.**

4. ~~Call for RE/MAX to [cut its ties with franchises involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank] [do everything within its legal and moral power to stop facilitating the sale and rental of property in Israeli settlement colonies in East Jerusalem and the West Bank].~~

5. ~~[Urge members of the RE/MAX network in the United States to not refer clients to agents and brokers who are involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.] [Commend RE/MAX, LLC, for responding favorably to discussions of this matter with representatives of the PC(USA) and committing to take action to ensure that RE/MAX, LLC, will no longer receive any income from the sale of Jewish settlement properties in the West Bank.]~~

6. ~~[Urge Presbyterians to take actions such as contacting local RE/MAX franchises or corporate headquarters or participating in petition campaigns to pressure RE/MAX to cut its ties with franchises involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.] [Encourage Presbyterians to continue to be in dialogue with RE/MAX, LLC, to explore ways that it can stop facilitating the sale and rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank.]~~

7. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils and entities and to communicate this action to the RE/MAX corporation.

Rationale

RE/MAX supports and profits from Israel's military occupation of Palestinian territories

RE/MAX, LLC, is based in Denver, Colorado. It has grown into a global real estate network of franchisee-owned-and-operated offices with more than 100,000 sales associates. RE/MAX Holdings Inc. is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange as RMAX. RE/MAX has been active in the Israeli market since 1995. It sells and rents houses and apartments in colonies reserved exclusively for Jews in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

RE/MAX has offices in the illegal West Bank colonies of Ma'ale Adumim and Oranit, as well as occupied East Jerusalem (in French Hill, Ramot, and Pisgat Ze'ev colonies.) The real estate agency is facilitating the distribution of illegally seized property in occupied Palestinian territory and assisting the Israeli government in its strategy of building settlements. RE/MAX takes advantage of the many financial incentives provided by Israel to increase the population of settlement colonies. These incentives include income tax reductions for Israeli citizens working in or investing in the illegal settlement colonies. In this way RE/MAX is supporting the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the human rights injustices suffered by Palestinians. In addition, RE/MAX is participating in housing discrimination because Israeli Christians, Muslims, and other non-Jews are restricted from purchasing settlement housing.

RE/MAX has been contacted by religious organizations and nonprofit organizations in the United States and been asked to cease its activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. RE/MAX has refused to do so.

PC(USA) General Assembly has declared Israeli settlements are illegal and a roadblock to peace

The 219th General Assembly (2010) overwhelmingly approved the information, commentary, and policy statements in Chapters 1 and 2 of "Breaking Down the Walls," a report of the Middle East Study Committee (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, pp. 1021ff). The church expressed the following statements and concerns about Israeli settlement colonies and the "Israeli-only" bypass roads that connect the settlements:

- "The Israeli occupation leads to the denial of ... human rights [for Palestinians] and the violation of international laws" (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 1046).
- "One of the hopes of the Oslo Interim agreements was that settlement growth would cease; however, the opposite has occurred, resulting in a current population of ... 285,000 [in the West Bank] and 198,700 in East Jerusalem" (*Ibid.*, p. 1045).
- "The growth of the number of settlements and settlers is perceived by many as an attempt by Israel to prevent the establishment of an economically viable Palestinian State" (*Ibid.*, p.1045).
- "Another concern of the occupation is the [numerous] 'Israeli-only bypass roads' that carve up the Palestinian homeland and connect one settlement to another. This has a devastating effect on the ability of [normal] Palestinians ... to live out a normal life—to visit family, farm family property; to seek medical treatment, to secure employment; and to travel freely in one's own country" (*Ibid.*, 1045).

The 219th General Assembly (2010) reaffirmed many of the historical positions of the PC(USA) regarding Israel and Palestine, including:

- A call for "the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories"; (*Ibid.*, 1022)

- An immediate freeze on both the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank; (Ibid., 1022)
- An immediate end to Israeli expropriation of Palestinian land and buildings in East Jerusalem. (Ibid., 1022)
- “The withholding of U.S. government aid to the state of Israel as long as Israel persists in creating new settlements on Palestinian land. (Ibid., 1022)

The 220th General Assembly (2012) called “for the boycott of all Israeli products coming from the occupied Palestinian Territories” (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 1366).

The 221st General Assembly (2014) took action to divest from three American companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestine (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 261).

The international community views settlement colonies as illegal and a major roadblock to peace

The United Nations has repeatedly upheld that Israel’s construction of settlements constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israeli neighborhoods in East Jerusalem that have been annexed by Israel, are also considered settlements by the international community, which does not recognize Israel’s annexation of this territory. The International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion in 2004 declaring these settlements to be illegal. In 2012, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, in response to moves by Israel to legalize Israeli outposts, reiterated that all settlement activity was illegal. Similar criticism was advanced by the European Union and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Arab countries, and of course Palestinians themselves.

U.S. presidents have declared Israeli settlement colonies are illegal and a major roadblock to peace

President Barack Obama: “The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop” (Remarks by the President at Cairo University, 6-04-09).

President George W. Bush: “Consistent with the Mitchell plan, Israeli settlement activity in occupied territories must stop, and the occupation must end through withdrawal to secure and recognized boundaries, consistent with United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338” (New York Times, April 4, 2002).

President Bill Clinton: “The Israeli people also must understand that ... the settlement enterprise and building bypass roads in the heart of what they already know will one day be part of a Palestinian state is inconsistent with the Oslo commitment that both sides negotiate a compromise” (CNN.com, Transcript of Clinton’s remarks to the Israel Policy Forum gala, January 8, 2001).

President George H. W. Bush: “Secretary Baker was speaking for this administration, and I strongly support what he said ... It would make a big contribution to peace if these settlements would stop. That’s what the secretary was trying to say ... and I’m one hundred percent for him” (<http://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/24/world/bush-backs-baker-view-of-mideast-peace-barriers.html>). President Bush was referring to the following statement by Secretary of State James Baker:

Every time I have gone to Israel in connection with the peace process on each of my trips I have been met with the announcement of new settlement activity. This does violate United States policy. It is the first thing that Arabs—Arab governments—the first thing that Palestinians in the territories—whose situation is really quite desperate—the first thing they raise when we talk to them. I don’t think there is any greater obstacle to peace than settlement activity that continues not only unabated but at an advanced pace (<http://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/23/world/baker-cites-israel-for-settlements.html>).

President Ronald Reagan: The Reagan Plan states that “the United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period (5 years after Palestinian election for a self-governing authority). Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlements freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks. Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of the Arabs that a final outcome can be freely and fairly negotiated” (http://www.cmep.org/content/us-statements-israeli-settlements_short).

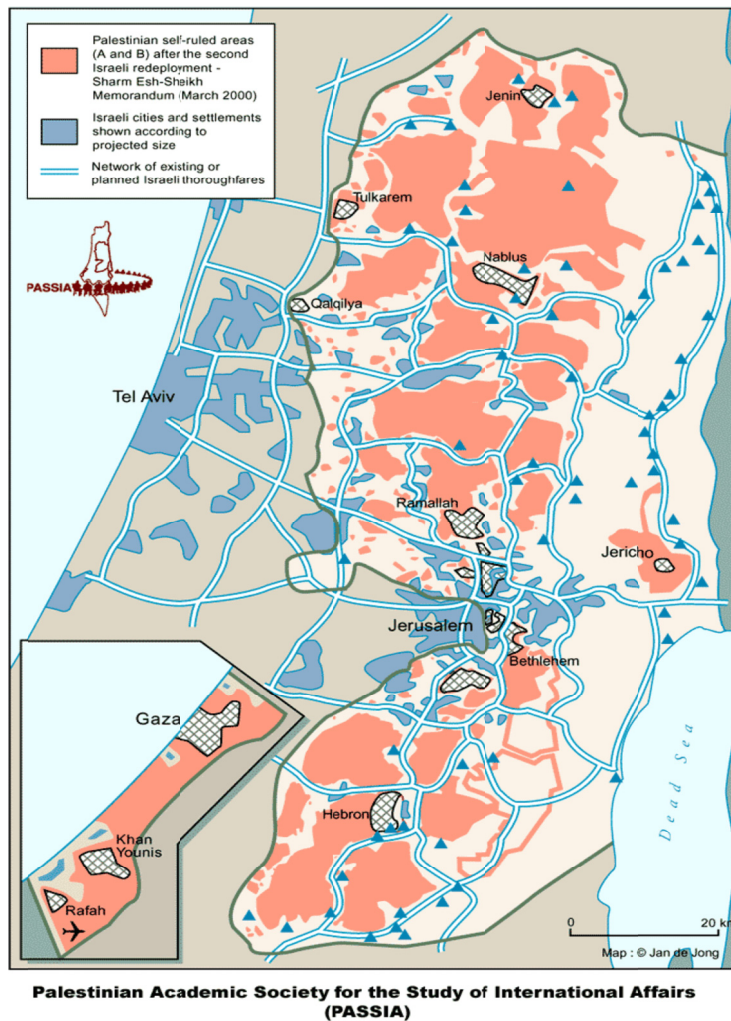
President Jimmy Carter: “Our position on the settlements is very clear. We do not think they [settlements] are legal” (http://www.cmep.org/content/us-statements-israeli-settlements_short).

Background on illegal Israeli settlement colonies in Palestine

There are 125 government-sanctioned Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank of Palestine. In addition, there were approximately 100 “settlement outposts” located throughout the West Bank. There is a massive infrastructure of “Israeli-only” roads that connect the settlements and allow unrestricted settler movement but limited or no access for Palestinians. These roads and the walls and fences that border them, combined with Israeli land use restrictions, confines Palestinians to within sixty-four isolated enclaves. Palestinians must go through Israeli checkpoints to get from one enclave to another.

Reference map

The construction of Israeli settlements colonies in the occupied West Bank and the Israeli only roads connecting settlements confine Palestinians to live within isolated and ever shrinking enclaves. To visualize the impact of the settlements and roads that connect them please refer to the reference map below.



Map of Israeli Settlement Colonies and Israeli-Only Bypass Roads in the West Bank of Palestine

- The triangles are major Israeli settlement colonies.
- The “Israeli-Only” roads connecting the linking settlement colonies allow unrestricted movement for settlers but allow limited or no access to Palestinians.
- Israeli land use restrictions and the road matrix divide the West Bank and confines Palestinians within 64 isolated enclaves.
- Palestinians must go through Israeli checkpoints to get from one enclave to another.

Concurrence to Item 08-04 from the Presbyteries of Cimarron, San Francisco, and Santa Fe.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the assembly approve Item 08-04.

Item 08-04 calls for RE/MAX, LLC, an American company headquartered in Denver, Colorado, to cut its ties with real estate franchises that sell and rent Jewish-only housing in Israeli settlement colonies in the occupied West Bank of Palestine. This is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its citizens to the occupied territories. It also violates RE/MAX’s International’s code of ethics, which states that its affiliates “shall undertake to eliminate any practice by real estate professionals in their community which could be damaging to the

public”, which would include the Palestinian public (<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/REMAX-Cashes-in-on-Israelis-Illegal-Settlements-20141114-0052.html>).

The item urges members of the RE/MAX network in the United States to not refer clients to agents and brokers who are involved in the sale or rental of settlement properties in the occupied West Bank. The ACSWP recognizes that Presbyterians may be among the realty franchises within the RE/MAX network, yet notes the twofold nature of the concern. RE/MAX, LLC profits from franchises that support the Israeli colonization of Palestinian territories—illegal under international law and opposed by PC(USA), and participates in housing discrimination, because non-Jews are restricted from purchasing housing in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The PC(USA) affiliated investment funds—the Pension Fund and Presbyterian Foundation—do not currently hold stock in RE/MAX, so MRTI is not in a position to advocate with them as a shareholder.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-04.

The information, commentary, and policy statements in Chapters 1 and 2 of “Breaking Down the Walls” (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/breaking_down_the_walls_ga219.pdf), a report of the Middle East Study Committee to the PC(USA) General Assembly, overwhelmingly demonstrate that the General Assembly has declared Israeli settlements are illegal and a roadblock to peace. Moreover, the United States Department of State and past and present Presidents have declared that the settlements are illegal and an impediment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Furthermore, these colonies (settlements) are illegal under international law.

RE/MAX has offices in the illegal West Bank colonies and sells and rents houses and apartments in these colonies that are reserved exclusively for Jewish citizens of Israel in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. RE/MAX activities in these illegal colonies are morally reprehensible and constitute the flouting of international law.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-04

Comment on Item 08-04—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has historically supported nonviolent economic strategies to counter unjust practices and/or promote social change.

These efforts have included calls for sanctions by the U.S. government, the use of our accumulated resources through divestment and investment and boycotts, including boycotts of table grapes and fast-food companies on behalf of farm workers, Nestle for selling infant formula in the developing world, J.P. Stevens sheets and towels to support textile workers, and the consumer boycott of all Israeli products coming from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Item 08-05

Item 08-05 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 08-06

[The assembly approved Item 08-06 with comment. See pp. 60, 61–62.]

[Comment: As disciples of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, of the people of Abraham and the lineage of David, we stand with the people of Israel, affirming their right to exist as a sovereign nation, and we stand with the Palestinian people, affirming their right to exist as a sovereign nation. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms Footnote 8, which emphasizes a preference for a two-state solution. The assembly also affirms our desire to stay in conversation with our partners in Israel who work for peace. Finally, the assembly expresses its opposition to any efforts to deny or undermine the rights of the Palestinian people or the Jewish people to self-determination.]

Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

1. Approve the following summary assessment statement:

The following summary assessment, requested recommendations, and supporting study and policy review together constitute a report with actions appropriate to a situation of moral urgency entitled, *Israel-Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace*. The sections are:

While the Door Closes: A Summary Assessment

Acting on Christian and Universal Values: Recommendations

The Two State Approach from a Values Perspective: A Brief Study

While the Door Closes: A Summary Assessment

This report focuses on the actual situation of Palestinians and Israelis in the land they share and on the values that need support from all people seeking a just peace. Faithful to the General Assembly's assignment, the report resists simple formulas. It understands the responsibility of a single church based in the U.S. to contribute to a larger ecumenical and interfaith conversation about basic moral expectations and to take informed actions of integrity, witness, and solidarity.

The Presbyterian Church [PC(USA)] has had a deep concern for Israel-Palestine for many reasons, including its place in Christian self-understanding and the prominent role the United States has taken there. Since 1949, the church has taken public positions on the situation, supporting Israel as a safe homeland for Jews but also calling for just treatment for Palestinians, including Palestinian refugees. In 1974, the General Assembly called for "The right and power of Palestinian people to self-determination by political expression, based upon full civil liberties for all. ... If the Palestinians choose to organize a permanent political structure, then provisions should be made to determine its jurisdiction, assure its security, and support its development."¹

In 1982, the assembly first called for "the establishment of a national sovereign state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as an expression of self-determination of the Palestinian people."² Subsequent Presbyterian statements have affirmed United Nations Resolution 242, of November 1967, calling for Israel's withdrawal from the territories it had just begun to occupy, and have lifted up the Palestine National Council's 1988 decision to recognize Israel within the boundaries that had held from 1949 to the 1967 war. That implicit ceding of 78 percent of British Mandate Palestine to Israel supported the possibility of a two-state solution and, with the largely nonviolent first Intifada, opened the path to the Oslo accords.³

The most recent comprehensive statement by the church on Israel-Palestine within its Middle Eastern context, *Breaking Down the Walls* (2010), provides the starting point of principles and policy for this study. That 2010 report examines the "contest of traumas" caused by past suffering on both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, with fears of anti-Semitism and fears of a continuing Nakhsba (or catastrophe of dispossession) hindering empathy for the "other."⁴ It carefully contrasts the First Testament's views on land with aspects of the covenant understood by Reformed Christians, and with Muslim and Christian Palestinian "samud," or steadfastness on the land. *Breaking Down the Walls* recognized "daunting and mounting obstacles to the viability of a "two-state solution," and called for the "immediate resumption of negotiations" to that end.

Over the years, then, the Presbyterian church has supported the international consensus favoring a two-state solution with a shared Jerusalem. Yet as situations change, the church must evaluate its positions accordingly. And in the view of many analysts, the door to a viable Palestinian state is closing rapidly, if it is still open at all.⁵ For example, Thomas Friedman, a long-standing proponent of "two states for two peoples," has suggested that calling for a two-state solution, without acknowledging the reality on the ground, is an exercise in denial.⁶

Israel's policy trajectory of continued settlements and brutal occupation is deeply troubling. Not only does it make a two-state solution increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to achieve, but the emerging, de facto single state's systematic violation of Palestinian rights and democratic values is eroding Israel's moral legitimacy. This has presented a growing crisis for a church that has historically supported Israel as a homeland for Jews, and we note growing divisions in the U.S. Jewish community as well.

This resolution takes the position that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should advance those efforts that best accord with its values, which have relevance in any political arrangement, including but not limited to that of two sovereign states—Israel and Palestine. Although statements by Israeli, Palestinian, and U.S. leaders confirm that no progress toward such a solution is expected in the near term,⁷ PC(USA) has supported an equitable two-state solution out of fairness and the belief that it would be far better for both peoples and three faiths to share the land. To keep open the option of a two-state solution, this report in its language and recommendations makes a clear distinction between the State of Israel within internationally recognized borders and the settlements and other illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).⁸

For years, abstract discussion of two- vs. one-state solutions or federations has served to distract attention from ongoing violations of human rights and increases in mutual hostility. De facto annexation, land confiscation,

and government subsidized settlement growth have increased since Oslo. About half the Israeli cabinet publically oppose any Palestinian state; the Yesha Council of settlements states clearly their goal: “Creating a situation where it becomes clear to the international community that another state west of the Jordan River is not viable.”⁹

In this situation, the church should foster relationships with partners who share its values, be they Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or secular, without being misled by mirages of peace agreements ungrounded in realism about power. This report does not demonize any people or belief system, but rather illustrates the results of giving one group greatly disproportionate power over another. Nor do we, as a U.S. church involved in the Middle East since the 1830s, claim to be innocent of religious nationalism and complicity with militarism and colonialism. Yet, as Reinhold Niebuhr said, “The sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world.” We are part of that world, we share that goal of justice, and—despite our observation of increasing tragedy—we believe engagement is also a hopeful duty.¹⁰

Grounded in the Reformed faith, our salient values include:

1. The dignity of all persons, despite our universal capacity to do harm;
2. Self-determination of peoples through democratic means;
3. The building up of community and pursuit of reconciliation;
4. Equality under the law and reduction in the separation that fosters inequality;
5. Recognition of our complicity and the need for confession and repentance; and
6. Solidarity with those who suffer.

These values influenced and are linked with the modern understanding of human rights, as in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN 1948): “[R]ecognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.” While sharing the first four of these values with countless persons of good will, the prophetic tradition and teaching of Jesus (as in the Sermon on the Mount; Matthew 5) lead us to confront our enabling of injustice and move to the side of those who suffer. Our presbyteries have approved the Belhar Confession of faith from South Africa, which affirms the unity of justice and reconciliation, “that true reconciliation which follows on conversion and change of attitudes and structures.” In confronting our own legacies of racial and ethnic separation, we believe:

- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged... [and]
- that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;¹¹

Presbyterian values and human rights provide a lens through which the study team examined the situation in Israel-Palestine. Realism requires us to call the current entity, “Israel-Palestine,” as one state is effectively subsuming the other. This report proceeds by defining values and then using the categories of the Oslo accords to examine capacities and functions of statehood. Further, this report notes the grave danger that Israeli government policies privileging a narrow form of Zionism may well change a resource-based struggle to an overtly religious one, eliminating the already-declining Christian minority, obliterating historical Muslim and Christian sites with enhanced Jewish sites, and increasing extremist antagonism in the Jewish and Muslim communities. The report’s findings are summarized here.

The Oslo Challenges

In the twenty-three years since the signing of the Oslo Accords, efforts to establish two states have achieved some limited successes, such as establishment of the Palestinian Authority and some security cooperation with Israel. Nonetheless, in accord with the request for an update of facts on the ground, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s study team found that the situation has stagnated or worsened on the core challenges identified in the Oslo Accords: (1) Jerusalem, (2) refugees, (3) settlements, (4) security arrangements, (5) borders, (6) relations and cooperation with neighboring countries, and (7) other issues of common interest. This report does not treat Item (6) except by implication. Among the “other issues of common interest,” the report considers water, economic development in Palestine, and Gaza.

1. East *Jerusalem*, which the Oslo Accords identified as the capital of a future Palestinian state, has been cut off from the rest of the West Bank by Israel’s erection of a fortified wall and security checkpoints, keeping out most Palestinians. The Israeli government has annexed all Jerusalem and expanded the city’s boundaries to include settlements, while depriving Palestinian residents of citizenship and public services, despite their full pay-

ment of taxes to Israel. This claim that Jerusalem is all part of Israel and its united capitol, in violation of international law, made Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem stateless, with tenuous and frequently cancelled permission to continue living in their homes. Systematic land reconfiguration and large, strategic settlements in support of “an exclusionary Jewish Jerusalem” are “marginalizing the other national and religious equities in the city,” increasing interreligious tension and contributing to the loss of Christian presence.¹²

2. *Refugees’* right of return to their former homes in what is now Israel or agreed-upon compensation, guaranteed on an individual basis under international law, remains unaddressed. In contrast, Jews from around the world are granted immediate Israeli citizenship based on the diaspora of the first and second centuries. Further, other countries pick up much of the tab for the care of the refugees, including host countries in the Middle East, in which Palestinians suffer from discrimination and poverty. Israel’s demographic fear of allowing significant numbers of refugees back would argue for a two-state solution with negotiated compensation. Yet on both sides the political capacity to make the compromises necessary to reach agreement appears seriously diminished since Oslo, with the refugee situation reinforcing Israel’s isolation in the region (often termed, “a dangerous neighborhood”).

3. Israeli *settlements* in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, illegal under international law, have continued to expand in number, territory, and population—now including more than 650,000 settlers. Their location and the roads connecting them (for exclusive Israeli use) hem in Palestinian cities and towns and block time-honored transport connections with each other and with Jerusalem and the wider world. Israel did evacuate 9,000 settlers from Gaza, but in all other areas the government provides subsidies, services, and access to resources to encourage a de facto colonization project. Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory receive treatment as Israeli citizens under a civil justice system, while Palestinians are under military occupation orders without full citizenship rights and legal protections.¹³

4. *Security* for Israelis and Palestinians is an existential concern. Wars, terrorist attacks, and hostility from those wishing to throw off the occupation have led Israel to spend a large share of national income on security. Today, however, although neighboring states may be unfriendly (due to refugees or border areas Israel continues to hold from past wars), Israel faces no significant military challenges from any of them. While there have been occasional internal spikes of violence (such as knife attacks in late 2015) and indiscriminate rocket attacks, most Israelis lead relatively secure lives. These attacks, as well as the fear of attack via tunnels into Israeli village areas (most tunnels are from Gaza to Egypt), continue to grip and shape internal Israeli politics and subvert the two-state process. Current policies, including militarized crackdowns, have not produced the total security that the government desires; indeed, some observers contend that they contribute to cycles of violence. Some Israeli soldiers, sent to protect settler colonies, suffer from something akin to post traumatic stress syndrome—*moral harm*—for having participated in the violent suppression of Palestinians.¹⁴ Finally, not all internal threats to Israeli security emanate from Palestinians. Israeli right-wing and religious extremists, who normally target Palestinians, have occasionally struck at government authorities and murdered Prime Minister Rabin in 1995, severely setting back two-state negotiations.

5. Meanwhile, Palestinians’ *security* has unambiguously worsened since Oslo. In the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, Israeli military and settlers killed 2,334 Palestinians between January 2014 and August 2015, compared with 90 Israelis dying from Palestinian attacks. The Israeli government routinely destroys Palestinian homes, wells, businesses and farms in East Jerusalem and most of the West Bank if they are built or repaired without Israeli permits, which are rarely granted. Palestinian property is expropriated for Israeli parks, heritage sites, security zones, and the enclosure wall. The Israeli military arrests adolescent Palestinians in the night, coerces confessions by threats of indefinite imprisonment, and holds them without trial or access to a lawyer, a translator, or even a parent. Palestinians are often held in Israel where families cannot visit, which violates international law. Palestinians who allegedly pose a threat are often shot on sight. Despite some security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli military frequently conducts incursions into Palestinian areas and conducts constant drone surveillance of Gaza and other Palestinian areas. These actions provoke backlash and subvert any prospects for a two-state solution.

6. The *borders* have become less clear. The government of Israel has not made an official declaration of its borders. Israeli construction of a fortified wall primarily on West Bank territory follows a path in defiance of a decision by the International Court of Justice. Area C, 60 percent of the West Bank, designated in the Oslo accords either to be part of a future Palestinian state or to be territory that the Palestinians could exchange with Israel in a final settlement, is now shown on maps from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism as indistinguishable from the internationally recognized territory of Israel. The parcels of the West Bank under Palestinian control are fragmented from each other and cut off from Jerusalem, Jordan, and the rest of the world with whom they need to trade and communicate.

7. Israeli authorities tightly limit the access of Palestinians to *water*, while assuring that their own citizens and the settlers have full access 24-7. Per capita use of water in 2014 was 183 liters per day in Israel, compared to

73 for Palestinians in the West Bank and a minimum of 100 recommended by the World Health Organization. Palestinians must have permission to drill or deepen wells, which is rarely granted. Many Palestinian towns get water only a few times a week, while nearby Israeli settlements enjoy swimming pools and watered lawns and gardens. Some of the incursions of the wall into West Bank territory seize control of aquifers there. Israeli wells along Gaza's border substantially deplete the safely drinkable water available there.

8. *Economic development* for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza suffers from Israeli restrictions that hinder exports of their products, imports of raw material, construction of economic infrastructure, transportation within the West Bank and with other economies, access to internet and other communications, and access to financial services. In Jerusalem and elsewhere, Palestinians cannot enforce contracts and property rights vis a vis settlers. A World Bank study showed that removing such obvious restrictions would allow the West Bank GDP to expand by at least a third. Problems with governance and rule of law by Palestinian authorities also hinder development; reducing externally imposed constraints would increase the incentive and capacity of Palestinians to address their own problems. A Rand Corporation study argued that a two-state solution would benefit Israel as well as Palestine, partly by lessening security expenditures (although U.S. aid covers a substantial share of this for Israel).¹⁵

9. Problems in *Gaza* have always been the most severe, due to the economic and fiscal blockade and the periodic attacks by Israel. The most recent air and land attack in summer 2014 made the misery far worse. More than 2,100 were killed in Gaza, including at least 521 children and 962 other civilians. Israeli losses were 71, reflecting their overwhelming military dominance. Around 500,000 households in Gaza became homeless and displaced, unemployment and food insecurity are high, and few households have piped water due to deliberate bombing and shelling of infrastructure. Hamas has arguably offered long-term truces to Israel in the past, but it also promotes an antagonistic ideology, which mirrors the extremist Israeli settler parties. The population of Gaza, 45 percent under fifteen years of age, is being punished collectively, ostensibly for this ideology; such actions violate the international law prohibiting collective punishment. Among others, David Cameron, Prime Minister of Great Britain, has described Gaza as “an open-air prison or even concentration camp.”¹⁶

The study report accompanying this resolution describes these trends further, noting the growth of Israeli power and resources and the weakening of Palestinian economic capacity, institutions, and culture, and even family life. It builds on our 2010 statement, *Breaking Down the Walls*, and similarly draws upon resources from across civil society and religious traditions. The Palestinian Christian *Kairos* document (December 2009) was a key source for ecumenical guidance, with its call for nonviolent resistance based in faith, hope, and love. We are indebted to the many Jews, Muslims, and Christians who are similarly committed to nonviolence as they seek peace with justice in that land all three faiths consider holy.

While lack of progress on the Oslo agenda does not condemn diplomacy or peace talks, advocating for the “two-state solution” or any other particular political arrangement has often distracted people from ongoing events and suffering. Affirming the “two-state” solution ideally means maintaining Israel as a demographically and democratically Jewish state alongside, one hopes, a democratic and peaceful Palestine. Less attractive political possibilities abound, including two extremes in the one-state category: either a Jewish-dominated state that further oppresses the Palestinians, or a potential Arab/Muslim majority state that could conceivably subject Jewish Israelis to expulsion or subjugation. Rather than sort through the increasingly complex contingencies needed to reach any political solution, which has been attempted repeatedly by negotiators, this report focuses on how to support human rights and democratic values for Israelis and Palestinians in the present interim and as a contribution to a better long-term solution.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders and organizations need to take responsibility for protecting human rights and eventually reaching a just peace. Although both sides take outside funds, often from the United States, sometimes with strings attached, the Israelis and Palestinians are in no sense equal negotiating partners. We reject any false equivalence between the capacity of a prosperous nuclear-armed state and that of a poor, divided, and occupied set of cantons. The Israeli government has conquered the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem and labels any resistance as “terrorism,” even though international law gives an occupied people the right to armed struggle to resist the occupier.¹⁷ The path of the wall, the pattern of checkpoints, and the matrix of military control divide and demoralize Palestinians, trapping them in unsustainable situations.

At the same time, decisions of the Palestinian Authority that discourage new leadership and its passivity in the face of Oslo violations weaken its capacity to negotiate on behalf others in prison, in exile, and under blockade. Leaders of Hamas face other challenges, some of their own making and some due to repeated Israeli military efforts to remove them since their victory in the free and fair elections of 2006, since which some have been imprisoned and others killed by rockets or drones. It is hard to think long term when massive inequality in wealth and weaponry would make any political leader's work seem impossible, shrinking civil society under an occupation that looks more and more like annexation and slow-motion expulsion. Yet Israel is not solely to blame for limitations of Palestinian leadership and the presentation internationally of their claims—including those of the

refugees. Despite the daily heroism and nonviolence of countless Palestinians, their political organizations have not maintained the unity needed for strength.¹⁸

We can no longer consider the U.S. government an impartial arbiter, as its diplomatic, financial, military, and intelligence assistance to the Israeli government vastly overshadows its assistance to the Palestinian Authority.¹⁹ The complicity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC[USA]) and other U.S. Christians in enabling the continued Israeli occupation derives from the overwhelming support from the United States to Israel, regardless of its policies. For example, in 2015 the prime minister of Israel openly opposed an international nuclear weapons agreement with Iran on the floor of the U.S. Congress, without being challenged on Israel's own refusal to sign the international nuclear nonproliferation agreement.²⁰ U.S. military and financial aid continued to Israel during its one-sided campaign against Hamas in Gaza, and Israel has repeatedly announced additional settlement construction in ways that undercut the peace process. PC(USA), with its own funds and member purchasing, has tried to curtail its support for the occupation and settlement, while making it clear that it is not divesting from or boycotting the internationally recognized Israel, within the "Green Line." This accords with our economic support for nonviolent social change in other cases where politics met an impasse.

In the past, our commitment to human rights and human dignity, to self-determination and equal justice, led PC(USA) to stand with those who saw a two-state solution as having the most hope for a society to realize values. Repeating the mantra of "Two-State Solution" has kept U.S. funding flowing to Israel but has failed to end the violence or lead to mutually accepted solutions. During its visit, the team learned that many of our Israeli and Palestinian partners and friends who previously embraced the two-state vision embodied in the Oslo Accords now have increasing doubts that it will come about in a manner consistent with these shared values. Solutions thinking is needed, but at this juncture, our calling as a church and as Christians is to point to the longer term and larger frame. Families and communities throughout the region are fractured by cultures of militarism, extremism, and xenophobia. Fear and despair pervade. The process coming out of Oslo, designed to be peaceful and temporary, has continued far beyond its envisioned conclusion and now is hardening into something that provokes interminable violence.

Without repudiating a long-term goal of two free states living in peace and prosperity, or losing hope that the United States can use its influence and considerable funds in a proportionate and helpful way, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) hopes to act with both integrity and effectiveness, seeking enforcement of international law and solidarity with civil society organizations to protect the individual and collective human rights of Palestinians. As stated by the General Assembly in 2010, "we do affirm the legitimacy of Israel as a state, but consider the continuing occupation of Palestine ... to be illegitimate, illegal under international law, and an enduring threat to peace in the region. Furthermore, we recognize that any support for that occupation weakens the moral standing of our nation internationally and our security."²¹

Acting on Christian and Universal Values: Recommendations

2. Approve the following recommendations:

As a denomination with partners in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, the PC(USA) has taken and should continue to take actions and positions in service to human dignity, self-determination, reconciliation across borders, equality before the law, and solidarity with those who suffer. Recognizing that the United States remains Israel's staunchest ally despite the continuing occupation and annexation of Palestine and failures of peace processes, this report also supports the calls of prior assemblies to make the billions of dollars in U.S. military aid to Israel conditional on its advancing its democratic practices to include basic human and citizenship rights for the Palestinian Christians and Muslims under its effective control, and on equalizing the rights of Arabs or Palestinians considered citizens of Israel. The current course of further restriction and dispossession will continue to weaken Israel's claims to share democratic values and will strain relationships in many communities, including between some Presbyterians and Jews, causing regrettable discomfort. Yet out of a much greater concern not to be silent in the face of the risk of increased violence, this General Assembly cannot normalize acceptance of the practices described in this report.

We commend adherents of all three Abrahamic faiths for their participation in frank and fair conversations in efforts to help prevent misunderstanding and mistrust among our communities in the U.S. and in Israel-Palestine. PC(USA) appreciates the efforts of the U.S. State Department and other diplomats of all nations who help raise the moral climate to reduce the frequency and severity of human rights violations and who present their governments with accurate information about the costs of further delaying a just peace. Similarly, the assembly commends reporters and members of human rights and development groups whose work requires bravery and honesty in facing Israeli and other armed personnel and the possibility of jail or deportation.

Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Mission Agency have sought to work with other peacemaking organizations to counteract the culture of resentment and militarization that drives violent interactions between Israelis and Palestinians. The PC(USA) has called on all parties to cease activities that worsen the prospects for a just peace, especially

Israeli occupation and settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the construction of the separation wall on territory east of the internationally recognized borders of Israel. Our Office of Public Witness (OPW) in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry to the UN (PMUN) have urged Palestinian leaders to increase their coordination and cooperation, to encourage creative and nonviolent initiatives to end human rights violations against Palestinian opponents, and to find ways to maintain dignity and resist the violence of knives, guns, and rockets. The limited success of years of “words-only” efforts is part of what has led the church to move toward nonviolent economic pressure on the settlement enterprise and to work with civic organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT).

Presbyterians support ecumenical and interfaith educational programs that bring Israeli and Palestinian children into contact with each other, such as Hand-in-Hand and Face-to-Face/Faith-to-Faith. Congregations need to educate themselves about all sides of the history of the conflict and about the structures of the occupation that prevent free movement within the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and into and out of Gaza. During mission trips they should witness and experience the restrictions on movement faced by Palestinians.

The PC(USA) supports international accompaniment programs of the ecumenical churches to observe and be protective witnesses to prevent violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program of the World Council of Churches, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Interfaith Peacebuilders all provide significant protection against settler and military violence against Palestinians. The PC(USA) has urged the police and courts of Israel and Palestine to provide equal protection under the law for all persons and their property in the West Bank and in Israel proper, without discrimination by ethnicity, nationality, or religious affiliation.

The PC(USA) has given strong support for a democratic Israel with secure and internationally agreed upon boundaries, living at peace with its neighbors and providing equal rights to all its citizens under one system of justice. Because Palestinians under occupation or exiled from their homes do not have such rights, however, the PC(USA) has taken several actions regarding corporate engagement in Israel-Palestine. The 217th General Assembly (2006) approved a statement urging that “... financial investments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investments of our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal.”²² The 218th General Assembly (2008) also called upon corporations doing business in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank “... to confine their business activity solely to peaceful pursuits, and refrain from allowing their products or services to support or facilitate violent acts by Israelis or Palestinians against innocent civilians, construction and maintenance of settlements or Israeli-only roads in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, and construction of the Separation Barrier as it extends beyond the 1967 ‘Green Line’ into Palestinian territories.”²³ The 220th General Assembly (2012) recommended that members and congregations avoid buying goods manufactured in the illegal Israeli settlements and pursue “occupation-free” investment within Israel-Palestine. The Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions, as recommended by 221st General Assembly (2014), refrain from investing in and profiting from three U.S. firms that supply critical equipment for the illegal occupation of the West Bank and the destruction of Palestinian houses and agriculture.

The Middle East Liaison Office and other mission offices gather and share information on what is happening to Palestinians and Israelis of all faiths and participate in joint discussions among Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations and communities on human values and human rights. A study guide for this report will be available to read and discuss within our congregations and communities.

a. For the dignity of all persons, that:

(1) Appropriate agencies of the General Assembly and all Presbyterians urge the Israeli government, as a matter of policy and practice, to stop the collective punishment and isolation of broad sections of the Palestinian population—the blockade of Gaza, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the administrative detention, the torture²⁴ and forced feeding of Palestinian detainees—and to restore the ID documents and citizenship status that have been stripped from Palestinians in East Jerusalem and elsewhere.

(2) Appropriate Presbyterian agencies work with international ecumenical and interfaith bodies whenever possible to strengthen this witness and ensure that the voices of diverse Israeli and Palestinian groups are heard, even in times of disagreement, while encouraging others to understand the faith bases of our positions.

b. For self-determination of peoples through democratic means, that:

(1) Members, ministers, and agencies would be encouraged to provide vigorous support if the government of Israel and representatives of the Palestinians come to an equitable agreement on a new political arrangement—possibly with two-sovereign states as envisioned at Oslo—advocating for it with the U.S. government, at the UN, and in other public forums.

(2) Members, councils, and appropriate agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) urge the U.S. Administration and Congress to support greater involvement and possible mediation by the United Nations agencies and Security Council, and not exercise our state's Security Council veto over Palestinian efforts for full membership in the United Nations or standing in international courts and treaties, nor oppose investigations and possible censure or penalties for human rights or war violations committed by either Palestinian or Israeli entities.

c. For building community through social, economic, and political enterprises that increase capacity and support for reconciliation, that:

(1) The State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and other bodies publicize Israeli and Palestinian actions that contribute to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect, opening opportunities for equal education with unbiased curricula, sports participation, permits to travel, participate in shared work trips, etc.

(2) The United Nations Security Council to establish a peacekeeping mission for Israel-Palestine with a mandate to protect civilians and their human rights.

(3) United Nations human-rights monitors be permitted to observe and report on violations of human rights by Israel and Palestine.

(4) Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas permit the Red Cross and Red Crescent to visit prisons in Israel-Palestine and to be permitted by these authorities to bring documented complaints to appropriate international judicial or UN bodies in case of violations.

d. For equality under the law and reduction in the separation that fosters inequality, that:

(1) Even if Israel does not fulfill its obligation to end the practice of child detention (which goes against Israel's ratification of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child), the General Assembly endorses the recommendations of the Military Court Watch organization at least to halt the human rights abuses of children by the military occupation in the West Bank: no night raids to arrest minors; every child to be told his or her legal rights in a language each understands; every child granted access to an attorney before interrogation; every child's parents present during interrogation; and every interrogation A/V recorded and made publically available.

(2) The assembly urges Congress to hold hearings into the use of U.S. made and subsidized military and police equipment by the government of Israel in carrying out policies that abuse human rights, violate Geneva Accords, or oppose American principles of religious liberty and nondiscrimination.

(3) In keeping with the initial intention of the United Nations that Jerusalem be an international city to honor and provide access to the holy places of three faiths, the General Assembly emphasizes the importance of having vital communities of all three faiths present. In practice, this means (a) calling on the Israeli government to be transparent and accountable in dealing with Muslim and Christian sacred sites, affording them the same protections as Jewish sites, allowing freedom of worship and all necessary permits for properly designated religious personnel, and allowing internationally authorized archeologists to review claims that affect traditional Muslim and Christian areas of living and worship (as World Heritage sites are reviewed); and (b) inviting Christian, Jewish, and Muslim dialogue groups, congregations, and communities, here and in Israel-Palestine, to discuss questions of religious liberty vis-a-vis those practices that highlight Jewish objects and customs in Jerusalem and other locations to the actual and potential detriment of other religious communities.

e. For acknowledgment and confession of our complicity in the injustices in Israel-Palestine, that:

(1) The Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions refrain from investments that support violence against Israelis or Palestinians, including finance and support for the economic activity and expansion of settlements outside of Israel's internationally recognized borders, in accord with previous General Assembly actions.

(2) Appropriate agencies of the assembly support measures by the Internal Revenue Service (or related units of the United States government) to investigate and possibly revoke the 501(c)(3) status for organizations, and tax deductions for individuals, that promote and finance the development or operation of Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law and obstacles to peace.

(3) The General Assembly affirms the traditional freedom of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other religious, civic, and private organizations in the United States to determine their own practices of investment or divestment, boycott or selective purchasing, in advocacy for peace and human rights, and therefore opposes efforts in state legislatures and elsewhere to limit or punish these exercises of freedom and nonviolent solidarity.

f. In solidarity with those who suffer, the General Assembly:

(1) Encourages Presbyterians to read and reflect on documents like *Kairos-Palestine*²⁵ that come from our Palestinian brothers and sisters and to support programs like Christ at the Checkpoint.²⁶

(2) Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate with the U.S. government for Israeli and Palestinian authorities to reduce trade barriers for U.S. imports into and exports from Palestinian firms in the West Bank and Gaza. Agricultural and manufactured goods made in Palestine by Palestinians should be able to reach American markets with the same ease as goods made in Israel.

(3) Supports U.S. government enforcement of laws requiring correct labeling of the place of production for imports to the U.S. of goods from Israeli settlements and of laws sustaining the prohibition on Israeli participation in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program until Israeli ceases to discriminate against U.S. passport holders of Palestinian origin. Provisions of trade acts that do not distinguish between Israel and the territories it occupies disregard human rights and international law.

Rationale

The Two-State Approach from a Values Perspective: A Brief Study

PRECIS

The repeated failure of the peace process in Israel-Palestine is also a failure of national and international politics to address the human rights of a people kept stateless by military occupation and exile. This report reviews the status of the “two-state” solution, but it does not engage in further political solutions-thinking, given the limited support for a Palestinian state by the United States and the international community in the face of Israeli government resistance. As a church based in the United States, we continue to believe that both Israel and the Middle East would be safer if Palestine were a free and viable state and not an arena for deep ethnic and religious hostility, a hostility that infects the profile of the United States and of Christianity in the region. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in this report assesses the situation through a lens of Reformed Christian moral values and commitment to integrity, witness, and solidarity with the Christian community in Palestine and worldwide.

This report is addressed to the ecumenical Christian community, Jewish and Muslim communities, and all persons of good will who refuse to accept the verdict of power politics that the cause of peace is lost. As that cause can no longer be kept waiting for an ideal political solution, two-state or otherwise, the church and nongovernmental organizations must prepare to advocate for full Palestinian rights within the zone of Israeli sovereignty, whether temporary or permanent. Our goal is to witness for justice, peace, and equal rights for all persons living in Israel-Palestine. Our prayer is that violence and suffering do not increase in the absence of more democratic alternatives.

A. A Framework of Christian Values and Human Rights

1. Our Values

We recognize that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is first of all a church, not merely a nongovernmental organization (NGO) comprised of religious people. As a Christian church, its primary allegiance is to Jesus Christ, who is its head and upon whose grace it always relies. Further, we recognize the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stands in the Reformed tradition. As such, its vision is shaped by a particular set of theological claims: the sovereignty of God over all things; the centrality of Jesus Christ in understanding this sovereign God; the authority of Scripture as it bears witness to Jesus Christ; the ubiquity of sin to distort vision, damage relationships, and harm all parts of God’s good world; the power of grace to overcome sin and make all things new; the wisdom within the long witness of the church’s confessions. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) expresses this vision through values that shape its actions in all contexts, including the context of this report.

Values form the theological heart of our report. The church advocates for upholding the downtrodden and oppressed, while working to enhance the dignity and well-being of all people. These values form a universal message based in the belief that a sovereign God, made perfectly manifest in Jesus Christ as he is witnessed in Scriptures, cares for all people at all times. Many Christian values are relevant in a context as complex and contested as Israel-Palestine, but certain of our values deserve priority here:

- *The Dignity of All Persons.* The God who has created all human beings, male and female, in the divine image (Gen 1:27) and commanded us to love them (Mk. 12:28–31) is the same God who invites us into his great mission of reconciliation (Matt 28:18–20). We begin to participate in that mission as we recognize that all persons carry the peculiar, unquantifiable, and indelible dignity that comes in human existence before God. All categories that divide persons must dissolve in the face of recognition of this dignity—no matter how functional or useless they are to us; no matter how benign or malignant they become for us; no matter how taught or innate they are. Regardless of our tendencies to choose sides, submit to tribal loyalties, or resist complexities in dealing with seemingly entrenched and intransigent conflicts, our first obligation is to honor the dignity of all persons with whom we are engaged, especially where that dignity is threatened, demeaned, or denied. The Christian mission of reconciliation will take us to difficult places; it will not allow us, however, to simplify those contexts, our neighbors, or ourselves, lest in doing so we lose sight of their dignity or surrender our own.

- *The Self-Determination of Peoples.* One way we affirm the dignity of all persons is to promote their rights to shape their own lives. Because there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:5–6), nothing and no one other than God can claim the ultimate allegiance of any person. Because God has made all people only “a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:5), all people have a capacity to live into their respective relationships with God unmediated by any other powers. Social, political, economic, and religious structures that help order societies and structure relationships are properly bound by these truths. Thus, self-determination is both a right that ultimately trumps whatever immediate and useful social good may come from denying that right and also a goal that should shape every social project in which the church participates. It is, in part, for this reason that God covenants with human beings (Gen 9:8–17; Gen 17:4–8) toward the ordering of their lives and welfare. As covenant people, we act most faithfully and stand on our surest footing when we promote every people’s right to self-determination, because it is through this right that they take up their own responsibilities within God’s covenanting work.

- *The Building Up of Community and Pursuit of Reconciliation.* The right to self-determination within the context of a covenant with God is properly ordered when it is directed towards the creation and growth of a community that can include all people. Because “... in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us ... we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:19–20). Obedient to a God whose reconciling power encompasses the world and empowered by a God whose obedience was most perfectly manifested in Jesus Christ, we can take up the roles of ambassadors and the work of reconciliation and community-building with the boldness of those who know that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39). This boldness allows us to confront all pursuits of individual vainglory, selfish desires, and exclusionary power in love and with the goal of transforming, rather than taking sides in, adjudicating over, or fleeing from conflict.

- *The Rule of Law and Recognition of Equality Before Law.* Human communities are both constrained and enabled by laws. As many reformers remind us, one function of law is to restrain immoral and corrupting behavior: we need laws to maintain order. Proper rule of law also allows persons and communities to better pursue ways of holiness, as John Calvin reminded us; we benefit from laws because they improve possibilities for social engagement and, therein, reconciliation. God can work through law at local, regional, national, and international levels. “Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble” (Ps. 119:165)—and good human laws resound with the echoes of divine law. Good human laws treat those who come before them with equality. Indeed, our fundamental conception of justice recognizes that standards should apply impartially towards all, at local, national, and international levels.

- *The Recognition of Complicity and the Need for Confession.* We need the law—and even more, we need grace through and before the law—because our own actions have never been immune from sin: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” Paul reminds us (Rom. 3:23). Rather than treating all people with dignity, we have sometimes used them for our own purposes. Rather than promoting their right to self-determination, our church and government have sometimes assumed the right to act on their behalf and without their consent. As a result, rather than building up communities of reconciliation, we have shaped communities of exclusion. Rather than making impartial judgments, we have favored those closest to us, those loudest around us, and those whose perspectives best mesh with our own. When acting this way, we have exacerbated problems rather than resolved them. A fundamental step in participating in God’s mission of reconciliation is to confess our complicity in systems and patterns of behavior that oppress and injure. Having recognized our past complicity, we must then act to amend it and to support those who have been oppressed and injured.

- *Solidarity with Those Who Suffer.* Following the commandments and example of its Lord, the church is called to attend to, care for, and stand in solidarity with those who suffer. God’s great self-revelations—at Sinai, to the prophets, in the incarnation—begin with “I have observed the misery of my people. ... Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them ...” (Ex. 3:7–8). And God has enabled and commanded the church to participate in that divine work as a central part of its ministry of reconciliation. So the church is called to both stand with and offer its resources to those who suffer. It stands with those who suffer in order to understand the conditions in which they find themselves, to recognize its own location in those conditions, and to see God at work there, transforming the world. It offers its resources to those who suffer as a demonstration of its commitment to the mission to which it has been charged and as a sign of its belief in the abundance of a God who is the giver of all good gifts, who desires human flourishing, who defeats even death, and who is bringing about the reconciliation of all things to himself (Col. 1:20).

These values apply particularly in the context of Israel-Palestine. Arising from within the wisdom of the Reformed tradition and manifesting themselves within the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), these values also align with the language of human rights as elaborated below and in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As Reformed theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff and others have shown, the concept of human rights arose partly out of Christian scriptures and developed through two thousand years of Christian thought; it now forms the basis for Christian understanding of justice.²⁷ Box 1 explains that so-called Christian Zionism is not an appropriate response to denials of human rights for Jews and does not reflect Presbyterian or true Christian values.

Box 1: Christian Zionism Does Not Reflect Presbyterian Values

Churches in the United States, including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), relate to modern Israel-Palestine in a wide variety of complex ways, shaped by many historical, theological, moral, ecclesial, interreligious, economic, and political forces. Although these relationships do not all align with each other, most of them are broadly faithful expressions of the church's witness in the world. But not all.

A serious example of Christian complicity in the exacerbation of suffering in Israel-Palestine is the promotion of contemporary Christian Zionism—the idea that Christians should support the return of Jews to Israel in order to fulfill prophecy and initiate Jesus' return. During the Six-Days War of 1967, fundamentalist church leaders in the United States who had previously either neglected Jewish Zionist concerns and ideas or had been antipathetic towards Jews and Judaism, read Israel's victory as a sign of the coming of end times, even as they saw the Cold War as a war between forces of good and evil. Finding touch points with their own millennialist interpretations of history within right-shifting Israeli and U.S. political movements, these leaders promoted an apocalyptic vision of a foul world in which conspiring global forces both within the U.S. and internationally plotted against Israel and Bible-believers. In such a world, concerns about justice, equity, diplomacy, and reconciliation between peoples (especially between Christians and Muslims) were downplayed. Instead, they promoted their dualistic vision of the world, shaped by narratives of persecution and adversarial, polarizing political engagements and linked to American neo-conservatism.

Adopting a literalist approach to scripture and based on the notion that biblical references pertain to contemporary and impending events, authors like Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye and ministers like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and John Hagee called on Christians to support Israel univocally, to encourage Jews from around the world to “return” to Israel, and to fund Israel's expansion to the Jordan River and beyond. Some even to pray for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the re-institution of sacrifices there, so that the Antichrist could come to desecrate it and therein help bring about Jesus' return. Christian Zionists have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into support for such projects—including support of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories—ironically with the goal of helping to bring about the battle of Armageddon in which most Jewish people would be killed except for a remnant that Christ saves at his return.

While there are many faithful ways to support Israel and the Palestinians, the heretical belief that Jews must return to and control Greater Israel in order to inaugurate Jesus' return is not such a way. Based on flagrantly bad biblical exegesis and dangerously corrupt theology, Christian Zionism denies the complexity of a land in which the three Abrahamic faiths intersect, ignores the plight of hundreds of thousands of persons of all three faiths, and ultimately treats Jews as instruments that God would use and then, for the most part, discard. Along the way, it gives witness to a heartless and capricious God, rather than the Christian God of love and justice who “did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17).

American Christians who are concerned about the Holy Land must speak out against this heresy no matter where we find it, especially if found in our own theologies. When Christians insist that Jews must control Greater Israel in order to inaugurate Jesus return, we must remind them that the gospel proclaims a God whose graceful actions precede and shape our response rather than a God who is constrained to respond to human actions (Romans 3–4). When Christians treat Jews (or anyone else) as a means towards achieving our own goals, we must remind them that Christians are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, not as instruments for our benefit (Mark 12:31). And when Christians claim that salvation depends on the control of a particular place by a particular people, we must remind them that Israel-Palestine, like all lands, do not belong to any single group of people, for “[t]he earth is the Lord's and all that is in it” (Ps 24:1).²⁸

To apply the values described above, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can promote human rights in the Middle East and work with other organizations that promote them. Furthermore, merely restating our values and affirming the importance of human rights is not enough in situations so filled with suffering. We suggest, therefore, that the church operationalize the values it holds by working in partnership with organizations that share our values and applying them in the situations that deny the human dignity of people involved with the conflict. Doing so is part of our life of faith, and engaging in this way is an appropriate response to the needs faced, especially by the most vulnerable in the conflict.

Acting on the basis of our Christian values and in alignment with the concerns of human rights, we will work for justice and hope that such work can shape viable political processes and solutions. Previous preoccupation with particular political arrangements, we see now, has delayed the betterment of peoples' lives—Israeli as well as Palestinian—as the daily routines of the occupation degraded their human worth and dignity.

The church has spoken clearly on various issues that support the operationalization of values to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, such as in *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* (1980). It should continue to promote human rights in the Middle East and to work with those organizations that promote them, no matter whether those organizations are Israeli or Palestinian, Jewish or Christian or Muslim, centered in the Holy Lands or beyond.

2. Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR], adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, asserts that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.” The U. N. General Assembly calls upon “every individual and every organ of society” to promote respect for the rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration's thirty articles.²⁹

Living its values, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has answered this call by faithfully proclaiming the inherent dignity of all people and affirming that equal human rights are essential to achieve just and lasting peace. The 221st General Assem-

bly (2014) called for the establishment and protection of equal rights for all people in Israel-Palestine. The assembly action enumerates key areas where rights have been routinely denied to Palestinians, including the right to equal protection under the law, the right to freedom of movement and worship, the right to protection of property, and the right to unhindered opportunity for economic development. The rights of children are lifted up for special care.³⁰

All Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to full and equal human rights. The UDHR makes clear that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms” which it sets forth, “without distinction of any kind,” and expressly states that “no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.” The declaration makes no exceptions or exemptions for reasons of national security, regional stability, or geopolitical advantage.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1966 and submitted to member states for ratification, transformed the provisions of the UDHR into binding international law.³¹ Both treaties set forth in their first articles a collective right to self-determination, by virtue of which a people have the right to “freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”³² The emphasis on the right to self-determination in 1966 reflected the colonial past of newly independent member states, and their lived experience that human dignity and fundamental freedoms cannot flourish unless a people have the right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live.³³

Many other aspects of international law have a central role in the analysis and recommendations of this report. Annex A summarizes some salient points.

B. *Facts on the Ground*

All persons need to become better educated about the complexities of history, land, economics, and politics of the situation in Palestine, because disagreements about the facts on the ground and ignorance of those facts are used to promote political ends that cause or exacerbate suffering. This section offers a primer on these topics, with references for further study. The complexities neither relieve us from the responsibilities of engaging in Israel-Palestine nor justify delaying the pursuit of our responsibilities. Part 1 of this section provides basic information about how the parts the Israeli-Palestinian territory differ in their legal and practical status. Part 2 describes what has happened since the Oslo Accords in 1993, particularly concerning the “permanent status issues” identified at Oslo.

1. *The Categories of Territories*

The region commonly known as Israel-Palestine comprises several subterritories over which the State of Israel, the Palestine Authority, and Hamas have claims (often competing) and within which the State of Israel controls most of the functions of a state:

State of Israel: The pre-1967 territory of the State of Israel has borders recognized internationally and by the Palestinian Authority. Israel itself, however, has not stated its official borders, and on maps issued by the government (Ministry of Tourism) the implied borders have expanded over the years, now including almost all of the West Bank, in Area C, discussed below.

Jerusalem: West Jerusalem was internationally recognized before 1967 as being under Israel’s control but accessible by all religious groups. East Jerusalem, east of the Green Line established after the 1948 War, was under Jordanian control before 1967 and accessible by all religious groups. After the 1967 War, the Israeli government claimed all Jerusalem as part of the State of Israel and as its capitol, but they did not give its non-Jewish residents citizenship or national voting rights. Israel has established de facto control of all of Jerusalem, extending its border eastward into the West Bank area.³⁴ Palestinians, who see East Jerusalem as the capitol of their future state, have not recognized this. According to international law, East Jerusalem is part of the West Bank, but this report often discusses it separately because it has been separated from the West Bank de facto and receives different treatment under the Israeli occupation. Approximately 300,000 Israelis currently live in settlements in East Jerusalem.³⁵

West Bank: The West Bank, which is comprised of territory west of the Jordan River and encompassed by the Green Line as established in 1949, was conquered by Israel in the 1967 War. Part of the West Bank has been annexed by Israel as its own land; the Interim Agreements at 1993 Oslo conference divided the West Bank into three areas, A, B, and C. This division was originally intended to last only five years or less, until a Palestinian Authority could take control of the whole West Bank.³⁶ In fact, the division has become more entrenched.

Areas A and B consist of a number of noncontiguous pieces of land scattered throughout the West Bank and containing major Palestinian cities such as Ramallah, Jericho, and Hebron, as well as numerous villages. The “Interim Agreements” from Oslo granted control of civil and security functions in Area A to the Palestinian Authority. In Area B, the Palestinian Authority was to control civil functions and to share the security functions with the government of Israel. Area A consists of approximately 18 percent of the total land within the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), and Area B consists of another 22 percent, much of it rural. There are no Israeli settlements in Areas A or B. Israeli citizens are forbidden from travelling in

Area A, and it is very difficult for Palestinians to travel from one section of Area A to another. Despite the nominal functions of the Palestinian Authority in Areas A and B, the Israeli government decides and often changes its decision about how much authority the Palestinians actually have. The Israeli Army comes into Areas A and B when it decides to arrest people or destroy wells and other infrastructure.

Area C is about 60 percent of the West Bank and is totally controlled by Israel. The Oslo Accord intended for Area C to be gradually transferred to Palestinian control. It is a contiguous area and now includes some roads and infrastructure accessible only to Jewish Israeli citizens. Today, more than 350,000 Jewish settlers live in about 250 settlements and outposts in Area C, and these communities continue to grow. Maps from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism show no distinction or line between Area C and the internationally recognized of Israel.³⁷

Gaza: The Gaza Strip, situated along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea just north of Egypt, is roughly five miles wide and twenty-five miles long and it is separated from the West Bank by the territory of Israel. It was occupied by Israel in 1967, following which more than a dozen Jewish settlements were established. In 2005 the Israeli government unilaterally closed these settlements and evacuated its troops. Israel has continued to make frequent military incursions into Gaza for various reasons.³⁸ Israel also controls Gaza's airspace, electromagnetic sphere, population registry, movement to the West Bank as well as all movement of persons and import/exports for three of Gaza's borders (Egypt controls the other), which in many ways continues the occupation. When the Hamas party took over in Gaza after winning the Palestinian elections—with majorities in both Gaza and the West Bank—Israel tightened its border controls and cut off most of Gaza's fiscal revenue. Since 2007 Israel has also implemented a siege against Gaza, causing lack of food security among much of the population, high unemployment rates, limited possibilities for earning a living in agriculture, fishing, and industry, and harm to the entire fabric of life.

The sequence of historical maps in Figure 1 shows how the Palestinians have lost territory, as the area under Israeli government control has expanded since 1946.

To summarize the current pattern of political authority, we can identify the key functions of a state and then ask which entities do those functions now.

Key functions of a state include:

- Maintaining public order by exercising a monopoly on the legitimate use of force—e.g., military and police.³⁹
- Controlling the borders and trade across them.
- Controlling the rights to use land, water, and minerals.⁴⁰
- Regulating the establishment, legitimacy, and function of organizations, including religious, business, and political parties.⁴¹
- Developing and enforcing monetary and banking policy (e.g., defining legal tender, controlling the supply of money (and credit), setting rules for foreign exchange transactions, controlling the issue of bank charters and regulating the chartered banks).

Table 1: Exercise of Authority in Areas of Israel-Palestine

	Control of military	Control of police	Control of borders and trade	Control of rights to land, water and minerals	Regulate organizations	Monetary Policy
Israel (1967)	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI
West Bank A	GOI	PA	GOI [PA]	GOI, PA?	GOI, PA	GOI
West Bank B	GOI	PA, GOI	GOI [PA]	GOI	GOI [PA]	GOI
West Bank C	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI
Gaza	Hamas, with GOI incursions	Hamas	GOI/ Egypt [Hamas]	Hamas, GOI	Hamas	GOI
Jerusalem	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI	GOI

GOI=Government of Israel

PA=Palestinian Authority

[] entity in brackets has some authority on paper, but the preceding entity sets more binding constraints, making the paper authority moot.

Figure 1: Maps showing the evolution of Palestine and Israel

Israeli Land and Israeli occupied land indicates areas under control of the State of Israel; some Palestinians own land there. The focus is on land; Egypt and Jordan have controlled Palestinian land prior to 1967; they sought unsuccessfully to regain that land in 1973, when Israel also confirmed its taking the Golan Heights from Syria. The Palestinian Land shown in the 2011 panel reflects the impact of the settlements, the wall, checkpoints and Israeli roads, plus the absorption of Area C by Israel (as can be confirmed by tourist maps from the Israeli Government Tourist Bureau).



Source: Americans for Middle East Understanding—ameu.org

Table 1 shows that, with the partial exception of Gaza, the Israeli government is the de facto state authority in almost all respects throughout the Israeli-Palestine territory. In other words, there is effectively almost a one-state situation now, although no one considers this status quo as a solution. Figure 1 shows how this is reflected on the ground. Box 2 discusses some common misperceptions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Box 2: Common Misperceptions About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Many misconceptions distort the discussions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some examples include:

Palestine before 1948 was a land without a people for a people without a land.

Palestine was a predominantly Arab and Islamic country by the end of the seventh century, and in 1516, it became a province of the Ottoman Empire. Following the steady arrival of Jewish colonists after 1882, by 1946 around 600,000 Jews were living in Palestine, with over 1,300,000 Muslims and Christians.⁴²

“God promised the Land of Israel to the Jewish people.”

The Israel envisioned in the Old Testament and modern Israel are not the same. They are shaped by different political systems, comprised of different people, contain different religious groups, have different histories, and play different roles in their larger geopolitical contexts. As Walter Brueggemann writes, “It is simply not credible to make any direct appeal from the ancient promises of land to the state of Israel. That is so for two reasons. First, much has happened between text and contemporary political practice that resists such innocent simplicity. Second, because the state of Israel, perhaps of necessity, has opted to be a military power engaged in power politics among with the other nation-states of the world, it cannot at the same time appeal to an old faith tradition.”⁴³

“There has to be a Jewish state, where Jews can find refuge.”

Israel’s declaration of independence states that the country ‘will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture, it will safeguard the Holy places of all religions, and it will be faithful to the principles of the charter of the United Nations.’ Insuring political and social rights for all religions includes the Jews and provides them refuge; it does not require that Jews become a privileged caste.

“Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East.”

Democracies exist along a continuum defined by questions about who is allowed to vote, the freedom and choice that persons have in voting, the range of persons who can hold office, the power of citizens to shape governance, and the basic governmental structures and documents that ensure such matters. Nor does the existence of a democracy guarantee rights for all citizens. Israel, for instance, may be a democracy but it lacks a formal constitution, and Palestinian citizens in Israel are restricted from

owning land and from many government benefits. Measures enacted since 2009 undermine the ability of Arab citizens of Israel and their parliamentary representatives to participate in the political life of the country; they criminalize political expression or acts that question the alleged Jewish or Zionist nature of the state. Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza—ruled to varying degrees by Israel—have no voting rights in Israel. Palestinians in the West Bank (except in East Jerusalem) and Gaza vote in competitive multiparty elections, although the U.S., Israel and the PA have kept Hamas, the winner of the only Palestinian-wide election, from taking power except in Gaza. Other Middle East countries—Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey—also have democracies with contested elections that effect on policy outcomes; like Israel, their democracies also have limits.

“All the Arabs want to throw the Jews into the sea.”

The Arab Peace Initiative, first introduced at the Beirut summit in 2002 by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, proposed ending the Arab-Israeli conflict (i.e., normalizing relationships between Israel and all Arab states in the region) in exchange for a complete Israeli withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the occupied territories and a “just settlement” of the Palestinian refugee crisis based on UN Resolution 194. The initiative has been re-adopted by the Arab League on several occasions. Although a number of Israeli officials responded positively to the initiative, it was described as a “non-starter” and rejected by the Israeli government. The Palestinian Authority supported the plan, and Mahmoud Abbas asked President Barak Obama to adopt it as part of his Middle East policy. The leadership of Hamas was divided, with most factions rejecting the plan.

“All the Israeli Jews want to drive the Palestinians out of the land between the Jordan River and the Sea.”

Although a minority of Jews have expressed this goal or acted to realize it, polls show that most Israeli Jews would like to find a way to live in peace with the Palestinians and have expressed willingness to make compromises to achieve that. Some Israeli individuals and organizations—including some of those met by the study team—actively advocate for the rights and better treatment of Palestinians.

“Islamic extremism is driving Christians out of the Holy Land.”

Palestinian Christians have lived continuously in the Holy Land since the first century AD. Today there are thirteen locally developed Christian denominations in Jerusalem, as well as churches of European and American origin. Many Christians were driven from Palestine as Israel expanded after the wars of 1948 and 1967, and they continue to emigrate in increasing numbers. Today the Christian population of the occupied territories has shrunk to 60,000. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and home to the Church of the Nativity, is nearly enclosed by the separation wall and a system of barriers—dirt mounds, roadblocks, gates and checkpoints. Most of the Christian-owned land in Bethlehem and the adjacent villages has been confiscated for Israeli settlement expansion. According to *Haaretz* “most Christians cite Israeli occupation as the prime cause of emigration and the decline of their community.”⁴⁴ Israeli authorities often deny Christian clergy, nuns, and religious workers the permits necessary for residency, work, and access to holy sites in Jerusalem and the West Bank.⁴⁵ Israeli settler groups and extremists have waged an intensifying campaign of “price tag” attacks against churches as well as mosques; these acts of vandalism aim to exact a price for actions perceived to obstruct the settlement enterprise. Palestinian Christians with West Bank IDs do not have freedom of worship; they have difficulty getting permits to worship in Jerusalem at Easter and other holidays.

2. *Developments since the Oslo Accords*

The Oslo Accords of 1993 advocated a two-state solution to the conflict in the territory of Israel-Palestine. United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967 and its land-for-peace approach were guiding understandings for the Oslo Accords, which both Israel and the PLO signed. The study team used these understandings as a gauge for assessing what has happened to the feasibility of a two-state solution since Oslo.

The Oslo Accords identified seven key problems—“permanent status issues”—that a peace settlement would need to address: (a) Jerusalem, (b) refugees, (c) settlements, (d) security, (e) borders, (f) relations and cooperation with neighboring countries and (g) other issues of common interest.⁴⁶ This report does not discuss Item 6, relations with neighboring countries. Among the “other issues of common interest,” the report focuses on those of water and economic development in Palestine. Gaza is also an issue of common interest, although the study team was not allowed to visit there and gather first-hand information.

a. *Jerusalem*

Compared with 1993, Jerusalem is farther than ever from being a shared capital of two states, as envisioned at Oslo. After 1967 Israel unilaterally applied its law in East Jerusalem and annexed it, initially de facto and later officially.⁴⁷ Israel took away the Palestinian citizenship of those living in East Jerusalem and has made it difficult for them to get Israeli citizenship even if they apply for it.⁴⁸ They have residency IDs, but these are conditional on making Jerusalem the center of their life and not leaving the area for too long. Israeli authorities check their homes, even at night sometimes, and use various pretexts to evict the residents and take over or destroy their homes and businesses. Residents need permits to make improvements or substantial repairs to their homes, but these are rarely granted; residents may lose their homes for making unlicensed repairs. Seizing of the property by Jewish settlers is also a problem. Israeli settlers receive preferential treatment and usually subsidies for building in East Jerusalem. Between 1967—the start of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank—and the end of 2014, 14,481 Palestinians have lost Jerusalem residency.⁴⁹ Between 2004 and 2015, 2,128 people, including 1,150 minors, were left homeless due to home demolitions in Jerusalem by Israeli authorities.⁵⁰

Despite being stripped of their citizenship, the East Jerusalem residents pay full Israeli taxes to a regime that neglects to provide adequate infrastructure and services. Israel revoked the social benefits and health insurance of these families. They cannot vote in Israeli national elections, where decisions about Jerusalem are made. The government of Israel dominates the

city ever more tightly through restrictions that deter Palestinians from living in Jerusalem or using it as an economic hub with connections to the rest of the West Bank and Gaza. Israel maintains this control through a range of measures, including checkpoints, a permit system, residency restrictions for Palestinians, and the growth of surrounding settlements. The separation barrier and Israeli military checkpoints deny Palestinians freedom of movement between the West Bank and Jerusalem. Families are often separated when one parent has status for residency with the Israeli authorities and the other does not.

b. *Refugees*

Palestinian refugees—about 8 million today—are no closer than in 1993 to being able to exercise their rights of return and compensation, as specified in international law.⁵¹ Table 2 summarizes the statistics of a situation, which becomes more complex with each generation. Most refugees, including descendants, date from the time of the 1948 war. More than five million Palestinian refugees are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Most of them currently reside in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.⁵² Palestinian refugees from the 1967 War are not registered with UNRWA. Some Palestinians were internally displaced around 1948 within what is now Israel and made Israeli citizens, but Israeli law has not allowed them to return to their homes and lands. Other Palestinians, some of whom were already refugees, have been internally displaced within the occupied Palestinian territory since 1967.⁵³

Table 2: Palestinians, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
Millions, as of end 2014

Total Palestinians	12.1		
Refugees		8.0	
From 1949			6.1
From 1967			1.1
From other conflicts			0.8
IDP in West Bank		0.34	
IDP within Israel		0.38	

Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>. Accessed 19 September 2015.

The parties involved have never reached agreement on any of the proposals for resolving the plight of Palestinian refugees, including compensation, repatriation to homes and lands in what is now Israel, and resettlement to third countries. All these options have been broached, but none has been adopted. Complicating the situation, the two United Nations agencies that support Palestinian refugees are overwhelmed and underfunded.⁵⁴ Any durable peace agreement is likely to remain elusive as long as the historic claims and contemporary realities of Palestinian refugees remain unaddressed.

c. *Settlements*

Since 1967, Israelis have created numerous settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT—the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza) with 547,000 settlers as of the end of 2013.⁵⁵ Israeli settlements are illegal under international humanitarian law (the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49), which prohibits occupying powers from colonizing, exploiting natural resources, or building infrastructure for their own use. There is a good reason for this prohibition, as the settlements endanger the lives of civilian populations, both the occupied and those settling in occupied territory. Many observers, including the study team and some Israeli officials, see the settlements as precluding the creation of a viable Palestinian state in what are now the OPT. The locations of the settlements and their infrastructure—highways, checkpoints, and the separation wall—thwart travel between Palestinian population centers in different parcels of Area A, described above.

For instance, the Tent of Nations farm, owned by a Christian Palestinian family whose deed to the hilltop tract of land goes back more than a century, has been surrounded by five settlements. It has been fighting in the courts for twelve years against the efforts of the Israeli settlers and military to drive them off their land. In 2014, the Israeli military destroyed about 1,500 their fruit trees, in violation of an Israeli court order.⁵⁶

The Palestinian resentment of the settlements' encroachment, appropriation of the local resources, attacks on the native population, and special status in the Israeli legal system has prompted acts of resistance and violence that, in turn, are used to justify many harsh aspects of the security regime imposed by the occupying Israeli military. The Israeli military presence to protect the settlements has, in turn, caused significant human suffering and insecurity for the Palestinians in the OPT.

d. *Security*

Between January 2014 and August 2015, ninety Israelis were killed by Palestinian actions. In that time, Israeli forces killed 2,334 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. While the study team was in Israel-Palestine, 16–25 August of 2015, violence continued:

- Clashes with Israeli forces in the West Bank injured fifty-four Palestinians, including eight children and two women.
- Israeli settlers made five attacks, including one that stoned and injured a six-year old Palestinian girl.

—Four incidents of stone throwing by Palestinians at Israeli-licensed cars in the West Bank injured six Israeli settlers, including a two-year old child.

—Israeli authorities demolished forty-two Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem for lack of Israeli-issued building permits, leaving fifty-four persons displaced, including thirty-three children.

—In Gaza, two children were injured when they encountered unexploded ordnance from Israeli missiles.⁵⁷

Israeli control and security measures have intensified since 1993, at the expense of Palestinian security. The Israeli government regulates the movement of goods and people both within the Occupied Territories and between them and Israel. The Israeli separation barrier, checkpoints, permit system, detention without trial, military courts, and prisons seriously jeopardize the potential for creating a second viable state alongside Israel. Palestinians live under several legal systems, including: Israeli military law in Area C; Israeli military and Palestinian Authority (PA) law in Area B; and PA law in Area A. Even in area A, nonetheless, Israeli military claims the authority to give orders and makes raids and arrests. Palestinians in Areas B and C and in East Jerusalem face the threat of home demolitions for building without permits, as well as detention without trial by Israeli military forces. Most of this happens near the settlements, which are the epicenter for human rights abuses. Since 1967, the Israeli military has arrested more than 800,000 Palestinians, about 20 percent of the population, with devastating effects on the fabric of family life.⁵⁸ The military courts routinely flout international human rights law, neglecting to explain rights or state charges in a detainee's own language, dispensing with any presumption of innocence, turning a blind eye to torture (such as forced feeding), and violating the prohibition on unlimited detention. These tactics lead to conviction rates around 99 percent, mostly by coerced confessions.⁵⁹ Israeli settlers, living illegally by international law in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, do not face the same impediments to movement as Palestinians. They live under Israeli civil law, not military rule, and thus are not subject to military detentions.

Israelis also suffer from lack of security, due to threats and activities by Palestinian groups and individuals, including dozens of suicide attacks with bombs on buses and in markets in the second intifada and recently attacks with knives. Hamas has launched more than 8,000 rockets from Gaza into Israel since 2005, resulting in dozens of Israelis killed and perhaps thousands injured. Many Israelis living near Gaza have reported symptoms of PTSD.

In sum, neither side is totally secure, although the Palestinians suffer more from the lack of security.

e. *Borders*

The effective borders between Palestinian and Israeli areas are largely unofficial and incompatible with a two-state solution. Israel built 85 percent of the separation wall on the Palestinian side of the Green Line, the internationally recognized border that defined the extent of Israel and those areas controlled by Jordan (the West Bank and East Jerusalem) and Egypt (Gaza) after the 1948 War.⁶⁰ In the Six-day War of 1967, Israel invaded and occupied the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Subsequently, UN resolution 242 of 1967 stipulated that Israel has to withdraw from the lands it occupied in the 1967 war; Resolution 338 reaffirmed this in 1973. Nonetheless, land seizure, settlement expansion, building the separation wall, restrictions on land use by Palestinians, and the demarcation of land into three areas in the West Bank continues, decimating the territory that Palestinians can use. Land designated by Oslo to comprise a Palestinian state (i.e., all of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza) is not available now, due to Israeli building and control. Most observers believe that a viable Palestinian state would need to have mostly contiguous territory and reach to Jordan, with control of that border. Neither the facts-on-the-ground found by the study team nor the statements of top Israeli officials give any reason to believe that this reality of land use will become fairer for Palestinians in the foreseeable future.

The Israeli-controlled separation barrier and the many Israeli military checkpoints within the West Bank inhibit or wholly prevent Palestinians from moving between work and home, visiting friends and family, traveling between the various areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority, and visiting East Jerusalem and the holy sites of the Old City. While Palestinians can move within Gaza, they are almost entirely trapped there. And East Jerusalem residents who are Palestinian face forced eviction by settler seizure of land and property due to insecure residency status.⁶¹

Besides the problem of the border's location, the Israeli authorities' harsh treatment of Palestinians at checkpoints on the border, and within the OPT, worsens living conditions and exacerbates the conflict. Long waiting times and unpredictable closures not only impair the chances for Palestinians to have gainful employment, they also disrupt the Palestinians' access to education, health care, and other social services. An average of 10 percent of pregnant Palestinian women were delayed at checkpoints every year from 2000 to 2007, while travelling to give birth in hospital. These delays resulted in sixty-nine births at the checkpoints, leading to thirty-five infant and five maternal deaths.⁶²

As Americans witness the debates on the immigration issue in the United States, we should remember that the Palestinians are not immigrants. They and their ancestors have lived on that land for centuries and generations, except when Israeli measures forced them to move. Since the 1967 war and change of the borders, however, the Israeli authorities have reduced and sometimes eliminated Palestinians' legal status, even though they did not move across any border, illegally or otherwise.

On the other hand, priority status and financial incentives have gone to Israeli settlers, who are illegal immigrants according to international law.

f. *Water*

Israel controls almost all water resources, above and below ground, and allocates it to favor its own citizens and to the detriment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The separation barrier acts as a “water wall,” which Israel moved east of the Green Line to seize important water sources in the West Bank, where Israel now controls 85 percent of aquifers.⁶³ The significant disparity in water access and allocation between Palestinians and Israelis has corresponding impact on public health and economic development. As the responsible power under the Fourth Geneva Conventions of 1949,⁶⁴ the Israeli military is supposed to ensure water access for all people under its control. Almost all Israeli settlers have uninterrupted access to water, which is used for swimming pools and landscaping, as well as for human consumption. Palestinians have 637 communities in the West Bank, and 281 are not served at all with water. Of the 356 served, 60 percent are only mostly served and 40 percent partly served. Palestinian populations, often residing near the settlements, typically get water only a few hours a week at unpredictable times. Palestinians are usually denied permission to drill wells or improve the ones they have (which is necessary as the water table recedes), in order to reserve the groundwater for Israelis. Most Palestinian homes in the West Bank have several tanks on the roof to store water, filling them when water is turned on and hoping it lasts. When the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) raids a village or refugee camp, the first shots are typically at the rooftop water tanks—easy targets—so the Palestinians will worry about how to have water the rest of the week instead of organizing resistance to the invasion. In contrast, the study team could see from the road that homes in most Israeli settlements do not have the rooftop water tanks; they do not need them.

As of March 2014, water consumption in the West Bank and Israel differed dramatically. The World Health Organization recommends at least 100 liters of water per person per day.⁶⁵ In the West Bank, Palestinian average consumption was 73 liters per person per day (domestic, urban, industrial) whereas in Israel consumption was 183 liters per person per day. As of August 2014, nearly 1.2 million Palestinians in Gaza had no running water,⁶⁶ and average daily per capita water consumption there was between 70–90 liters, much of which was essentially recycled sewage because Israeli wells around the periphery of Gaza had lowered the water table so far. Establishing a viable Palestinian state and economy will require dividing water rights equitably, allowing sufficient water for Palestinians’ daily needs and economic development, including agricultural production. Even in the current allocation of territorial authority, fairness requires much more equitable sharing of water resources.

g. *Palestine Economic Development*

Economic development for Palestinians is a major topic of common interest as part of the Oslo process. Allowing people to develop their economic potential and pursue economic well-being—“the pursuit of happiness” in our American Declaration of Independence—is an important human right. Palestinians under Israeli occupation cannot fully exercise it. Israel is a regional economic power and its citizens, primarily the Jewish ones, enjoy the benefits of a global economy. Palestinians are much poorer, and Israeli policies contribute substantially to making them that way. The economic opportunities and public services that the GOI (government of Israel) provides to people under its control vary widely. The government provides generous public and social services to Jewish Israelis, especially those settling in the occupied Palestinian territories. Within Israel, non-Jewish citizens get some services and opportunities, but fewer than their Jewish compatriots.⁶⁷ Also, incomes and standards of living in the occupied territories are much lower than in Israel.⁶⁸ Palestinians living in the occupied territories get essentially no services from the occupying government, even though international law requires that the occupying power provide such services. The Israeli government also actively blocks the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza from many economic opportunities, as elaborated below. The Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas in Gaza, and the UN provide some social services to Palestinians with funds from taxes and donors, although the Israeli government periodically cuts off their access to these funds.

Allowing and helping the Palestinian economy to develop in the West Bank and Gaza was part of the Oslo understanding. Employment and economic progress would give Palestinians reasons to hope and work for peaceful coexistence with Israel. The Oslo peace process and the establishment of the PA initially ushered in rapid growth, driven by some return of the Palestinian diaspora and large inflows of public and private capital. Yet those early hopes did not last:

Economic conditions in the West Bank and Gaza ... deteriorated in the early 1990s. Real per capita GDP for the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) declined 36.1% between 1992 and 1996 owing to the combined effect of falling aggregate incomes and robust population growth. The downturn in economic activity was due to extensive corruption in the newly governing Palestinian Authority, and to Israeli closure policies in response to security incidents in Israel, which disrupted previously established labor and commodity market relationships. The most serious effect was the emergence of chronic unemployment. Average unemployment rates in the 1980s were generally under 5%; by the mid-1990s this level had risen to over 20%. After 1997, Israel’s use of comprehensive closures decreased and new policies were implemented. In October 1999, Israel permitted the opening of a safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the 1995 Interim Agreement. These changes in the conduct of economic activity fueled a moderate economic recovery in 1998–99.⁶⁹

The outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000 brought increased violence and uncertainty and the intensification by Israel of policies that impeded the movement of people and goods and fragmented the Palestinian territories into small enclaves lacking economic cohesion. In the ensuing recession, GDP contracted by an average of 9 percent per annum in 2000–2002.

Subsequent Palestinian reforms, accompanied by large inflows of donor assistance and some easing of movement restrictions, allowed growth to resume between 2007 and 2011. Extraordinary levels of donor budget support will not likely continue, so sustaining growth will require further Palestinian reforms and the reversal of Israeli occupation policies that hinder growth.

Israeli occupation, control over natural resources, and restrictions on the movement of labor, imports, and exports has severely constrained Palestinians' chances for economic development. In Gaza, the lack of inputs and lack of access to markets have resulted in a virtual shut-down of the private sector, which, in turn, has led to high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty.⁷⁰ Economic opportunity for Palestinians in the West Bank is also seriously constrained by Israeli policies, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem. This feeds the more radical wing of Palestinian politics.

Every morning, hours before dawn, around 30,000 Palestinian laborers make their way from the occupied West Bank, where they live, and enter Israel to try to get to their jobs. These workers, desperate to keep their jobs, arrive at the checkpoints hours early, sleeping on concrete on the Palestinian side of the checkpoint so that they make it through in time. Workers say they work in Israel for a variety of reasons, but most point to a lack of opportunity, high unemployment, and low wages in the occupied West Bank.⁷¹ West Bank Palestinian workers in Israel make an average of around \$65 a day, more than double the average daily wage in the West Bank. Given the high demand for work permits, which are only granted to a fraction of applicants, workers have no job security, creating dangerously helpless situations for thousands. With the onslaught of recent violence, things have only gotten worse for the Palestinians trying to make a living for their families.⁷²

Israeli policies that seriously hinder Palestinian economic development include restrictions on freedom of movement, unequal and insufficient access to water, denial of permission for Palestinians to build on or improve their property, toleration of settler violence against Palestinians and their property (destroying houses and orchards⁷³), failure to provide public services for the occupied population, restriction of electronic communications, and subsidies and encouragement for Israeli settlements to exploit resources east of the Green Line in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Such practices violate international law, which prohibit the occupying power from exploiting the resources of the occupied territory and require the occupying power to provide public services and protection to the local population.⁷⁴

World Bank reports show evidence that alleviating today's restrictions on Palestinian activity and production in Area C would add about USD 3.4 billion to Palestinian GDP—or 35 percent of its 2011 GDP. See Annex B. About two-thirds of this would be direct benefits, mostly through opportunities for agricultural expansion and Dead Sea minerals exploitation⁷⁵, plus some from tourism, construction, telecommunications, mining, and quarrying. The other third would be indirect benefits from the multiplier effects of the potential growth in the leading sectors.⁷⁶ Improving the capacity for Palestinian economic growth in Area C would not solve all the Palestinian economic problems. But without the ability to conduct purposeful economic activity in Area C, the economic space of the West Bank will remain crowded and stunted and its inhabitants' daily interactions with the State of Israel will be extraordinarily inconvenient, expensive, and frustrating. Already the constraints make it impossible to sustain even the current standards of living without large donor inflows, which also have become unsustainable.

Similarly, a 2015 report from the International Labor Office concluded:

The continuing occupation fundamentally affects the rights and well-being of Palestinian women and men, including through confiscation of land, forced displacement, a myriad of [sic] unpredictable and opaque access and movement restrictions and exposure to violence by Israeli security forces and settlers. Measures taken by the Israeli authorities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have created separate and different realities that favour Israeli citizens over Palestinians, a situation that contradicts the principle of equality and non-discrimination.⁷⁷

h. *Gaza*

Understanding the Israel-Palestine situation requires considering the part in Gaza. The Gaza strip, 25 miles long and between 4 and 8 miles wide—141 square miles—is now home to more than 1.8 million Palestinians. More than two-thirds of its inhabitants are refugees, including descendants from the wars of 1948 and 1967. Most live in eight refugee camps that surround Gaza's cities and towns. Gaza's population has tripled in the past thirty years; most are under age 18.

Although Gaza has been relatively isolated from the Arab world for the last fifty years, it lies in the heart of the Middle East and has a long history. Throughout antiquity Gaza was a prosperous Mediterranean port, strategically located at the intersection of trading routes linking Egypt, Arabia, and the eastern Mediterranean.⁷⁸ Religiously, Gaza is mostly Muslim today and less secular than the West Bank, with its traditional culture influenced by the proximity to Egypt. Approximately 1,200 Palestinian Christians live in Gaza today. Most are Greek Orthodox, while some are Roman Catholic.⁷⁹

Gaza has been under Israeli military control since the Six-day War in 1967. Although the Israeli army withdrew from Gaza in 2005, along with several thousand Israeli settlers, the Israeli government still controls access to Gaza by land and sea and controls its airspace and airwaves. Israel controls the population registry and issuance of identification cards to Palestinians in Gaza.⁸⁰ Israel controls almost all of Gaza's land border, and its navy blockades the side facing the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt controls the short land border on the southwest. The concrete walls and wire fences, which the Israelis built on Gaza's land, puts a third of its limited good farmland out of use. There are only two land crossing points: Most humanitarian supplies enter through the Erez crossing, controlled by Israel. Mostly pedestrians use the Rafah crossing, under Egyptian control.

Gaza's infrastructure has been crippled by repeated air strikes, a chronic shortage of fuel, and restrictions on the import of supplies, equipment, and spare parts. Its electrical crisis dates back to June 2006 when its power plant was targeted by an Israeli missile. Subsequent airstrikes have destroyed fuel storage tanks. Gaza's power plant currently operates at less than half capacity. Although Gaza also purchases electricity from Israel and Egypt, it still experiences rolling blackouts of 12–16 hours per day, and there is insufficient fuel to operate water pumps, wells and sewage treatment facilities. Israel has sunk many wells around the border of Gaza, minimizing the amount of fresh groundwater that can reach the population there. Most Gaza households receive piped water for eight hours or less only once every two to four days. More than 90 percent of Gaza's water supply is unsuitable for drinking.⁸¹

Following Israel's September 2005 withdrawal, the Palestinian Authority assumed administrative authority in the Gaza strip. In Parliamentary elections in January 2006, Hamas won a plurality of the total vote and a majority of seats. Hamas was popular in Gaza because it was perceived as being less corrupt than the Palestinian Authority and because of the health and social services it provided, including funding of schools, orphanages, clinics, and hospitals.⁸² When Hamas assumed power in February 2006, however, Israel, the United States, and the European Union refused to recognize its right to govern, and direct aid to the Palestinian government was cut off. After six months of intermittent fighting, Hamas wrested control of Gaza from Fatah in June 2007. Several internationally brokered attempts to create a unity government, combining Hamas with the Palestinian Authority (Fatah) in the West Bank, have failed. Hamas remains the sole government within Gaza.

Since then Gaza has been subject to a blockade by Israel. To mitigate the effect of the blockade, more than 1,500 tunnels were dug between Gaza and Egypt, making possible a "tunnel economy" that peaked between 2007 and 2013 and averted a total collapse of the Palestinian economy. A wide range of goods restricted by Israel were imported through the tunnels, including fuel, construction materials, agricultural tools, seeds, pesticides, and spare parts, for nonmilitary machinery as well as for weaponry. Most of the tunnels to Egypt were closed by mid 2013.⁸³ During its 2014 incursion, the Israeli military sealed off the remaining tunnels to Egypt, plus a few to Israel, purportedly dug to enable assault teams to attack Israeli border posts.⁸⁴

Claiming unprovoked rocket attacks on Israel by Hamas and other militant groups, Israel has launched three attacks on Gaza between 2008 and 2014 (see Box 3). Today, nearly two years after Israel's last Gaza incursion, 100,000 Palestinians are still homeless, and 80 percent of its population depends on international aid. Much of the rubble from bombed homes and buildings has been cleared, but virtually no rebuilding has occurred. According to the Israeli organization Gisha, which monitors movement restrictions in Gaza, Israel restricts import of civilian goods that it defines as "dual use," which includes basic construction material. Although a mechanism exists for vetting the import of materials for private use, what has been brought in is only a fraction of what is needed.⁸⁵ International donors are reluctant to commit larger sums to reconstruction if peace cannot be maintained between Hamas and Israel.

According to a May 2015 World Bank report, Gaza's unemployment rate is 43 percent, the highest in the world, and more than 60 percent of Gaza's youth are unemployed. In recent months Hamas has tried to suppress assorted Salafi jihadists in Gaza, some of whom are in touch with networks in Syria. These jihadists regard Hamas as infidels, because of its Palestinian nationalism and its willingness to negotiate with Israel over a ceasefire. If living conditions do not improve and hopes continue to fade among Gaza's youth, the lure of ISIS will inevitably grow, posing new and unpredictable dangers, not only for Gazans themselves, but for Israel, the region, and for the west's wider war on the Islamic State.⁸⁶ Hamas and ISIS are bitter enemies for many reasons.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development concluded that a Palestinian state cannot be economically viable without the reintegration of Gaza with the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Gaza should be the seaport for a future Palestinian state, and if the Palestinian National Authority were permitted to develop natural gas in Gaza's offshore oil fields, this would generate revenue for the authority and allow power plants to operate in the West Bank and Gaza.⁸⁷

Twenty years ago Sara Roy, a Jewish scholar and daughter of a holocaust survivor, wrote: "Gaza dispels the myriad myths and illusions consistently invoked to legitimize Jewish control and depicts the bleakness of a future in which that control is allowed to persist."⁸⁸ Today the isolated fragments of Palestine in Area A, their borders in Area B controlled by Israel, and their enclosure by Area C and the settlements reveal this bleak scenario arriving in the 21st century for the West Bank as well as Gaza.

Box 3: Israeli Incursions into Gaza, 2008–14⁸⁹

Since it dismantled the settlements there in 2005, Israel has made three major incursions into Gaza, as well as numerous minor ones.

December 2008–January 2009: *Operation Cast Lead*

Israeli deaths: 8, including 3 civilians

Palestinian deaths: 1,391, including an estimated 759 civilians, of whom 344 were children and 110 women

November 2012: *Operation Pillar of Defense*

Israeli deaths: 6, including 4 civilians

Palestinian deaths: 167, including 87 civilians, of whom 30 were children

July–August 2014: *Operation Protective Edge*

Israeli deaths: 72, including 5 civilians

Palestinian deaths: 2,256, including 1,462 civilians, of whom 538 were children and 253 women.

The number of Palestinian children killed by Operation Protective Edge exceeds the total number of Israelis, civilians and soldiers, killed by Palestinians in the last decade.⁹⁰

UNRWA Commissioner General reported: “On seven separate occasions, UNRWA schools that had been used as emergency shelters and whose exact positions we had provided to the Israeli army were either hit or struck nearby by Israeli shells or other munitions. ... This is all the more serious because UNRWA improved the system of notification to the Israel army about the location of its emergency shelters after similar incidents during the 2008–2009 war.”

The military confrontation between Hamas forces in Gaza and the Israeli military is lopsided. Unguided projectiles from Gaza fired against Israeli towns did some damage and violate the Geneva conventions, as they are effectively targeting noncombatants. For instance, between 7 July and 26 August 2014, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza fired 4,881 rockets and 1,753 mortars towards Israel. On the other hand, Israeli forces have massive material superiority, with the economic resources of a high-income economy and the latest in weaponry, some of which the U.S. supplies. They also have nuclear arms, ready and waiting. In the 2014 conflict, IDF carried out more than 6,000 airstrikes in Gaza, many of which hit residential buildings. Israeli fighting forces received 5,000 tons of munitions and fired 14,500 tank shells and around 35,000 artillery shells. Damage to civilian property and persons in Gaza in 2014 were many times what Israelis suffered.

3. *Viability of the Two-State Solution*

The Oslo Accords pointed to a two-state arrangement as the way forward, and the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority signed on to this. At the time, it looked feasible that the Israeli and Palestinian leaders could implement such an agreement. Since then the United States, many other governments, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and many other organizations have endorsed the Two-State Solution, even though there was not full agreement on what this meant. The disagreement has widened since Oslo. Nonetheless, most stakeholders have been reluctant to end their formal agreement on the desirability of something called Two-State Solution.

In the meantime, developments on the ground, discussed above, have made it seem increasingly unlikely that the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority/Hamas will agree in the foreseeable future on a two-state arrangement and a process to get there. Many of the additional barriers to the two-state solution stem from the expanding matrix of occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem: Israeli settlements, Israeli-only highways connecting them to one another and to the internationally recognized territory of Israel, and the separation wall. This matrix of occupation has exacerbated conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians and thus led to expansion of the security apparatus guarding the settlements and to increased harshness in the security procedures.⁹¹ This in turn has further increased resentments and made more difficult the road to agreement on any political configuration, including that of two states. None of the parties considers the unstable, almost-one-state status quo as a solution.

Breaking Down the Walls (2010) noted the declining Christian presence in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem—the three areas identified as Palestine in the Oslo accords. While stating our commitment to equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis, a position underlined by the 221st General Assembly (2014), we join Christians around the world in opposing policies that are on a path to end a vital Palestinian Christian presence in Israel-Palestine. Israeli policies discriminate against this already small minority, such as the rules stripping non-Jewish Jerusalemites of their residency permits if they marry persons from the West Bank or Gaza. Furthermore, the struggle goes beyond land and population. Israeli government measures to enhance exclusively Jewish religious and historical sites and to obscure or destroy Muslim and Christian sites has exacerbated conflicts and reduced the scope for compromises needed to reach a just peace. Other discriminating policies include hindering the exercise of Islam and Christianity on holy days, limiting the mission of historic Christians and Muslim institutions, using less Arabic in signage, and neglecting public infrastructure and services in non-Jewish areas.⁹²

The Oslo Accords, initially intended to enable Israel and Palestine to maintain the security of their citizens in the face of threats by various state and non-state players, now inhibit the ability of either country to establish a just and secure state. As a result, Israel spends a high percentage of its GDP on its military, walls, checkpoints, and forces that occupy the West Bank and surround Gaza.⁹³ Neither Israelis nor Palestinians feel safe, as extremists on both sides play on people’s fears, with counterproductive outcomes—less security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

The primary parties to the Oslo accord, the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, now seem to lack the political mandate in their own communities that could support the compromises necessary for a lasting peace agreement, with two states or otherwise. Recent Israeli governments have depended on coalitions with far-right parties, committed to expansion and control of all land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. Despite its importance in both the region and the international community, Israel’s status and reputation in that international community has not improved and has become worse with some of its international partners. The Palestinian Authority (PA) lost the election in 2006, but has stayed in power in the West Bank because it and the Israeli authorities did not allow the elected Hamas party to take power there. In the last

decade, the PA's popularity has declined even further due to inefficiency, allegations of corruption, and its perceived weakness in the response to Israeli incursions. And an emaciated Palestinian Authority, even where it can maintain control over Area A, cannot defend Areas B and C, has no ability to inhibit the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, has little influence with Hamas in Gaza, and has no power in East Jerusalem.

Since Oslo, the various peace processes initiated or managed by the United States and by the quartet of the U.S., Russia, UN, and European Union have all failed to make sustained progress or deal with the imbalances of power between Israelis and Palestinians. The ability of right-wing Israeli interest groups and money to exert undue influence on the U.S. government and legislators has contributed to crippling U.S. diplomatic efforts to act as a neutral mediator.

We Presbyterians cannot predict whether or when this dismal situation will transform to a paradigm shift and a breakthrough agreement on a political arrangement leading to a just peace. Box 4 shares a comparison with South Africa, which ends on a note of hope. We should not, however, keep our concerns for Christian values and human rights on hold while we wait and hope for such a breakthrough. We need to witness now for our values in the existing situation.

Box 4: A Perspective on Israel-Palestine Through a South African Lens

Critics of Israeli policy in the occupied and annexed territories and in Gaza often draw comparisons with apartheid in South Africa. A closer look reveals some similarities and also some significant differences.

Many South Africans, including those who took part in the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel, see striking parallels between the oppression that they experienced under apartheid and the realities faced by Palestinians today. Some, such as Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, have even argued that the situation for Palestinians is worse than it was for black South Africans. Others are reluctant to classify the policies of contemporary Israel as apartheid, because they see that term as uniquely bound up with South African history.⁹⁴

The pockets of limited Palestinian control (Area A and Gaza) and even more limited control (Area B) remind one of the patchwork of South Africa's Bantustans in the 1970s and 1980s. South Africa tried to persuade the world (and itself) that hundreds of scattered, non-contiguous parcels of land—territory selected precisely because it was perceived to be of little strategic or economic value—could actually comprise one or more viable states. Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and other participants in the Oslo Accords have similarly tried to sustain the narrative that a two-state solution could evolve out of the configuration of the pockets of increasingly constrained Palestinian autonomy.

Other similarities between present-day Israel-Palestine and South Africa under minority rule include forced removals and demolition of housing, huge inequalities in access to resources, the pervasive presence of security forces, and the palpable tension in daily life that perpetually threatens to boil over into violence. Both Israel and apartheid-era South Africa portrayed themselves as pro-Western bulwarks of democracy, strategically located in resource rich but politically volatile regions.

There are also key differences. While Israelis of Arab ancestry suffer discrimination in many respects—some enforced by law—Israel's legislation and jurisprudence is not as completely reliant upon and shaped by a system of racial classification. There is not, for example, an Israeli equivalent of South Africa's Separate Amenities Act, which, from 1953 to 1990, sanctioned the exclusion of people from public premises and services on the basis of race. The virtual segregation of Israeli buses shows, however, that administrative action can achieve a similar effect, even in the absence of legislation.

Another important difference is that Israel's economy does not depend on Palestinian labor to the same extent that the economy of white areas of apartheid South Africa relied upon the labor of other racial groups, particularly Africans. Labor history is a central strand of South Africa's liberation narrative for good reason: it was the black majority who kept the wheels of mining and industry turning, creating the wealth that the Nationalist government reserved for a small white minority. Black women as underpaid servants raised white children and maintained white households, in addition to their own. Apartheid aimed to control the non-white workforce and ensure its exploitability, not to drive it out or eliminate it altogether. The Israeli economy does not depend so heavily on Palestinian workers, so there is less incentive to seek mutual coexistence.

While the South African government's attempts to justify apartheid policies were increasingly discredited as morally bankrupt by the 1980s, the long and shameful history of Jewish persecution, the horrors of the Shoah, and the persistence of anti-Semitism today have allowed Zionists to continue portray to the project of building a Jewish state as morally valid, without counting the cost to the Palestinian families being displaced.

In the end, the debate about whether or not Israeli policies and practice should be labeled "apartheid" should not distract us from the substantive issues at stake. The overriding moral from the history of South Africa's liberation struggle is the central importance of recognizing the human dignity and letting all parties to the conflict feel that they have meaningful opportunities to shape a common future. Only when one ceases to label those with a different perspective as "other", thereby devaluing or dismissing their views, can one begin a genuine search for accommodation and mutually acceptable options.

Faith communities are often best placed to champion this message—as they did in South Africa—because of the depth and richness of their moral teachings. The international ecumenical movement against apartheid was effective largely because it acted in solidarity with local churches that had deep roots in all of South Africa's communities. In the Middle East, as in South Africa, the Church is called not to align itself behind one particular political "solution," but rather to persist in lifting up God's call for justice and dignity for all humanity. Often this implies that the Church must stand with the marginalized

and those with less social, economic and political power, amplifying their voices and helping to level the playing field in the struggle for self-determination.

South Africa's experience carries a message of hope. For decades, the struggle to dismantle apartheid and implement non-racial democracy seemed to make little progress in the face of a heavily-armed and intransigent state. Growing moral outrage prompted few political concessions, either from the apartheid state or from members of the international community who allowed perceived strategic or economic considerations to trump ethical concerns. But once that seemingly impenetrable façade began to crumble, it did so rapidly. In the space of a few months in 1993, public opinion amongst white South Africans underwent a sea change. People who had previously bought into the state's portrayal of every African political leader—and particularly Nelson Mandela—as a dangerous terrorist, suddenly saw Mr. Mandela as a national treasure, a statesperson with integrity, humility, and moral fortitude. Meanwhile, the African National Congress, which enjoyed by far the widest support in black communities, showed little inclination to use its enhanced bargaining position to wring new concessions from the faltering state, but instead adhered closely to its longstanding demands for nonracial democracy, human rights, and equal protection under law. At the very moment when South Africa seemed to be on the verge of descending into renewed violence and even greater bloodshed, a yearning for peace and reconciliation prevailed, clearing the way for a negotiated settlement and a democratic transition that has lasted more than two decades, despite ongoing challenges. The Church is uniquely qualified to identify and nurture the glimmers of hope in a hurting world, even in those situations that appear the most intractable.

C. Putting Values into Action by the Presbyterians and the Church

What can we do, given the impasse for achieving a political settlement in Israel-Palestine? Should PC(USA) wait for other U.S. religious groups to become concerned, and focus on interreligious dialogue? Should the church now shift the emphasis of its attention to promoting its values—the dignity and worth of all persons and the welfare and protection of the most vulnerable—in whatever political situation may evolve? How can we act on our belief that God is moving in the world, bringing about reconciliation—even in contentious and divided places like Israel-Palestine—through the work of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit? The church has, throughout its history, exercised greater influence in cultural spheres than in political ones; when we engage in shaping culture, we play to our strengths. How does the Spirit of Jesus lead us to engage the world in faithful, hopeful, and loving ways?

In response, we encourage the church to work with local mission partners and organizations pursuing reconciliation in Israel-Palestine and beyond. Where political structures in the Holy Lands seem intransigently antagonistic and consistently destructive, and where political remedies to the conflict seem beyond the power of any persons or groups to achieve, the PC(USA) can work with such partners to shape cultures and change the facts on the ground. By doing so, it may help change those structures and bring new remedies into existence. Such an ecumenical approach meshes with the hopes and visions of a large share of its members and is less likely to get caught in the political crossfire that currently marks U.S. conversations about Israel-Palestine. Most importantly, such an approach is consistent with the humble and hopeful way that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, brings salvation to the world.

The church can focus its witness and ministry in Israel-Palestine on five issues: security, water, economic wellbeing, freedom of movement, and children. These five issues are urgent, important to both Israelis and Palestinians, and in accord with statements the denomination has already made regarding the Holy Lands. They are, moreover, areas of strength in the denomination's world mission and issues for which we have or could find suitable mission partners. We can address them in concrete ways, with hopes for amelioration and solution. Wise and shared engagement on these five issues can change the facts on the ground by shaping cultures of engagement that can restructure political visions, processes, and actions towards more harmonious relationships in whatever political configuration the leaders in the region can agree on.

1. Security

Although a mainline American denomination like the PC(USA) cannot offer military security to either Israel or Palestine, it can take a stand against continued militarization of security and the resulting insecurity that militarization breeds. It can manage its resources to encourage a less militarized security system. The PC(USA) has already decided not to invest its funds in U.S. firms that produce weapons, including those perhaps obtained by Palestinians and those sold to Israel for its occupation security operations. We already decided to stop investing in three companies engaged in non-peaceful activities, namely, maintaining and implementing the occupation of Palestinian territories, against which the church has taken an explicit stance. At the same time, the PC(USA) can work with partners in Israel-Palestine in programs that reduce the levels of fear and suspicion that stimulate calls for harsher forms of security and isolation. Many persons and organizations in Israel-Palestine are working to build relationships and trust among Israelis and Palestinians, among them the Parents Circle Families Forum, Rabbis for Human Rights, Combatants for Peace, and Seeds of Peace. Working with such organizations that emphasize a holistic vision of security for all can help change the facts on the ground, and thus eventually change the facts at the checkpoints. Presbyterian efforts can work with partners in East Jerusalem and in other areas not yet completely divided in efforts build bridges, show methods of human security, and lessen the constant recourse to militarization and control.

2. *Water*

Although Israelis and Palestinians should have equitable access to adequate and affordable water, as noted above, Israel limits access to water for many Palestinians, so that water consumption differs dramatically in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel, as detailed above. Presbyterians have a long and exemplary history of helping to bring clean water to those in need, through its programs like Living Waters for the World. We can bring the wisdom of this work to bear on water needs in the Holy Lands, joining with other individuals, states, and nonprofit groups who are working to support the equitable development of water resources and the distribution of that water. We encourage congregations to study reports by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program and to work with organizations like ANERA, EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East, USAID, and indigenous organizations to provide sustainable and affordable clean water to those who need it most.

3. *Economic Wellbeing*

Allowing Palestinians to develop their economic potential and increase employment would give reasons to hope and work for peaceful coexistence with Israel. Even in situations where no government has centralized control of all the organizations with violence capacity, developing profitable economic opportunities can give competing organizations substantial incentives to refrain from using violence, in order not to spoil their economic gains.⁹⁵

To help reduce economic disparities in the region, Presbyterians in the United States can participate in many ways. We can become better informed about where the products we use come from and can advocate with the U.S. government to enforce our own trade laws with respect to our economic relations with Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, including accurately labeling countries of origin. Products made in the West Bank settlements should not carry “Made in Israel” labels, according to our laws, but they often do.⁹⁶ Our Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., and Presbyterian Ministry to the UN in New York can encourage the United States to require that products from Israeli companies operating in Area C be labeled as such, in accord with U.S. law and to push the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to reduce trade barriers for exports and imports from the West Bank and Gaza. We can purchase agricultural and manufactured goods made in Palestine and produced by Palestinians, which should be able to reach American markets with the same ease as goods made in Israel. We can avoid buying goods manufactured in Israeli settlements as in the PC(USA) resolutions of 2012⁹⁷. And we can, as we stated at the 220th General Assembly (2012), pursue positive investment in Palestine, working with organizations like Green Action and Olives of Peace or more directly through the Presbyterian Foundation, which has financed several projects with West Bank Palestinians.⁹⁸

4. *Freedom of Movement*

Palestinians and, to a much lesser extent Israeli citizens, face harmful restrictions in their ability to live, worship, work, and be with their family and friends in the Holy Lands. Palestinians are unable to travel freely between the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem or to live in either location as they choose. By contrast, Israeli settlers usually enjoy preferential treatment for building homes and businesses and for constructing, using, and maintaining roads built for their exclusive use. Israeli citizens are warned not to enter many parts of Palestine, particularly Areas A and B, regardless of their connections to persons and programs in those areas.

Congregations can educate themselves about the structures of the occupation that prevent free movement within and between the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. When planning trips to the Holy Lands, they should include attention not only to sites in Israel (the Mount of the Beatitudes, Caesarea Maritima, Nazareth, etc.) and in the Old City of Jerusalem, but also to Palestinian cities within the West Bank (Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, Hebron) and to places like the Tent of Nations homestead. They should learn about how the citizens within these areas would travel between the sites that tourists visit so easily. Experience the checkpoints; get out of the tourist bus and go through a checkpoint on foot, like the Palestinians have to do. Attend to signs that restrict movement, roadblocks, and earth mounds. Notice the location of the separation barrier and consider its impact on communities. Compare settler roads with Palestinian ones. Consider volunteering with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program or Christian Peacemaker Teams.⁹⁹ Also consider how to support organizations like B’Tselem, Gisha, and Machsom Watch that are working to protect and support freedom of movement for all.

5. *Children*

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine probably does its worst harm to children, Israeli as well as Arab. They live in a militarized world, are taught to distrust those who do not share their views or their nationality and are offered narratives that suggest that their own wellbeing must come at the expense of others. They are drawn into increasingly insular and militaristic communities, where they may become prey to extremist groups whose interests are not in their wellbeing but only in particular radical causes. Some are taught that killing the others is a solution.

Palestinian children as young as twelve face abuse and neglect at the hands of Israeli military courts, which routinely detain them for stone-throwing, associating with those who throw stones, being suspected of having thrown stones, or even without any specified crime allegation. Many suffer physical and psychological abuse while in detention after being taken from their homes at night, and about half of those detained are taken to prisons in Israel rather than the West Bank, in viola-

tion of the Geneva Conventions. Under Israeli military law, Palestinian children do not have the right to have a parent present when questioned by police, whereas Israeli children have this right. Israeli children cannot be given a sentence that results in mandatory custody until age fourteen, whereas Palestinian children receive such sentences at age twelve.¹⁰⁰ Educational opportunities are constrained by the lack of resources, the inability to move freely in the West Bank, and the limits of UNRWA to fund adequate education for Palestinian children.

The PC(USA) has a long history of working to alleviate the suffering of children at home and around the world. In the Holy Lands, working to alleviate the suffering of children could take at least three forms. First, the denomination should advocate for an end to the illegal military detention of Palestinian children in Israel and the unequal treatment of Palestinian and Israeli children. Its governing body and Office of Public Witness should lobby elected representatives in this regard and its members should, likewise, contact their individual representatives in this regard. It can partner with programs like Military Court Watch that monitor, report on, pursue more just strategies for dealing with detained children, and advocate for adherence to international law in this regard. The PC(USA) can endorse their recommendations to shield children from abuses:

- no night raids to arrest minors;
- every child to be told their legal rights in a language he/she understands;
- every child granted access to an attorney before interrogation;
- every child’s parents present during interrogation; and
- every interrogation is A/V recorded.

Second, the denomination should support educational programs that bring Israeli and Palestinian children into contact with each other, such as Hand-in-Hand and Face-to-Face/Faith-to-Faith. Although such programs alone may not suffice to overcome the antagonisms, misunderstandings, and moral blindness that pervade the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, they surely help. Third, as peacemaking is the believer’s calling, the denomination should work with organizations like Children of Peace to dismantle the culture of militarization that drives Palestinian youth to throw stones and attack settlers and that drives young Israelis, especially young settlers, to exacerbate the occupation as members of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and sometimes to make deadly attacks on Palestinians.

Reflecting on the plight of the children and Jesus’ admonition to “let the little children come to me” (Mt. 19:14) reminds us to focus our attention and advocacy on the most vulnerable and oppressed. Jesus met with the rich and powerful—tax collectors, Pharisees, centurions—and his message to them was to care for the poor, the sick, and the widows. The PC(USA) can follow His example: while the politicians debate the how to arrange boundaries, we can witness with our purchases and investments to end the actions and policies that are terrorizing the children and families of all faiths in Israel-Palestine. We can keep ourselves informed about what is happening with all those in the region and advocate changing policies to share more equitably the access to resources and opportunities—farmland, water, transport, and international trade. We can allocate our purchases and investments to support fairer economic development, helping the Palestinian economy to close the widening gaps with that of Israel. We can engage in relationships with mission partners and allies in Israel-Palestine.

In whatever actions the PC(USA) undertakes, we need to maintain an attitude of humility and awareness that Palestinians and Israelis are making their decisions under highly stressful situations. Our nation, the U.S.A., by its actions and inactions has contributed to the difficulty of their situation, so we have no claim to moral superiority. Nonetheless, we must recognize the unpleasant facts of the situation and make our own determination of what we can do, resulting in the least harm and the most good. If some discussions result in awkward situations with our friends here and abroad, we may remember that some of the truth-telling in Jesus’s ministry also pushed people out of their comfort zone.

Annex A: Principles of International Law in Israel-Palestine

Continuing Occupation and Obligations of the Occupying Power. Belligerent occupation is governed by the Hague Regulations of 1907, as well as by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and the customary laws of belligerent occupation. UN Security Council Resolution 1322 (2000), paragraph 3: “Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and its responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in a Time of War of 12 August 1949...” The Security Council vote was 14 to 0, making it obligatory international law.

The Fourth Geneva Convention applies to the West Bank, to the Gaza Strip, and to the City of Jerusalem. The Palestinian people living in these occupied Palestinian territories are “protected persons” within the meaning of the Fourth Geneva Convention. All of their human rights are protected under international law. Thus, the denial of human rights, the use of collective punishment, closure of areas, annexation of land, establishment of settlements, and the continuing actions by Israel designed to change the legal status, geographical nature, and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, violate international law. Israel, as Occupying Power, is obliged under international law to preserve the territorial integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods within the Palestinian territory, including the removal of restrictions on movement into and from East Jerusalem, and the freedom of movement to and from the outside world. See, e.g., UNGA/RES/56/62, 2001.

Resistance by Those Subject to Occupation. Occupied people have, by weight of customary international law, expressed in many UN resolutions, the right to militarily resist their occupation and subjugation as long as this resistance is properly conducted within the confines of international humanitarian law. General Assembly Resolution A/RES/3246 (XXIX) (November 1974).

Settlements. International law clearly prohibits the settlement of Israeli citizens in the OPT. As a result, all state actions in support of the establishment and maintenance of the settlements, including incentives to create them and the establishment of infrastructure to support them, are illegal under international law (Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949).

Jerusalem. Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem contravenes customary international law, as confirmed by Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and recognized by the International Court of Justice. Because of its illegality, the annexation has not been recognized by any foreign state. Under international law, East Jerusalem remains part of the West Bank and is occupied territory. See, for example, UN Security Council Resolution 478, 1980. Accordingly, all settlement-related activities and any legal or administrative decision or practice that directly or indirectly coerces Palestinians to leave East Jerusalem—including evictions, demolitions, forced displacements, and cancellation of residence permits on a discriminatory basis—are illegal under international human rights law. The confiscation or expropriation of private property in the OPT, including East Jerusalem, is in almost all cases illegal.

The Wall. The International Court of Justice, in its 2004 advisory opinion, stated that establishing the Wall, or barrier, inside occupied territory is prohibited under international law, and the UNGA swiftly called for the Wall to be torn down, with reparations made to Palestinians harmed by its construction (UNGA Resolution July 2004). The combination of illegal settlements, checkpoints, and the Wall have had devastating effects on the social, economic, and cultural rights of many thousands of Palestinians. (See the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsq_no=IV-3&chapter=4&lang=en.)

Palestinians Right to Self-Determination. Numerous General Assembly resolutions have affirmed this right as particularly applicable to the Palestinian people, including Resolutions 2535 (10 Dec. 1969); 2649 (30 Nov 1970); 3236 (22 Nov 1974); 43/177 (15 Dec. 1988); and 48/94 (20 Dec. 1993). Of particular note is Resolution 3236, which reaffirms and specifies the inalienable rights of Palestinian people in Palestine as including: (a) the right to self-determination without external interference; (b) the right to national independence and sovereignty; and, the (c) "inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted." The resolution emphasizes that "full respect for and the realization of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable for the solution of the question of Palestine."

Gaza. Under international law, Gaza is an integral part of the OPT, despite the partial Israeli withdrawal, and thus Israel has the duties and obligations of an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and international humanitarian law, which it is not fulfilling. Both the UN and the Red Cross have declared that the blockade of Gaza is illegal, and is not warranted by Israel's security concerns.

Home Demolitions. UN Security Council Resolution 1544 (2004) called on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and to end the demolition of homes in violation of that law.

Palestinian Prisoners Held in Israel. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 states that "Protected persons accused of offences shall be detained in the occupied country, and if convicted they shall serve their sentences therein" (Article 47). When Palestinian detainees and prisoners from the OPT are held in Israel, as is frequently done, it violates international law and deprives them of visits with relatives and loved ones. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10721&LangID=e>

Equality Under the Law for Those Living in the OPT. Military courts deal with Palestinians in the OPT who are suspected of crimes, whereas settlers are dealt with under civil law. See http://www.addameer.org/israeli_military_judicial_system/military_courts.

Right of Return, Repatriation, or Compensation. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948), reaffirmed annually since 1949, resolved that Palestinian "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

Annex B: Estimated Effects of Removing Restraints on the Palestinian Economy

A World Bank study has analyzed the effects of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian economy, especially its prospects for development in Area C.

Direct Benefits

The World Bank Report 2014 estimates that the potential additional output from the five sectors evaluated in this report—agriculture, Dead Sea minerals, mining and quarrying, tourism, construction, and telecommunications— would amount to at least USD 2.2 billion per annum in valued-added terms—a sum equivalent to 23 percent of 2011 Palestinian GDP. The bulk of this would come from agriculture and Dead Sea minerals exploitation.

In *agriculture*, the key issues are access to fertile land, and the availability of water to irrigate it. We have not included in our calculations the 187,000 dunums of land that fall under the control of Israeli settlements. (The Ottoman unit dunum is about one-quarter acre.) To irrigate the 326,400 dunums of other agricultural land notionally available to Palestinians in Area C would require some 189 MCM of water per year. Current Palestinian allocations under the Oslo Accords are 138.5 MCM, or 20 percent of the estimated availability—a share to be revisited at Final Status negotiations. Irrigating this unexploited area as well as accessing additional range and forest land could deliver an additional USD 704 million in value added to the Palestinian economy—equivalent to 7 percent of 2011 GDP.

The Dead Sea abounds in valuable *minerals*, principally large deposits of potash and bromine. Israel and Jordan together derive some USD 4.2 billion in annual sales of these products, and account for 6 percent of the world's supply of potash and fully 73 percent of global bromine output. Demand for both these products is projected to remain strong, with the Dead Sea a cheap and easily exploited source. There is no reason to suppose that Palestinian investors along with prospective international partners would not be able to reap the benefits of this market, provided they were able to access the resource. Taking as a benchmark the average value added by these industries to the Jordanian and the Israeli economies, the Palestinian economy could derive up to USD 918 million per annum—equal to 9 percent of 2011 GDP, almost equivalent to the size of the entire Palestinian manufacturing sector.

Area C is also rich in stone, with estimated deposits of some 5,000 acres of quarryable land. Palestinian stone mining and quarrying is already Palestinian territories' largest export industry, based on the famous Jerusalem Gold Stone. However, this is a struggling industry, due to Israeli refusal to permit opening new quarries or to renew permits for most existing quarries in Area C. If these restrictions were lifted, the Bank report estimates that the industry could double in size, increasing value added by some USD 241 million—and adding 2 percent to 2011 Palestinian GDP.

The *construction* industry is in acute need of additional land to expand housing and make it more affordable. Areas A and B are already very densely populated and built up. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) analysis suggests that less than 1 percent of the land in Area C is currently available to Palestinians for construction; permit data also show that it is almost impossible for Palestinian to obtain permission to build in Area C. Less than 6 percent of all Palestinian requests made between 2000 and 2007 secured approval—while Israelis routinely get permits. This situation applies not only to housing but also to public economic infrastructure (roads, water reservoirs, waste treatment plants) and industrial plant, and to the access roads and utility lines needed to connect Areas A and B across Area C. These factors have substantially suppressed growth in the construction sector and have led housing prices in the West Bank to increase over the past two decades by about a fourth above what would otherwise be expected. Lifting the tight restrictions on the construction of residential and commercial buildings alone (excluding infrastructure projects) could increase West Bank construction sector value added by some USD 239 million per annum—or 2 percent of 2011 Palestinian GDP.

Area C has major global *tourism* potential, but for Palestinians this remains largely unexploited, mostly due to restrictions on access and investment, in particular around the Dead Sea. Palestinian Dead Sea tourism development was envisaged in the Interim Agreement, but has not yet emerged. Israeli settlement enterprises, on the other hand, have expanded tourism and other activities in the area. If current restrictions are lifted and investment climate in the West Bank improves, it is reasonable to assume that Palestinian investors would be able to create a Dead Sea hotel industry equivalent to Israel's, producing value added of some USD 126 million per annum—or 1 percent of 2011 Palestinian GDP. Investments to develop other attractive tourism locations in Area C could generate substantial additional revenues.

The development of the Palestinian *telecommunications* sector is constrained by Area C restrictions that prevent the construction of towers for mobile service and have impeded the laying of landlines and asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) cable. Israeli authorities have granted the two Palestinian mobile operators to only limited 2G frequencies in West Bank Palestinian area, and no access to the 3G spectrum. By contrast, Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem almost all have 3G or 4G.¹⁰¹ Importation of equipment has also been difficult. As a result, Palestinian telecommunications costs are high, and coverage and service quality are poor. The 3G restrictions in particular threaten the industry's viability, particularly since Israeli settlers are allowed to develop their competing infrastructure in Area C. The World Bank report estimates that removing today's restrictions on the internet would improve the viability of this Palestinian industry and would add some USD 48 million in value to the sector—equal to 0.5 percent of Palestinian 2011 GDP.

Indirect Benefits

Alleviating the constraints on the five sectors mentioned above would have sizeable effects on the demand for output in other sectors. Data on inter-sectoral linkages, produced recently by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, imply an overall multiplier effect of at least 1.5. In other words, allowing Palestinian agriculture or tourism to increase by \$1 million would increase demand and output in other sectors by at least an additional \$0.5 million. Applying this demand-side multiplier, the potential value added from alleviating today's restrictions on access to, and activity and production in Area C is likely to amount to some USD 3.4 billion—or 35 percent of Palestinian GDP in 2011. Dynamic effects would surely be even more.

Other indirect benefits from the supply-side effects of improved physical and institutional infrastructure are less easily calculated, but would also be substantial. All Palestinian industries depend on the quality of transportation, electricity, water, and telecommunications infrastructure. Transportation infrastructure is particularly problematic as Palestinian use of roads in Area C is highly restricted, and travel times to get around the artificial obstructions is often hours longer than the previous and traditional routes. The Palestinian Authority has not been allowed to develop roads, airports, or railways in or through Area C. Restrictions in Area C have impeded the development of "soft" institutional infrastructure such as banking services, which are hamstrung by the inability to open and service branches, and the inability in practice to use land in Area C as collateral. These impediments create significant uncertainty and reduce the expected returns on potential investments.

Allowing increased potential output for the private sector would dramatically improve the PA's fiscal position, making it less dependent on international donors. Even without improvements in the efficiency of tax collection, at the current rate of tax/GDP of 20 percent, a USD 3.4 billion increase in GDP could bring additional tax revenues of about USD 700 million.

Annex C: Work of the Study Team

The study team appointed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to fulfill the General Assembly's request for researching the report comprised the following volunteers, all members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

The Reverend Mark Douglas PhD, Professor of Christian Ethics, Columbia Seminary;
Mr. Samuel Jones, Executive Director, Heartland Initiative (former mission volunteer);

08 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

Leila Richards MD, with experience in crisis medicine service in Gaza, Iraq, and Lebanon;
Steven Webb PhD, economist and economic historian, formerly with World Bank, liaison member to the Advisory Committee;
Douglas Tilton PhD, a political scientist serving with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, contributed insights on nonviolent social change from his long experience in Southern Africa;
The Reverend Beverly Brewster Esq. was a volunteer advisor on human rights issues;
The Reverend Christian Iosso PhD, Coordinator of ACSWP, provided staff services.

The study team met three times, with advance orientation in New York City in January 2015, to observe the new UN Security Council's first session on the Middle East. The team was hosted at the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations and met with

The Reverend Mark Koenig, Coordinator, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN);
Mr. Ryan Smith, Presbyterian Representative at the United Nations, also of PMUN;
David Wildman, PhD, United Methodist Church;
The Reverend Douglas Hostetter, Director, Mennonite Central Committee UN Office;
Mr. Jordan Street, UN Representative for the NY Society of Friends;
Mssrs Richard Wright and Yasmin Reitzig of the UN Relief and Works Agency (which serves Palestinian refugees and their descendants from the wars of 1948 and 1967);
Mr. Brad Parker, Associate Director, Defense of Children International—Palestine.

The group was also briefed by several members of the UN Security Council staff: Dr. Darco Mocibob and Mssrs. Stefan Vazzelle; James Sutterlin; Jusef Jai.

The study team met in Cambridge, Mass., in March 2015, with the following scholars:

Sara Roy PhD, Harvard, Center for Middle Eastern Studies;
Michael Hudson PhD, Middle East Initiative/Georgetown University;
Herbert Kelman PhD, Harvard, Social Ethics, consultant to Oslo process;
Ms. Ruth Alan, Senior Program Officer, Mercy Corps (international humanitarian NGO);
Susan Akram PhD, Boston University, expert in human rights law.

The study team visited Israel–Palestine August 17–25, 2015, (not able to visit Gaza).

Consulting with the Reverend Katherine Taber, Presbyterian co-worker:

Mr. Samuel Bahour, Managing Partner, Applied Information Management;
Dr. Khalil Shiha, General Director, PARC, Agricultural Development Association;
Dr. Abdelrahman Alamarah (Tamimi), Director General, Palestinian Hydrology Group;
Diana Buttu, Esq. Human Rights Attorney;
Danny Seidemann, Esq. Director, Terrestrial Jerusalem; Expert on two state options;
Mr. Nathan Stock, Director, Israel-Palestine Field Office, The Carter Center;
Mr. Oded Ravivi, Mayor of Efrat (Ephrata) Settlement;
Mr. Oded Diner, International Relations Director, B'Tselem;
Ms. Salwa Duaybis, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling;
Gerard Horton, Esq. Military Court Watch;
Dr. Muhannad Beidas, UNRWA, field chief of Education Programme;
Dr. Catherine Cook, Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN;
Ms. Mira Rizek, National General Secretary, National YWCA of Palestine;
Dr. Munther Isaac, Bethlehem Bible College, Christ at the Checkpoint coordinator;
Grass Roots Jerusalem tours; Aida Refugee Camp tour;
Lubnah Shomali, Esq. Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights;
Mr. Daoud Nasser, Tent of Nations farm/conference center for reconciliation;
Miri Eisin, Col. (ret), Israeli Defense Forces/ Engaging in Discourse;
Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al Quds University, Al Aqsa Mosque;
Rabbi Dr. David Rosen, Founder, Rabbis for Human Rights;
Mr. Noam Rabinovich, GISHA—Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement;
Mr. Omar Barghouti, Co-founder, Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions organization;
Mr. Rafat Sub Laban, Advocacy Coordinator, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association.

In Washington, D.C., September 10–11, 2015, the team met with:

Ms. Catherine Gordon, Associate for International Affairs, Office of Public Witness;

08 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES

Mr. Kevin Rachlin, Deputy Chief of Staff, J-Street;
Mr. Mike Merryman-Lotze, Palestine-Israel Program Director, American Friends Service Committee;
Ms. Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, Director, Mennonite Central Committee;
Mr. James Winkler, President and General Secretary, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

An open hearing was held on the two-state question under the important sponsorship of the Presbytery of National Capital and with the gracious hosting of National Presbyterian Church. Co-chairs of ACSWP, Drs. Ray Roberts and Christine Darden, attended. Those speaking and submitting statements:

Ms. Emily Brewer, Co-Director, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (later submitting statement);
The Reverend Walter Owensby, ret. Office of Public Witness staff, Washington, D.C.;
The Reverend Jan Armstrong, Executive Presbyter, Santa Barbara;
The Reverend John Wimberly, PhD, Presbyterians For Middle East Peace, former pastor, Western Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C.
Mr. Steve France, Sabeel North America, shared presentation with next two:
Dr. Carol Burnett, Sabeel North America, Catholic University of America;
Mr. Paul Verduin, Washington Alliance for Middle East Peace & Sabeel.
The Reverend Melinda Thompson, Esq. Israel-Palestine Mission Network, Washington area;
The Honorable David Mack, Ambassador, ret. & member of National Presbyterian;
The Reverend Dr. Roy Howard, Pastor, St. Mark's Presbyterian, N. Bethesda, MD;
The Reverend Todd Stavrakos, Pastor, Gladwyne Presbyterian, Lower Merion, PA and leader of Interfaith Partners for Peace, a Rabbi-Pastor Dialogue group;
Mr. Alan Wisdom, Institute for Religion and Democracy & member of Georgetown Presbyterian;
The Reverend Mark Boyd, Pastor, Park Presbyterian, Beaver, Pa.;
Mr. Paul Lewis, member, Bradley Hills Presbyterian;
Ms. Kaliani Grad-Kaimal, J-Street U. at George Washington University;
Ms. Elyssa Feder, Sr. Southeast Campus Organizer, Director of J-Street U Israel Programs;
Ms. Sara Williams, PhD candidate, Emory University, Atlanta.

In addition to those making presentations, the study team received detailed correspondence from: the Reverend John Lindner, the Reverend Stephen H. Wilkins, and the Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer, and shorter correspondence from Mssrs. Mike Duffy, Kae Paterson, John Newton Hickox, Ms. Sue Dravis, Dr. John A Wallace, and the Reverend John A. Johnson.

Endnotes

1. *The Middle East Conflict: A Presbyterian Report (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1974, Part I, p. 584; cf. Minutes, 1984, Part I, p. 338; see also pp. 82, 335–39, “Resolution on the Middle East”), p. 21. The passage is quoted in Paul Hopkins, American Presbyterians and the Middle East Conflict, American Presbyterians (Journal of Presbyterian History), 68:3 (Fall, 1990), pp. 159–160. That section continues: “... provision should be made for just compensation or restoration of Palestinian property and land, and the satisfactory settlement of all Palestinian refugees, including return where feasible and desired. The Palestinian people should be full participants in negotiations concerning any of these matters through representatives of their own choosing.”*
2. *Minutes, UPCUSA, 1982, Part I, p. 307; also quoted in Hopkins, op. cit.*
3. Statements that the Palestinians do not recognize Israel are thus inaccurate, though recent efforts to have Israel recognized as a “Jewish state” appear to add an exclusivism to Israel not present in its founding documents or negotiations prior to the current Netanyahu administration.
4. The Middle East Study Team discussed the contest of traumas with Avram Burg, former Speaker of the Knesset, who has written on this in books such as, *The Holocaust Is Over, We Must Rise from Its Ashes* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2008). A more recent discussion of the overcoming of trauma by taking “the psychological position of the moral third,” capable of acknowledging the pain of the other and one’s own capacity for evil as well as victimhood, can be found in Jessica Benjamin’s “Acknowledging the Other’s Suffering,” *Tikkun magazine*, 30:3, Summer 2015, pp. 15–16, 60–62. The role of this third position resembles the place of the Spirit in confession, forgiveness, and freedom from anxiety.
5. For example, Thomas Friedman’s Op Ed in the *NYTimes*, ending his former advocacy for the two-state solution. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/10/opinion/the-many-mideast-solutions.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&_r=1. Even as we quote several leaders below, Juan Cole’s analysis of Friedman’s arguments is a caution against personalizing the causes of the situation: “an Israel determined to permanently occupy all the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea ...” <http://www.juancole.com/2016/02/israel-friedman-of-the-ny-times-surrenders-to-one-state-solution-sees-me-apocalypse.html>.
6. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/10/opinion/the-many-mideast-solutions.html?emc=eta1>.
7. See the transcript from President Obama’s March 24, 2015, press conference after the end of his second attempt at a peace process (first with George Mitchell, then with John Kerry): <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/217375/barack-obama-says-two-state-solution-unlikely-after/>.

“We’ll continue to engage the Israeli government and the Palestinians and ask them where they’re interested in going and how they see this issue being resolved. But what we can’t do is pretend that there’s a possibility of something that’s not there. And we can’t continue to premise our public diplomacy based on something that everybody knows is not going to happen at least in the next several years. That is something that we have to—for the sake of our own credibility that we have to be honest about.”

Prime Minister Netanyahu has at times committed to a very limited Palestinian entity, but more frequently he has stated “no concessions” “no withdrawals.” For instance, from March 14, 2015: “I think that anyone who is going to establish a Palestinian state today and evacuate lands is giving attack ground to the radical Islam against the state of Israel,” he said. “This is the actual reality that has formed here in recent years. Anyone who ignores this is sticking his head in the sand.” Asked if that meant a Palestinian state would not be established if he were prime minister, Mr. Netanyahu said, “Indeed.” (*The New York Times* previously translated this as “correct”; the words are very similar in Hebrew.) <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/20/world/middleeast/netanyahu-two-state-solution.html> An October reiteration of his opposition: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/israel-benjamin-netanyahu-reject-palestinian-state_us_562e5f1be4b0c66bae58b878.

For President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, the Oslo agreement is no longer binding as Palestinians have hit a wall when it comes to Israeli negotiation: “As long as Israel refuses to cease settlement activities and to the release of the fourth group of Palestinian prisoners in accordance with our agreements, they leave us no choice but to insist that we will not remain the only ones committed to the implementation of these agreements, while Israel continuously violates them,” Abbas said. “We therefore declare that we cannot continue to be bound by these agreements and that Israel must assume all of its responsibilities as an occupying power.” Hence his efforts at establishing Palestinian statehood and international recognition through the United Nations, despite past vetoes on the Security Council by the United States <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/30/mahmoud-abbas-palestinians-no-longer-bound-by-oslo-accord-with-israel>.

8. The study team recognizes a generic preference for a two-state solution but differs over the extent to which such a solution remains a political possibility. As such, this report builds on values analysis to offer a direction forward that is neither oriented around nor a repudiation of a two-state solution. Importantly, it recognizes that the PC(USA) should never conflate the pursuit of peace and justice with the pursuit of any particular political structure, since no political structure short of the Kingdom of God warrants its full affirmation. All political solutions are grounded in history and entail compromises; values analysis shows the consequences of history, the costs of compromises, and gives special attention to who has paid and continues to pay costs. The report’s emphasis on values in the context of contemporary Israel-Palestine is an attempt to name that history, describe those costs, and offer a way forward in spite of the study team’s differences and in alignment with the denomination’s commitment to work for the Kingdom of God.

9. *The New York Times*’ editorial, “The Fading Two-State Solution,” notes that “Israel is moving quickly to establish facts on the ground that preclude a Palestinian state,” and quotes a U.S. official: “It is starting to look like a de facto annexation” (*NYT*, p. A16, January 23, 2016). Another major voice supportive of Israel, *The New Yorker* magazine, has carried a series of pessimistic reports by its editor, David Remnick, including, “The One-State Reality,” <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/11/17/one-state-reality>. The study team visited with the mayor of a settlement whose information packet included a nine-step plan for total incorporation of Palestine into Israel; the statement quoted (from a news article) is step five: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/03/21/settlers-9-step-plan-to-kill-the-two-state-solution.html>.

10. This frequently quoted aphorism is from the Reinhold Niebuhr, whose political ethics were largely in the Reformed tradition.

11. See http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/belhar.pdf. The quote defining “true reconciliation” comes from the Supporting Letter, para. 3, that goes with the document.

12. Seidemann, Daniel “The Myth of a United Jerusalem” *The Atlantic*, Nov. 2011: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/11/the-myth-of-united-jerusalem/249239/>. Seidemann warns: “Cumulatively, Israeli policies in East Jerusalem today threaten to transform the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a bitter national conflict that can be resolved by means of territorial compromise, into the potential for a bloody, unsolvable religious war. This threat derives from Israel’s dogged pursuit of the settlers’ vision of an exclusionary Jewish Jerusalem—displacing Palestinians in targeted areas, politicizing archeology, handing over of the most sensitive cultural, historical, and religious sites to extreme settler organizations, and promoting a narrative that East Jerusalem is exclusively or predominantly Jewish, while marginalizing the other national and religious equities in the city. In the process, Israel is alienating even its staunchest allies and thus undermining its own claims in the city. It is also putting itself on a collision course with the forces of moderation in the Muslim and Christian worlds, who sense, with reason, that their equities are being marginalized in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is fast becoming the arena where religious fundamentalists—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim; domestic and international—play out their apocalyptic fantasies.” The Israeli Committee on Home Demolitions substantiates Seidemann’s reportage with its analyses of Jerusalem restrictions on family unification, housing permits, etc., such as a master plan based on the goal of “preserving a firm Jewish majority in the city”: <http://icahd.org/2012/07/24/discrimination-in-the-new-master-plan-of-jerusalem/>. Not all of this process of emphasizing Jewish presence over others is in Jerusalem, and nor is it linked to settlers. The State Department’s annual religious liberty review notes the privileging of Jewish holy sites, for example. The 2009 Report stated: “At the end of 2008, there were 137 designated holy sites, all of which were Jewish” <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2009/127349.htm>. For a report on the redesign in Jerusalem: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/world/middleeast/10jerusalem.html?_r=1.

13. In the West Bank [not East Jerusalem] most Palestinians have PA citizenship, although it does them little good in the face of Israeli military actions.

14. Breaking the Silence is the veterans group that describes the methods of ensuring security for settlements by disrupting the security of Palestinians: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/24/world/middleeast/israeli-veterans-criticism-of-west-bank-occupation-incites-furor.html>. “Last year, the group published a report containing testimonies from more than sixty Israeli officers and soldiers who served during the war in Gaza in 2014. It contended that the guiding military principle was one of “minimum risk to our forces, even at the cost of harming innocent civilians.” It added that caused “massive and unprecedented harm to the population and the civilian infrastructure” in Gaza.

15. For the Rand study, The Costs of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, see: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR740-1.html.

16. Quoted in a review of Max Blumenthal’s *The 51 Day War*: <http://americamagazine.org/issue/culture/inevitable-violence>.

17. The Palestinian people have, by weight of customary international law, expressed in many UN resolutions, the right to militarily resist their occupation and subjugation by Israel as long as this resistance is properly conducted within the confines of international humanitarian law. See Annex A.
18. There are analogies between the nonthreatening economic development strategies of the Palestinian Authority and those of Booker T. Washington in the post-Reconstruction U.S. South. In the U.S. case, W.E.B. DuBois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began to employ legal and political strategies that brought more rights to African Americans as a whole, though many remained in poverty. Because African Americans in the NAACP had citizenship and could appeal to the federal courts, they had tools not available to Hamas and other Palestinians, who have tried to defend themselves by force. Thus Palestinian political and civil organizations have been put in situation where nonviolence has meant further victimization while fighting back, a la Hamas, has meant even more thorough destruction. For the contrast between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois approaches, see Gary Dorrien, *The New Abolition: WEB Du Bois and the Black Social Gospel* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2015).
19. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dougbandow/2016/02/16/u-s-should-stop-subsidizing-bad-israeli-economic-and-occupation-policies/#53e94375463d>
20. The invitation to Prime Minister Netanyahu was developed by the Israeli ambassador and the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives and reflected an unprecedented intrusion into U.S. politics by a foreign head of state, although the lines between Israeli and U.S. citizenship, political, and financial activity are often blurred. Since the Iran agreement, Netanyahu has argued the U.S. should provide more military aid to Israel as it was endangered, although most observers see the reverse as true. As this document is finalized, U.S. Ambassador Daniel Shapiro has criticized the Israeli government: “Too much vigilantism goes unchecked, and at times there seems to be two standards of adherence to the rule of law, one for Israelis, and another for Palestinians. ... Hovering over all these questions is the larger one about Israel’s political strategy vis-a-vis its conflict with the Palestinians.” Scholar Juan Cole, commenting on the sometimes insulting exchanges that followed, noted, “Then yesterday [Jan. 21, 2016] the Netanyahu government made Shapiro’s point for him by announcing that it will steal 350 acres of Palestinian land near Jericho in the Jordan Valley.” See: <http://www.juancole.com/2016/01/netanyahu-demands-more-billions-from-us-after-iran-deal-insults-us-ambassador-steals-more-land.html>. Along with the taking of Palestinian land, Israel demolished six structures built by the European Union as part of their aid to the Palestinian economy: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-idUSKCN0UZ11P>.
21. This statement comes near the end of the rationale leading into the recommendation section of *Breaking Down the Walls*.
22. *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 944.
23. *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 1223.
24. Using torture is a grave charge, yet publicly defended by some, hence multiple sources: The use of torture in interrogations of Palestinians: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.645587>. The use of torture generally: <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/TERRA-INCOGNITA-On-torture-Israels-failed-policy-438229>. Torture and children: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-government-tortures-children-by-keeping-them-in-cages-human-rights-group-says-9032826.html>. Also: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinian-israel-children-idUSBRE95J0FR20130620>. The practice of torture by the Bush Administration and Presbyterian opposition to torture: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/resolution-against-torture/>.
25. The Kairos Palestine document has led to support groups in other countries as well as among the Christian churches of Israel-Palestine: <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/content/kairos-document>.
26. See <http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/index.php/en/>. Through biennial conferences sponsored by Bethlehem Bible College, “The mission of ‘Christ at the Checkpoint’ is to challenge Evangelicals to take responsibility to help resolve the conflicts in Israel/Palestine by engaging with the teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God.” This group opposes Christian Zionism, based on texts such as Galatians 3:29, “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”
27. Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010.
28. This section is informed by the General Assembly resolution: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/resolution-confronting-christian-zionism/>. For further reading on Christian Zionism, we recommend: Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism*. Oxford: One World Pub., 2006.
- Gunner, Göran and Robert O. Smith, eds. *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.
- Prior, Michael. *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry*. London: Routledge, 1999: pp.103–55.
- Spector, Stephen. *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
29. *UN Declaration of Human Rights*, Preamble.
30. Resolution of the 221st General Assembly (2014), *Equal Rights for All Inhabitants of Israel and Palestine*, <http://pcbiz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=4793>; see also UDHR, Articles 7-13, 17-18, 22.
31. The United States and Israel have signed both treaties, but the United States has not yet ratified the ICESC.
32. ICCPR, Part One, Article 1, ICESC, Part One, Article 1
33. Aryeh Neier, *The International Human Rights Movement, A History*, 2012, Princeton Univ. Press, p. 64.
34. The U.S. does not recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capitol and maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv.
35. Jodi Rudoren and Jeremy Ashkenas, “Netanyahu and the Settlements,” *New York Times*, March 12, 2015.
36. Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (“Oslo Accords”), September 13, 1993.

37. *Ibid.* http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist%20Information/Discover%20Israel/Documents/Map%20Of%20Israel.pdf
38. Some incursions have targeted specific Hamas military assets aimed at people and property in Israel. Most have been to punish Palestinians collectively for military or non-military actions that the Israeli government disapproved. Some have been to demonstrate Israeli authority and ‘mow the lawn’—an Israeli expression for keeping Palestinians in fear and degrading their capacity and will to thrive and resist Israeli occupation, which international law gives them the right to do.
39. Max Weber 1919. *Politics as a Vocation*. Munich.
40. A corollary of the right of self-determination is the right of peoples to “freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources” and not to be “deprived of [their] own means of subsistence,” as proclaimed in Article 1 of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In accordance with this principle, the UN General Assembly has reaffirmed “the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people ... over their natural resources, including land, water and energy resources” (UNGA, 2012: para. 1).
41. North, Wallis, and Weingast 2010. *Violence and Social Orders*. Cambridge University Press.
42. Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980; pp. 10–12, 23.
43. Walter Brueggemann, *Chosen? Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. pp. 37–39.
44. Reuters, “Declining Palestinian Christian population fears its churches are burning into museums,” <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/declining-palestinian-christian-population-fears-its-churches-are-turning-into-museums-1.317689>.
45. U.S. State Department Report on International Religious Freedom: Israel and the Occupied Territories, 2013.
46. Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (“Oslo Accords”), September 13, 1993, Article V.
47. The world community has repudiated Israel’s 1980 annexation of Jerusalem through its Basic Law of Jerusalem. UN Security Council Resolution 478 of August 1980.
48. Many do not apply for it, because they (like the U.S. and most other nations] do not recognize the Israeli annexation as legitimate.
49. “Statistics on Revocation of Residency in East Jerusalem”. 27 May 2015. B’Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Source: http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation_statistics. Accessed on Friday 28 August 2015.
- “Forced Displacement: Overview.” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Occupied Palestinian Territory. Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010137>. Accessed on Friday 28 August 2015.
50. “Statistics on Demolition of Houses Built Without Permits in East Jerusalem.” 9 July 2015. B’Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. http://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building/east_jerusalem_statistics. Accessed 28 August 2015.
51. According to international law, refugees have the right to return to their homes of origin, receive real property restitution, and compensation for losses and damages. The UN General Assembly set forth the framework for resolving the Palestinian refugee case in UN Resolution 194 (III), which calls for repatriation for those refugees “wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors,” or compensation for those choosing not to return. On November 22, 1974, UN Resolution 3236 made the right of return an “inalienable right.”
52. Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>. Accessed 19 September 2015.
53. Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights. *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, vol. VII, 2013–15*. p. 31. <http://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/badil-new/publications/survey/Survey2013-2015-en.pdf>.
54. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has authority to register Palestinian refugees, and it offers what social services it can to them. It is increasingly underfunded and has an extra budget crisis in 2015 due to the increased numbers and needs of registered refugees, especially in Syria and Gaza. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) has not been active or advocated for Palestinian rights for years.
55. Source: the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem. <http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics>. Accessed 28 August 2015.
56. The study team visited the Tent of Nations farm. The sign at the entrance reads, “We Refuse to Be Enemies.” See BBC coverage at <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-27883685?SThisFB%3FSThisFB>.
57. “Protection of Civilians: Reporting Period: 18–24 August 2015.” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Occupied Palestinian Territory. Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/poc18august-24august.aspx>. Accessed 28 August 2015.
- In addition, the study team observed a demonstration on behalf of a hunger-striking lawyer who Israeli authorities were holding in indefinite long-term detention without charges, until his health had been permanently damaged.
58. See “Children in Israeli Military Detention” http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf.
59. Military Court Watch, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Israel.
60. Prior to this war, the 1947 UN General Assembly resolution 181, from which Israel derives its legitimacy, provided 45 percent of historical Palestine for the Palestinian state and 1 percent for Jerusalem and Bethlehem to be under international jurisdiction.
61. “Forced Displacement: Overview.” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Occupied Palestinian Territory. Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010137>. Accessed on Friday 28 August 2015.

62. <http://www.thelancet.com/health-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-2011>. See also <http://visualizingpalestine.org/visuals/checkpoint-births>.
63. http://www.btselem.org/water/discrimination_in_water_supply.
64. Convention (IV), concerning the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949.
65. “Discriminatory Water Supply”, B’Tselem: The Israeli Information Center on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 10 March 2014. Source: http://www.btselem.org/water/discrimination_in_water_supply. Accessed on 28 August 2015.
66. “The Water, Sanitation and Energy Crisis in Gaza Humanitarian, Environmental and Geopolitical Implications with Recommendations for Immediate Measures.” August 11, 2014. Dr. Oded Eran, Institute for National Security Studies; Gidon Bromberg, Michal Milner, EcoPeaceMiddle East. Source: [http://foeme.org/uploads/14366909641~%5E\\$%5E~EcoPeace-INSS_Gaza_Report_Final.pdf](http://foeme.org/uploads/14366909641~%5E$%5E~EcoPeace-INSS_Gaza_Report_Final.pdf). Accessed on 28 August 2015.
67. David Wesley, an anthropologist from Tel Aviv University, has analyzed the systematic (although unofficial and usually not admitted) discrimination of Israeli authorities to favor industrial development by Jewish enterprises, at the expense of Palestinian firms and farms even within Israel. <https://books.google.com/books?id=fReNyVETItAC&pg=PA257&lpg=PA257&dq=david+a+wesley+tel+aviv+university&source=bl&ots=2YUWsqedt2&sig=F8oQatcNFTikY6FpJIVfvE5Qb80&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiTpt7k9ITLAhWK2SYKHdcOBi0Q6AEIKzAD#v=onepage&q=david%20a%20wesley%20tel%20aviv%20university&f=false>.
68. Per capita gross national income (GNI) in West Bank Gaza was about US\$ 5,000 (PPP, current dollars), compared with \$32,830 in Israel. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD>; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics data indicate that per capita GNI in the West Bank is about 134 percent of the national average, but only 51 percent in Gaza. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/Rainbow/Documents/e-napcapitacon-1994-2014.htm>.
69. See the history section: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_the_Palestinian_territories. One may question the weighting of Palestinian Authority corruption in comparison to labor market shutdowns, but Wiki entries on controverted points involve fact-checking contests.
70. World Bank. 2014. *Seeing Is Believing: Poverty in the Palestinian Territories*. Washington, D.C. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17836>.
71. The number of Palestinians crossing the Green line to work in Israel has been much higher but Israel now brings in laborers from Thailand and otherwise tried to reduce any dependence on Palestinian labor. For the use of Thai guest workers in most of the Kibbutzim remaining: <http://forward.com/news/israel/206371/foreign-workers-now-teach-jews-how-to-farm-on-th/>. For the Chinese role and exploitation: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/05/world/middleeast/05workers.html?_r=0. For a critical overall assessment, see <http://www.counterpunch.org/2009/08/20/the-strategy-behind-israel-s-migrant-labor-policies/>.
72. <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/12/palestinian-laborers-checkpoints>.
73. During the study team’s visit, Israel uprooted 150 olive trees from Cremisan Monastery—some were 1,500 years old. This is an area where the wall cuts one of the remaining Christian communities and areas apart, and will make it hard for the Christian farmers (and wine-makers) to tend their lands, which will likely be called, “abandoned,” and taken over by settlements on the other side of the wall.
74. Fourth Geneva Convention.
75. Israeli settlements in occupied West Bank are moving ahead aggressively with economic exploitation of the Dead Sea, along the shore in Area C of OPT.
76. See details in Annex B. This pertains only to the parts of Area C not currently occupied by the settlements. Orhan Niksic, Nur Nassere Eddin, and Massimiliano Cali. *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*. World Bank Studies. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0193-8>.
77. ILO, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*. May 2015.
78. In biblical times, Gaza was one of the five Philistine city-states that remained unconquered by the Israelites. According to the book of Judges, it was in Gaza that the blinded Samson pulled down the pillars of the Temple of Dagon.
79. The Christian presence in Gaza dates back to the fifth century, when Bishop Porphyry was granted permission from the Byzantine Emperor to build a church in Gaza. The St. Porphyrius church belongs to the Greek Orthodox community and is still in use today. Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City has served Gaza’s Palestinians for more than a century. Established as a clinic by the Church Missionary Society during the Ottoman era, it is now administered by the Anglican diocese of Jerusalem.
80. *Haaretz.com*: Peter Beinart, “Gaza myths and facts: what American Jewish leaders won’t tell you.”
81. Partially treated sewage is pumped directly into the sea. Nearly one third of Gaza households are not connected to a sewage network, relying instead on open cesspits. Waterborne diseases from contaminated water are a particular risk to children under the age of five, causing repeated episodes of diarrheal disease that result in stunted growth and chronic malnutrition. This problem was noted as early as 2002 in a study carried out by Johns Hopkins University and al Quds University for CARE International. In a 2012 study the World Health Organization reported that approximately half of all children under the age of two and 39 percent of pregnant women receiving antenatal care in Gaza suffered from iron-deficiency anemia, adding that chronic malnutrition in children under five “is not improving and may be deteriorating.”
82. Hamas is a Muslim religious and political movement that was initially given encouragement by the Israeli government as an alternative to Fatah. It was loosely linked to the Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan, but each country’s “franchise” of the Brotherhood is different.

83. UNCTAD report, July 2015, p. 10.
84. The primary use of tunnels was economic and their presence long known. Space prevents a review of the causes of the 2014 war, which was supported by many Israeli newspapers but opposed by *Haaretz*, which emphasized the repetitive nature of the attacks on Gaza and of the pattern of accusations (inherited from the previous treatment of Yasir Arafat). An example from Gideon Levy may be noted: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.607306>. Israel responds each time to criticisms that it has massively violated the laws of war, blaming Hamas for provocations and for sacrificing its own people. Whatever options Hamas may think it has, this cycle would seem to reinforce hatred and, as noted by much international press, spread that hatred especially among 1.3 billion Muslims. The U.S. typically calls for “restraint” while resupplying Israel; since these are wars of choice, presumably the U.S. is given some advance notice of when they will begin.
85. “The Gaza Cheat Sheet: Real Data on the Gaza Closure. www.gisha.org.”
86. Sarah Helm, “ISIS in Gaza.” *NY Review of Books*, January 14, 2016.
87. An UNCTAD report on assistance to the Palestinian people: ‘Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory’, 6 July 2015, concluded, “The devastation in Gaza is not only the result of the latest military operation but rooted in a prolonged occupation and blockade and the recurrent destruction of infrastructure. The Palestinian people need to secure their human right to development under international law far more than they need donor aid. ... Donor aid is important for extending a lifeline to the beleaguered people of Gaza, [but] should not be viewed as a substitute for ending the blockade and calling on Israel to fulfill its obligations under international law.” It predicted: “If the current blockade and insufficient levels of donor support persist, even with a reversion to the status quo that prevailed before the latest military operation, Gaza will become economically unviable...” pp.14–15.
88. Sara Roy 1995. *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-development*. Wash. D.C. Institute for Palestine Studies.
89. Source: B’Tselem. Names here of the incursions are those selected by government of Israel.
90. Gaza Assault: Information from the Institute for Middle-East Understanding (<http://www.imeu.org>) via IPMN web page.
91. *Our Harsh Logic: Israeli Soldiers’ Testimonies from the Occupied Territories, 2000–2010*, by Breaking the Silence.
92. Here is a popular account of promoting and partly inventing an exclusively Jewish history on the ground: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/letty-cottin-pogrebin/eyewitness-report-on-the_b_515269.html. A detailed study of settler takeover strategies in one area, Silwan, is provided here: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.683416>. An effort to describe the process and objections to its characterization: <http://www.worldlibrary.org/article/WHEBN0022033448/Judaization%20of%20Jerusalem>. A larger framework of “ethnocracy” as a framework for Israel’s political practice: <http://www.ipk-bonn.de/downloads/ethnocracy-viftachel.pdf>. An Emirates’ summary of the situation: http://www.ecssr.ac.ae/ECSSR/print/ft.jsp?lang=en&ftId=/FeatureTopic/Ibrahim_Abdel_Karim/FeatureTopic_1517.xml.
93. Estimates of Israel’s military spending vary widely, from 5.3 percent of GDP (Forbes) to around 20 percent (Haaretz) when labor costs are fully accounted.
94. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid gives the legal definitions of “apartheid”. These were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1973 and the subsequent Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as objective criteria for assessing the applicability of the term, without reference to any national context.
95. Douglass North, John Wallis, Steven Webb and Barry Weingast, ed. 2013. *In the Shadow of Violence: Politics, Economics and the Problems of Development*. N.Y.: Cambridge U. Press.
96. Recent regulations to U.S. Customs and Border Protection reiterated the requirement for accurately labeling the place or origin. http://apps.cbp.gov/csms/viewmssg.asp?Recid=21420&page=1&srch_argv=&srchtype=&btype=abi&sortby=&sby#att. The E.U. and British law also require labeling to distinguish between goods originating in Israel and those from the Occupied Territories, In 2009, the United Kingdom initiated guidance on labeling goods from West Bank settlements to facilitate boycotts of those goods.
97. See <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=3775>.
98. The Presbyterian Foundation’s Transformational Investment program has several projects in Palestine for Palestinians, including a Life Sciences and Medical Device technology incubator in Nazareth, micro-finance to help Palestinian small enterprises (especially women-owned and in agriculture), and most recently a solar-energy project in Jericho. <http://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/Ways-To-Give/Transformational-Investing/January-2015-Project-Update.aspx>.
- Debates about divestment within the denomination over the past decade have mistakenly treated divestment primarily as an economic rather than political strategy and, therefore, treated positive investment as an alternative to divestment. Both strategies can be pursued simultaneously because they are pursuing different ends: divestment attempts to bring political attention to the occupation in the hopes of ending it; investment attempts to build up the Palestinian economy.
99. Ecumenical Accompaniment Program (eappi.org) is a three-month volunteer program of the World Council of Churches, partnering with the PC(USA). Christian Peacemaker Teams (cpt.org) is a global program with short- and long-term volunteers in several places of conflict, including Hebron.
100. “Fact Sheet,” Military Court Watch. Source: http://www.militarycourtwatch.org/page.php?id=a6r85V_cpyUa4755A52Y2mp3c4y. Accessed on Friday 28 August 2015. See also *Our Harsh Logic: Israeli Soldiers’ Testimonies from the Occupied Territories, 2000–2010*, by Breaking the Silence.
101. Reuters, Jan 13, 2015.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-06 with comment.

In paragraph two, the overture states “Since 1949, the church has taken public positions on the situation, supporting Israel as a safe homeland for Jews but also calling for just treatment for Palestinians, including Palestinian refugees.” This statement of the PC(USA) and many others similar to it are reminiscent of the British Balfour Declaration of 1917: “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”¹ In this declaration, “the Palestinians were never once cited by name, whether as Palestinians, Arabs, Christians, or Muslims and were referred to only as “non-Jewish communities,” possessing solely civil and religious rights; their national and political rights were not mentioned.”²

The Balfour Declaration was issued at a time when Palestine had a large majority (over 92 percent) population of Christians and Muslims. It ushered in to what was to become a 100 year war against the Palestinian people waged by the West—Europe and the United States. At the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, Palestine was suffering from famine due to the Ottoman’s confiscation of foodstuffs for their war effort in Palestine against the British in which 65,000 people died.³ Food aid was sent to Palestine from the Western nations. However this aid was mainly to help the small Jewish population.⁴ After the British took Palestine, their colonial “passification” targeted the Arab population and British thuggery was surpassed only by the Zionist Israelis following the departure of the British Police from Palestine in 1948.⁵ “As colonists, the Israelis after 1948 adopted British imperial policies in their dealings with the Arabs—the British were, after all, experts in such things—instituting collective punishments and abusing the local Arabs, often, in the same torture centres established under the [British] Mandate government.”⁶

Israel came into being at the point of the gun and has “international recognition” as the overture states because the Truman Administration recognized Israel almost within minutes of its declaration of statehood. Israel exists and continues to exist due to the continuing U. S. and European backing. With this beginning, how can this overture refer to “legitimacy” (in paragraph 6 of the overture) or “danger of losing moral legitimacy” when referring to the State of Israel?

Moreover, (part 2 under the “Oslo Challenges”) the overtures mentions the Jewish “diaspora of the first and second centuries.” As far as we know, there has been no documented large-scale Jewish exodus from Palestine during the first and second centuries; rather it is believed that with the ascendancy of Christianity and the Byzantine control of Palestine, the majority of Palestine’s population accepted Christianity. This overture, if it is to refer to “diaspora of the first and second centuries” must document this statement with accepted historical references.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s continued statement that it supports the existence of Israel appears to be a tacit approval of the way Israel was born and is a sin against the Palestinian People. The church must confess and repent.

All this being said, the reality is that Israel exists and is a member state of the United Nations. This overture represents a positive step forward in its documentation of Israel’s human rights violations against the Palestinian people. Its orientation towards addressing the appalling human rights abuses in Palestine is positive as well as its stance on the question of whether continued support of a two-state solution is productive considering the realities of the Israeli government’s expansion of settlements within the Palestinian territories it has gained by the violence of war.

This overture, with the deletions recommended here, represents a positive move forward in the position of the church on Palestine/Israel; therefore ACREC advises approval of this overture with the indicated revisions.

Endnotes

1. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/israel_and_the_palestinians/key_documents/1682961.stm.
2. See N H Gordon, *Palestine Is Our Home*, Palestine Books, 2016 for further details.
3. Roberto Mazza. *Jerusalem: From the Ottomans to the British* (Library of Middle East History). Tauris Academic Studies, 2009.
4. Ibid.
5. Mathew Hughes (2013) *A British ‘Foreign Legion?’ The British Police in Mandate Palestine*. Middle Eastern Studies, 49:5 696–711.]
6. Sunday Times Insight Team, *Israel and Torture* (London: Sunday Times, 1977), p. 11. See also Ilan, Pappé, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians In Israel* (New Haven, Conn. Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 38–46, and H. Cohen *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948–67*. (Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press, 2010), pp.14–15, 17.)

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 08-06

Comment on Item 08-06—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions respectfully requests that the General Assembly refer Item 08-06, Recommendation 2.e.(1) to the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI).

The Board of Pensions notes that—in the section above the recommendations—the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) quotes the 217th General Assembly (2006) statement that “... financial investments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, [should] be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investments of our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal.”

If the church wishes to revisit the 2006 statement to further address corporate behaviors in the Middle East, MRTI is the proper place for those issues to be addressed.

Item 08-07

[The assembly approved Item 08-07 with amendment. See pp. 60, 62.]

On Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)—From the Presbytery of New Hope.

The Presbytery of New Hope overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Prayerfully study the call from Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel [as well as resources that oppose this BDS movement] (see “additional resources” after the Rationale section of this overture for full text of the call).

2. Engage in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue with the authors and signatories of this document, including our historic church partners in Palestine [and our interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement], in order to better understand and interpret the call for BDS that was issued in 2005.

3. Serve as a prophetic witness with a voice of humility and wisdom amidst the controversy and confusion around the BDS call.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to facilitate dialogue events regarding BDS, which would include the authors of the 2005 civil society call [and our interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement] and any interested Presbyterians.

5. Direct the Stated Clerk to distribute, for prayerful study, the text of the Palestinian call [and documentation from interfaith partners who oppose the BDS movement] to all PC(USA) congregations.

Rationale

A broad array of organizations across Palestinian civil society issued a call in July 2005 “for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights.” Endorsed by organizations within the occupied Palestinian territories, among the Palestinian refugee population, and within Israel, the call emphasizes that boycott, divestment, and sanctions are

non-violent punitive measures [that] should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

- Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
- Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
- Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Over the past decade, this call has become one of the most significant, controversial, and misunderstood human rights movements of our time.

Item 04-04 of the 221st General Assembly (2014), which called for divestment from Hewlett Packard, Caterpillar, and Motorola Solutions, explicitly states, “This action on divestment is not to be construed or represented by any organization of

the PC(USA) as divestment from the State of Israel, or an alignment with or endorsement of the global BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanctions) movement” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 261).

While upholding this position of the church, it is important to recognize that thousands of other institutions and individuals dedicated to a just peace in Israel/Palestine, including many of our ecumenical and interfaith partners, are, in fact, aligning with and endorsing the BDS movement.

In order to better comprehend the multiplicity of peacemaking efforts in the Middle East and many of our partners’ roles in these struggles, it is essential that we understand the content of the call for BDS and the context in which this movement has emerged.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) commended for study the Kairos Palestine document (“A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering”), which represents the Palestinian Christian endorsement of the BDS call. As the voice of every Christian denomination in Palestine, the Kairos document is a vitally important interpretation of and response to the call for BDS. But the Palestinian Christian community is just one of many Palestinian groups that endorsed BDS. And the Kairos document gives us only a partial picture of this broader movement. As children of God also suffering from the Israeli occupation, inequality within Israel, and exile as refugees, the rest of Palestinian civil society deserves that we at least prayerfully listen to and understand their call—even if we do not endorse it.

To further clarify the intentions and parameters of the BDS movement, there is a need for expansive interfaith and ecumenical dialogue with the authors and signatories of the original 2005 call. Indeed, we cannot fully understand the significance of the BDS call without actively engaging those to whom it is most relevant.

Finally, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long played an important role as witness to peacemaking efforts in the Middle East. In the spirit of this tradition, the church needs to serve as a prophetic voice of wisdom and humility amidst the cacophony of reactions to the BDS call. Through a prayerful study of the call for BDS and engaged dialogue with its authors, the church has the opportunity to serve as a gentle voice of love, hope, and reconciliation.

Additional Resources:

The full text of the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions can be found at <http://www.bdsmovement.net/call>.

Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel Until it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights

9 July 2005

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel’s Wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal; Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court’s decision. Thirty eight years into Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank by means of the Wall. Israel is also preparing – in the shadow of its planned redeployment from the Gaza Strip – to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel’s entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.

In light of Israel’s persistent violations of international law; and

Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel’s colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine; and

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions; and

Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression;

We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

Concurrence to Item 08-07 from the Presbytery of the Palisades

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 08-07—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of Item 08-07.

Commissioners are aware that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), like many other churches and nongovernmental organizations, has long participated in boycotts, engaged in divestment, and supported sanctions for human rights and other purposes. The General Assembly adopted careful policies on boycotts in 1979 (http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/boycotts_policy_analysis_criteria.pdf) and divestment in 1984: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/divestment-strategy-principles-and-criteria/>. In both cases, these are nonviolent strategies engaged in by citizens and groups to supplement insufficient political measures to provide justice, and in both cases there are ethical values of integrity, effectiveness, and solidarity at stake for anybody seeking to exercise responsibility through market power. Many individuals practice selective purchasing, which can be similar to boycott, in their everyday lives. And historically churches have avoided investments in alcohol, tobacco, and gambling: the “sin stocks.”

In considering this item, commissioners are thus being asked to focus on a particular movement of support for an end to the occupation of Palestine. Because political efforts at reaching a just solution have repeatedly failed (see Item 08-06), efforts of boycott, divestment, and sanctions are being adopted internationally and are being vigorously opposed by the Israeli government and its supporters. Given the actions of the 2012 and 2014 General Assemblies to approve positions of boycott and divestment with regard to the settlements and occupation (not of Israel within internationally recognized borders), it would seem that the 221st General Assembly (2014) was clarifying that it was acting independently of any specific organization.

Past General Assemblies have supported the boycott of settlement products and the divestment of key companies supporting non-peaceful pursuits in the occupied territories out of support for peace and human rights within a just “two-state” solution, which requires an end to the occupation and resolution of the refugee problem. Claims that all persons and groups taking the moral and nonviolent actions of boycott, divestment, and sanctions favor a “one state” or “the end of Israel” are not accurate.

Commissioners may ask if the resources and methods for study can be fully provided by the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. The Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries may be able to provide other resources, including social witness reports approved by past General Assemblies, and the Office of Interfaith Relations may also be able to provide assistance.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-07

Advice and Counsel on OVT 086—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 08-07.

It would seem to be eminently clear that Presbyterians should be well-informed about any issue to which they voice concurrence or lack thereof. BDS is a well-proven, nonviolent means to influence a party that has disproportionate power over another helpless and unarmed group, to change its suppression or occupation.

As this overture states: “Through a prayerful study of the call for BDS and engaged dialogue with its authors, the church has the opportunity to serve as a gentle voice of love, hope, and reconciliation.”

The ACREC strongly advises approval of Item 08-07.

Item 08-08

[The assembly answered Item 08-08 with the action taken on Item 08-07 with comment. See pp. 60, 62.]

[Comment: With the decision to prayerfully study the call from Palestinian Civil Society for boycott, divestment, and sanctions, the PC(USA) acknowledges that this may constitute a source of concern for our interfaith partners and supporters of Israel as a state. This choice for prayerful study is aimed to discern how we may be called to actively work for lasting justice and peace for people of Israel and Palestine. We seek ways to be faithful and effective by means that don't perpetuate injustice or systematic violence.]

Commissioners' Resolution. Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) shares the concerns expressed by the United Methodist Church General Conference, meeting in Portland in May 2016, and calls upon all PC(USA) church entities, including mission networks, to refrain from financial support and affiliation with the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, an umbrella organization of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) advocate groups, due to its opposition to peacemaking tactics that can create a lasting peace for all people in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Rationale

Recognized leaders of the international, secular, and organized Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement have explicitly called for the end of the Jewish State of Israel, embraced and encouraged violence by children and teenagers in the “knife intifada,” and opposed the types of reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis that the Scriptures demand of us.

The reconciling message of Jesus Christ is a far more powerful tool in the pursuit of peace than those methods utilized by the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement. In the Gospels, and in the letters of Paul, we read how Jesus sought to humanize, rather than demonize, the “other.” The gulf between the Gentiles and Jew in the first century was as divisive, if not more, than those between Israelis and Palestinians today. Jesus taught us to love our enemies, not divest from them. In Galatians, Paul writes that we are neither Gentile nor Jew, but all one in God’s eyes. It is in the context of the teachings of Jesus that this resolution is submitted, with the hope that the General Assembly can see behind the terribly divisive approaches and politics that have driven the church in recent years.

The U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation is the primary American arm of this secular BDS movement. As the United Methodist Church described it in their General Conference legislation disassociating the church from this organization: “This one-sided political coalition’s website (www.endtheoccupation.org) reveals that its agenda includes seeking ‘to isolate Israel economically, socially, and culturally,’ and promoting ‘comprehensive divestment’ against Israel, while overlooking anti-Israel aggression. ... Blaming only one side while ignoring the wrongdoing of Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran will not advance the cause of peace.”¹

The BDS movement claims to be a human rights campaign to secure justice for Palestinians, yet its stated goals make it clear that its true goal is to see the de-legitimization and end of the Jewish State. Omar Barghouti, founder of the BDS movement uses the “right of return” of Palestinian refugees to argue, “If the refugees were to return, you would not have a two-state solution, you’d have a Palestine next to a Palestine.”² The end result of which would be to “end Israel’s existence as a Jewish State.”³ Barghouti was the keynote speaker at the PC(USA) Israel Palestine Mission Network conference in 2015.⁴

The underlying goal of BDS is clear: the replacement of a Jewish State of Israel with a single Palestinian state consisting of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. While the world’s diplomatic community seeks to create two states in which the West Bank is an autonomous political entity, the BDS movement is not content with such an effort. They seek to merge the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel into one state that will be governed by the Palestinian majority. The PC(USA) has supported ending the occupation of portions of the West Bank with an important contingency: Israel remains a Jewish state and Israel’s security is ensured.⁵ Yet, the words of BDS proponents present a very different goal:

“The real aim of BDS is to bring down the state of Israel ... that should be stated as an unambiguous goal. There should not be any equivocation on the subject. Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of the state of Israel.”—As’ad AbuKahlil.⁶

“Peace or better yet, justice, can not be achieved without a total decolonization (one can say de-Zionation) of the Israeli state.”—Michael Warshawski.⁷

“I think the BDS movement will gain strength from forthrightly explaining why Israel has no right to exist,”—John Spritzler⁸

“Good riddance! The two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israel conflict is finally dead. But someone has to issue an official death certificate before the rotting corpse is given a proper burial and we can all move on and explore the more just, moral and therefore enduring alternative ... the one-state solution ... where, by definition Jews will be a minority”—Omar Barghouti.⁹

The affiliation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with such voices is a disgrace to the reconciling message of Jesus Christ. For far too long, we have permitted an anti-Israel faction¹⁰ within the church to dictate policy and to advocate for policies that would effectively call for the end of the Jewish State of Israel, and which would in no way advance peacemaking in a way that Jesus would ever support. That faction is proud of its affiliation with BDS.¹¹

The association between BDS and violent insurrection cannot be understated. In October 2015, the BDS movement issued a statement of solidarity with the “Palestinian popular resistance,” when the current wave of terrorism against Israeli civilians began.

“Whether the current phase of Israel’s intensified repression and Palestinian popular resistance will evolve into a full-fledged intifada or not, one thing is already evident—a new generation of Palestinians is marching on the footsteps of previous generations, rising up en masse against Israel’s brutal, decades-old regime of occupation, settler colonialism, and apartheid.”¹²

Yet, the “popular resistance” that BDS stands in solidarity with is not nonviolent. A terror wave of stabbings and shootings began in October 2015, in which individuals, often teenage Palestinians, have taken up weapons and randomly attacked Israelis in Jerusalem, and throughout Israel and the West Bank, and in recent months, escalated into bus bombings and mass shootings. The BDS Movement’s statement of solidarity with these actions is a call to arms in support of terrorism against innocent civilians. How unchristian could this be?

PC(USA) support for the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation is ultimately the same as solidarity with radical militants in the West Bank and Gaza. The BDS Movement’s primary investors have, according to a former U.S. Department of the Treasury terrorist analyst, been the same individuals who have funded Hamas, a US-designated terrorist organization that brutally controls the Gaza strip and is supported by Iran.¹³ Hamas’ founding charter includes as one of its primary goals the destruction of the State of Israel. The extremism of BDS is reflected in the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), which coordinates the movement globally. Mahmoud Nawajaa, the general coordinator of the BNC, has publicly supported Hamas’ armed wing—the Al Qassam Brigades—on social media.¹⁴ Its founder, Omar Barghouti, describes the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation as its “most important strategic ally and partner in the U.S.”¹⁵

Opponents of this resolution will say this is restricting the freedom of association of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members. But as a church there are certain core values that must never be sacrificed. Among those is Jesus’ teaching on the commandments:

Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mk. 12:29–31)

As Paul says in Romans, true Christians must “love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor” (Rom. 12:10). “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ No, ‘if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads’ (Rom. 12:18–20). The Gospel of Matthew cautions us to “‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?’” (Mt. 7:15–16).

While all individuals remain free to choose whatever path they want in seeking justice, as a church, we cannot, and will not stand for an approach that demonizes an entire people, and which delegitimizes the very existence of the Jewish homeland and glorifies violence against Israeli civilians. Jesus is a peacemaker, but his teaching distinguishes between those who give lip service to peace and those who really are “all in” for peace. As His followers, we have an obligation to align ourselves with those who truly work for peace for all, and not just some; with those who see the affliction of all people and not just some; with those who do not use violence and coercion; with those who promote tolerance and inclusion.

By ending our affiliation with the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ in the United Methodist Church,¹⁶ which also took steps to commit itself to peacemaking, and affirming the right and duty of all people of all nations to determine their own destiny.¹⁷ In fellowship with the United Methodist Church, we will further strengthen the message against hatred that they prophetically expressed. Together, in collaboration, we can cease to be a divisive force on Israel-Palestine issues, but instead move forward in a way that would be productive, and promote a two-state solution, respecting the rights of both peoples.

Endnotes

1. See, <http://calms2016.umc.org/Text.aspx?mode=Petition&Number=198>, End Coalition Support.
2. Omar Barghouti, speech at Ottawa University, March 4, 2009, <http://youtu.be/5oJRriJ2tY8>; reported later in the *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/01/opinion/global/zero-dark-zero.html?_r=0, and online in “The Electronic Intifada,” <http://electronicintifada.net/content/boycotts-work-interview-omar-barghouti/8263>.
3. Ibid, note 2, “electronic intifada.”
4. <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/11/3/ipmn-concludes-annual-gathering-encouraged-continuu/>.
5. The church has reaffirmed as recently as 2010, “Israel’s right to exist as a sovereign nation within secure and internationally recognized borders in accordance with United Nations resolutions,” http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/ga221-middle-east-faq.pdf; also see, <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/6/27/zionism-unsettled-no-longer-sold-pcusa-website/>
6. As’ad AbuKahlil, “Critique of Norman Finkelstein on BDS,” <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/4289>.

7. Michael Warschawski, "YES to BDS an Answer," in Audrea Lim, Ed. *The Case for Sanctions Against Israel*, (London, 2012: Verso Press).
8. John Sprinkler, "Norman Finkelstein's Criticism of BDS: Wrong, but with a grain of truth," <http://newdemocracyworld.org/palestine/bds.html>, Feb., 2013.
9. Omar Barghouti, "Relative Humanity, the Essential Obstacle to a Just Peace in Palestine," *Counterpunch*, December 12–14, 2003, at <http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/12/12/relative-humanity-the-essential-obstacle-to-a-just-peace-in-palestine/>.
10. A definition of faction is useful. James Madison, writing in *Federalist 10*, described a faction as "a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." Clinton Rossiter, Ed., *The Federalist Papers*, No. 10, p. 78 (Penguin Books: New York, 1961).
11. See the statement by IPMN Moderator, the Reverend Jeff DeYoe in 2014, "We have voted at the GA level to invest and to answer the BDS call. The semantics of whether or not we are part of a movement are irrelevant." <http://www.ecclesio.com/2014/09/after-the-hysteria-part-two-rev-dr-jeff-deyoe/>.
12. See, <https://bdsmovement.net/2015/solidarity-with-the-palestinian-popular-resistance-boycott-israel-now-13313>.
13. See, proceeding of the U.S. House of Representatives, Foreign Affairs Committee, April 19, 2016. <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20160419/104817/HHRG-114-FA18-Wstate-SchanzerJ-20160419.pdf>.
14. European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, "International Conference of Local Governments and Civil Society Organizations in Support of Palestinian Rights," December 2, 2014, at <http://www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Provprog-SEVILLE-with-names-1DEC2014.pdf>; Mahmoud Nawajaa, Facebook Post, July 14, 2014, at <https://www.facebook.com/mahmoud.nawajaa/posts/10152621485783185>. (Above the post, Nawajaa wrote "the Qassam style! Glory to resistance and eternity to martyrs.")
15. See, <http://endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=3775>.
16. Ibid, note 1.
17. United Methodist Church 2016 General Conference, "A Pathway for Peace in Palestine and Israel," <http://calms2016.umc.org/Text.aspx?mode=Petition&Number=205>.

Michael Gizzi, Presbytery of Great Rivers
 Bryan Franzen, Presbytery of San Jose

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 08-08 be disapproved.

The several assumptions governing this item are faulty and the action would serve the purposes of those defending Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza.

1. The item claims that the practices of boycott, divestment, and sanctions are all tied to violence and to a particular organization seeking the end of Israel. It does not mention the call of most Palestinian Christian leaders for boycott, divestment, and sanctions as one of the few nonviolent measures that can be taken to challenge a military occupation dating to 1967 that is illegal under international law. It is the occupation of Palestine by a government committed to a Greater Israel that is, in fact, contributing to the end of Israel as a democratic state.

2. The item claims that other measures of undefined "reconciliation" are more effective in stopping the growth of settlements, the annexation of Palestinian land, and the deprivation of Palestinian rights. Years of interfaith dialogue, polite requests, and prayerful appeals have had no effect; last General Assembly's action to divest of three key companies was responded to directly by the prime minister of Israel, noted widely in the international press, and taken as real support by Palestinians of all faiths. The effective, nonviolent action taken by the PC(USA) is being discredited in this item.

3. The specific coalition mentioned, the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, is a *coalition*, which means that not all its members have to believe the same things to unite on the several goals. Contrary to the collection of quotes in the item, the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation is explicitly nonviolent and includes a wide range of religious bodies, including Quakers and Jews committed to nonviolence. Demonizing this group by various "guilt-by-association" methods deflects consideration of the actual ongoing abuses that this group struggles against daily.

4. The United Methodist Church (UMC) delegates were swayed by a measure like this one, but it should be noted that their Board of Pensions, on policies that were not challenged, has divested of several Israeli banks and the prison and security company G4S. The UMC did not repudiate these and possible future divestment and boycott actions, and advocacy for reductions in U.S. support for the occupation. A good number of local conferences have divested over the occupation. At the same

time, the UMC General Conference also voted against inclusive ordination and denies marriage equality. It is not clear whether an action of their conference should be followed that seems inconsistent with other stronger actions.

5. The claim that all boycott, divestment, and sanctions seek the destruction of Israel, and is hence a violent practice, echoes the Israeli government's fear of isolation due to its unparalleled occupation and annexation policies. Every organization critical of the policies of an increasingly ultra-nationalist government is attacked, and millions of dollars are spent seeking to influence foreign governments and organizations to see Israel's policies favorably and to discredit Palestinian claims. Commissioners will have received a number of slickly produced documents repeating similar positions to those in Item 08-08. They are part of an effort to deny the uncomfortable truth that only nonviolent economic pressure has made the government of Israel aware of the costs of depriving other people of their dignity and rights.

6. As the commissioners putting forward this measure acknowledge, it would restrict the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s witness to block even one vehicle of cooperative action. In this case, there is little to no financial involvement, but an effort to create a rush to judgment on a group with which justice advocates in the church have been involved for years. We suspect that the settlers continuing to colonize Palestine would be delighted at this unnecessary and fear-based action.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 08-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 08-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 08-08.

Boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) are not forms of punishment; they are a way for people/groups to stop being participants in the oppression of the Palestinian people. Jesus calls us to love our neighbor, not to participate in our neighbors acts of aggression. BDS gives us tools to love the oppressor while ending our complicity with the oppression itself.

There seems to be much disagreement about what the BDS call says. There is an important resolution calling for prayerful study of the BDS call. Demonizing this call before we have even read or tried to understand it is putting the cart before the horse. Let us learn about BDS and then decide as a church what we think about it.

The Palestinian Christians have called out to us from the depths of oppression, asking us to end our complicity in their oppression. They are calling for nonviolent solidarity and we owe it to them to take the time to learn and not simply reject their nonviolent calls without trying to understand.

On the U.S. campaign:

- There are more than eighty faith-based member groups, so a full quarter of the coalition is faith-based!
- There are eighteen Jewish organizations in the coalition.
- Anyone can look at the website of the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and see that they have never, ever said or written the types of inflammatory messages in this commissioners' resolution.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 08-08

Comment on Item 08-08—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation is not an affiliated organization of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. All affiliations must go through the process of approval by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Additionally, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has not provided any financial support to the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.

Mission networks, as semiautonomous entities, are not subject to the same guidelines as agencies of the General Assembly.

Item 09-01

[In response to Item 09-01, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 62, 63.]

On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

The Presbytery of San Francisco overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to:

1. Express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God’s creation, including a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries; the elderly and children; and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) thus recognizes the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy regime in a way that is both just and compassionate. This mandate compels us to action as a denomination to divest from the fossil fuel industry even as we reduce our use of fossil fuels and shrink our carbon footprint.
2. Call upon the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to:
 - a. Immediately stop any new direct investment in fossil fuel companies.
 - b. Work to ensure that within three years, none of the Board’s or the Foundation’s directly held or commingled assets includes holdings of either equities or corporate bonds in the fossil fuel companies identified in the Carbon Underground 200 list* by
 - (1) working with current and prospective asset managers to develop and implement institutional fossil-free investment options;
 - (2) establishing within one year fossil-free investment options for fund participants;
 - (3) actively seeking out and investing in renewable and energy efficiency related securities;
 - (4) notwithstanding the above provisions, retaining or acquiring minimal sufficient investment in fossil fuel companies to participate in shareholder engagement activities;
 - (5) notwithstanding the above provisions, taking no action inconsistent with fiduciary duty or principles of sound investment, including the real and substantial risk of stranded carbon assets.
 - c. Incorporate into public financial reports regular updates detailing progress made towards these ends.
3. Call upon the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform affected fossil fuel companies and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this resolution.
4. Call upon, and provide instructional materials to assist all levels of the denomination (presbyteries, congregations, and individual members), in taking action to slow climate change, including: divestment of fossil fuel holdings; shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, and federal levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and local efforts to reduce carbon footprint consistent with the 2006 call† for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 “Power to Change” recommendations.‡

Alternate Resolution:**The 222nd General Assembly (2016)**

1. Requests the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to consider an increasingly more diversified energy sector in their overall investment portfolios, which would increase exposure to potentially profitable alternative energy companies and/or companies with an active interest in changing the consumer market’s energy demand (e.g. automobile companies producing alternatively powered vehicles).

2. ~~[Commits to remaining invested in current energy companies whose primary resource is fossil fuel for the purpose of MRTI’s (Mission Responsibility Through Investment) stockholder engagement.] [Directs MRTI to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations, including possible~~

* <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/the-carbon-underground-2014/> or current equivalent (accessed 06-17-2015)

† <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/guide-going-carbon-neutral/> (accessed 06-17-2015)

‡ http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf (accessed 06-17-2015)

selective divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.]

3. Directs the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

Rationale[§]

In 1981, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Speak Truth to Power,” the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Change,” that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God’s good creation.

For more than two decades, our church’s Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment has engaged in shareholder action with fossil fuel companies. They have done an exemplary job, but have made no impact in addressing climate change. When the best people we have make so little progress, the fault lies with an intractable industry, obsessed with profit at the expense of creation.

Our church has voiced support for legislation addressing the need to transition to a fossil-free economy, but has no power to enact it. Our church has voiced support for taxes on carbon emissions, but has no power to levy them. Our church has voiced the need for all members of our denomination to do what they can at an individual level, but individuals acting alone can do little to shift the course of an economy.

Our church invests hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil fuel companies.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. However, the power and clarity of prophetic voice is easily stained by hypocrisy and inconsistency.

Many claim that it is inconsistent to divest from fossil fuels while we are members of a society that is addicted to them. This is true. But it is equally inconsistent to attempt to rehabilitate that society while invested in its addiction.

Even as we continue working to mitigate the climate crises, we must shed the burden of our investments in climate destruction. This act will speak more loudly and more clearly than any prophetic declaration we have voiced to date.

It’s time to put our money where our mouth is. It’s time to divest from fossil fuels.

“Can we hear the grave warnings in reports like this one [Power to Change] from Christians who have carefully studied these matters? And then can we act as stewards of God’s earth, witnessing to Christ in the re-direction of our lives toward a more sustainable future? I pray that we can, and that our church’s good work can help in this great change.”—Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, April 2009

Concurrence to Item 09-01 from the Presbyteries of Blackhawk, Boston, the Cascades, Central Nebraska, Chicago, East Iowa, East Tennessee, Genesee Valley, Geneva, Greater Atlanta, Mid-Kentucky, Monmouth, Muskingum Valley, National Capital, New Castle, Newton, Northern Plains, the Pacific, the Redwoods, Sacramento, Salem, San Jose, Seattle, Southern New England, the Twin Cities Area, and Western North Carolina.

Concurrence to Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy (with Additional Rationale)

In 1981, our church made clear through the document “The Power to Speak Truth to Power” the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy. In 2008, our church made clear through the document “The Power to Change” that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God’s good creation.

Our church has voiced support for legislation encouraging a fossil-free economy, but has no power to enact it. Our church has voiced support for taxes on carbon emissions, but has no power to levy them. Our church has asked us and our institutions to cut carbon emissions, and we have, but that is not enough to shift the course of the economy or the climate.

Our church also invests hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil fuel companies. We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

[§] More overture information, included detailed rationale and footnotes on research, is available at <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/resources/overture2016>

As we work to mitigate the climate crisis, we must shed the burden of our investments in climate destruction. This act will speak more loudly and more clearly than any prophetic declaration.

This overture asks us to sever our financial ties to the fossil fuel industry as a means of social witness in the world. When we join the worldwide divestment movement, our voice will amplify the voices of others as we collectively say that it is wrong to profit by harming creation.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

This action is rooted in the foundational theological and biblical principles of our Presbyterian identity. In Genesis 1 and 2, God gave humanity our vocation as stewards of creation. In Matthew 25: 31–46, Jesus calls on us to care for our fellow human beings, including “the least of these.”

Human caused climate change is destroying creation and creating a reality in which more and more people are hungry, thirsty, homeless, and devastated by diseases, wars, and civil unrest. This destruction and the suffering it creates are directly at odds with our vocation as stewards and with what Jesus commanded.

Climate Change Rationale

Most world governments—and the PC(USA)—agree that we must hold global warming below a 2°C increase. To do so, we must stay within a carbon budget that was estimated in 2011 to be 565 gigatonnes (GT) of CO₂ equivalent. By the 222nd General Assembly (2016), we will have less than 400 GT—around ten years—left in our carbon budget. Meanwhile, fossil fuel companies have nearly 3,000 GT of CO₂ equivalent, or seven times our remaining budget, buried in fossil fuel reserves they intend to produce, and they spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year looking for more.

Denominational Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God’s creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its impacts on the “least of these,” and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Divestment is the logical next step in accomplishing these ends.

Divestment Rationale

Divestment has a long history in our denomination as part of a strategy for pursuing mission objectives of the church in the world through socially responsible management of the church’s assets.

The 196th General Assembly (1984) approved the report “Divestment Strategies: Principles and Criteria,” noting that we can use our investments as a powerful tool to bring about social change. Divestment is contemplated only after persistent shareholder efforts to persuade a company to change have failed.

For more than two decades, our church’s Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment has engaged in shareholder action with fossil fuel companies. This approach can continue to provide a seat at the table to engage with the industry, but it has had no impact in addressing climate change.

The divestment principles and criteria also recognize the importance of working with the ecumenical community and acting in solidarity with other Christian bodies. To date, Episcopalians, Unitarians, Lutherans, Anglicans, Quakers, Methodists, the United Church of Christ, some Presbyterian congregations, and the Churches of England and Scotland have committed to divestment.

Divestment also protects our financial interests. In the carbon-constrained world we are entering, the value of fossil fuel companies will decline. The International Energy Agency projects that carbon cuts great enough to stay below the 2°C threshold could leave nearly \$300 billion in fossil fuel investments stranded by 2035.

Jobs

Divestment is a prophetic witness that challenges the country to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy efficiency as quickly as possible. Job loss in the fossil fuel industry is a serious concern, especially to our brothers and sisters in states where the industry is prevalent. We as church can advocate for sustainable jobs and worker retraining. We as church can reinvest in sustainable industries. We as church must be sympathetic and caring about job losses in a single industry, but must also consider the greater good generated for wage earners, families, and all of creation by moving away from fossil fuels. In the end, job losses will be more than offset by job creation in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

More Than Symbolism

When people act singly, their impacts may be more symbolic than effective, but when many act in unison, they can bring about massive social and economic changes. Consider the powerful social changes that divestment brought about with Apartheid, tobacco and Darfur.

Some say it is hypocritical to divest from fossil fuels while remaining dependent on them. It is equally hypocritical to gamble on the continued profitability of the fossil fuel industry while urging individuals to use less fossil fuels. Divestment and conservation go hand-in-hand, and both will work together to make renewable energy and energy efficiency more widely and economically available.

Summary

As Christians, we have the privilege and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. The power and clarity of our prophetic voice must not be undermined by the hypocrisy of our investments in fossil fuel companies that amount to nearly two hundred million dollars.

Divestment declares that we are refusing to stay neutral in the fight against climate disruption. We stand united with our brothers and sisters around the world in refusing henceforth to make money from an industry that is harming all of God's creation.

A fully footnoted version of this rationale is available at: <http://www.fossilfreepcusa.org/resources/overture2016>.

Concurrence to Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of Heartland (with Additional Rationale).

In 1981, our church made clear through the document "The Power to Speak Truth to Power" the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document "The Power to Change" that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God's good creation.

Our church has voiced support for legislation encouraging a fossil-free economy, but has no power to enact it. Our church has voiced support for taxes on carbon emissions, but has no power to levy them. Our church has asked us and our institutions to cut carbon emissions, and we have, but that is not enough to shift the course of the economy or the climate.

Our church also invests hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil-fuel companies.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

As we work to mitigate the climate crisis, we must shed the burden of our investments in climate destruction. This act will speak more loudly and more clearly than any prophetic declaration.

This overture asks us to sever our financial ties to the fossil fuel industry as a means of social witness in the world. When we join the worldwide divestment movement, our voice will amplify the voices of others as we collectively say that it is wrong to profit by harming creation.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

This action is rooted in the foundational theological and biblical principles of our Presbyterian identity. In Genesis 1 and 2, God gave humanity our vocation as stewards of creation. In Matthew 25: 31–46, Jesus calls on us to care for our fellow human beings, including "the least of these."

Human-caused climate change is destroying creation and creating a reality in which more and more people are hungry, thirsty, homeless, and devastated by diseases, wars, and civil unrest. This destruction and the suffering it creates are directly at odds with our vocation as stewards and with what Jesus commanded.

Climate Change Rationale

Most world governments—and the PC(USA)—agree that we must hold global warming below a 2°C increase. To do so, we must stay within a carbon budget that was estimated in 2011 to be 565 gigatonnes (GT) of CO₂ equivalent. By the 222nd General Assembly (2016), we will have less than 400 GT—around ten years—left in our carbon budget. Meanwhile, fossil fuel companies have nearly 3,000 GT of CO₂ equivalent, or seven times our remaining budget, buried in fossil fuel reserves they intend to produce, and they spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year looking for more.

Denominational Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God's creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its impacts on the "least of these," and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the

dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Divestment is the logical next step in accomplishing these ends.

Divestment Rationale

Divestment has a long history in our denomination as part of a strategy for pursuing mission objectives of the church in the world through socially responsible management of the church's assets.

The 196th General Assembly (1984) approved the report "Divestment Strategies: Principles and Criteria," noting that we can use our investments as a powerful tool to bring about social change. Divestment is contemplated only after persistent shareholder efforts to persuade a company to change have failed.

For more than two decades, our church's Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment has engaged in shareholder action with fossil-fuel companies. This approach can continue to provide a seat at the table to engage with the industry, but it has had no impact in addressing climate change.

The divestment principles and criteria also recognize the importance of working with the ecumenical community and acting in solidarity with other Christian bodies. To date, Episcopalians, Unitarians, Lutherans, Anglicans, Quakers, Methodists, the United Church of Christ, some Presbyterian congregations, and the Churches of England and Scotland have committed to divestment.

Divestment also protects our financial interests. In the carbon-constrained world we are entering, the value of fossil-fuel companies will decline. The International Energy Agency projects that carbon cuts great enough to stay below the 2°C threshold could leave nearly \$300 billion in fossil fuel investments stranded by 2035.

Jobs

Divestment is a prophetic witness that challenges the country to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy efficiency as quickly as possible. Job loss in the fossil-fuel industry is a serious concern, especially to our brothers and sisters in states where the industry is prevalent. We as church can advocate for sustainable jobs and worker retraining. We as church can reinvest in sustainable industries. We as church must be sympathetic and caring about job losses in a single industry, but we as church must also consider the greater good generated for wage earners, families, and all of creation by moving away from fossil fuels. In the end, job losses will be more than offset by job creation in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

More Than Symbolism

When people act singly, their impacts may be more symbolic than effective, but when many act in unison, they can bring about massive social and economic changes. Consider the powerful social changes that divestment brought about with apartheid, tobacco, and Darfur.

Some say it is hypocritical to divest from fossil fuels while remaining dependent on them. It is equally hypocritical to gamble on the continued profitability of the fossil fuel industry while urging individuals to use less fossil fuels. Divestment and conservation go hand-in-hand, and both will work together to make renewable energy and energy efficiency more widely and economically available.

Summary

As Christians, we have the privilege and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. The power and clarity of our prophetic voice must not be undermined by the hypocrisy of our investments in fossil fuel companies that amount to nearly two hundred million dollars.

Divestment declares that we are refusing to stay neutral in the fight against climate disruption. We stand united with our brothers and sisters around the world in refusing henceforth to make money from an industry that is harming all of God's creation.

"Can we hear the grave warnings in reports like this one [Power to Change] from Christians who have carefully studied these matters? And then can we act as stewards of God's earth, witnessing to Christ in the re-direction of our lives toward a more sustainable future? I pray that we can, and that our church's good work can help in this great change."—Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, April 2009

Concurrence to Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of Hudson River (with Additional Rationale)

In 1981, our church made clear through the document, "The Power to Speak Truth to Power,"¹ the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document, "The Power to Change,"² that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God's good creation.

Our church has voiced support for legislation encouraging a fossil-free economy, but has no power to enact it. Our church has voiced support for taxes on carbon emissions,³ but has no power to levy them. Our church has asked us and our institutions to cut carbon emissions,⁴ and we have,⁵ but that is not enough to shift the course of the economy or the climate.⁶

Our church also invests hundreds of millions of dollars in fossil fuel companies.⁷

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

As we work to mitigate the climate crisis, we must shed the burden of our investments in climate destruction. This act will speak more loudly and more clearly than any prophetic declaration.

This overture asks us to sever our financial ties to the fossil fuel industry as a means of social witness in the world. When we join the worldwide divestment movement, our voice will amplify the voices of others as we collectively say that it is wrong to profit by harming creation.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

This action is rooted in the foundational theological and biblical principles of our Presbyterian identity. In Genesis 1 and 2, God gave humanity our vocation as stewards of creation. In Matthew 25: 31–46, Jesus calls on us to care for our fellow human beings, including “the least of these.”

Human caused climate change is destroying creation and creating a reality in which more and more people are hungry, thirsty, homeless, and devastated by diseases, wars, and civil unrest.⁸ This destruction and the suffering it creates are directly at odds with our vocation as stewards and with what Jesus commanded.

Climate Change Rationale

Most world governments⁹—and the PCUSA¹⁰—agree that we must hold global warming below a 2°C increase.¹¹ To do so, we must stay within a carbon budget that was estimated in 2011 to be 565 gigatonnes (GT) of CO₂ equivalent.¹² By the 222nd General Assembly (2018), we will have less than 400 GT—around ten years—left in our carbon budget.^{13, 14} Meanwhile, fossil fuel companies have nearly 3,000 GT¹⁵ of CO₂ equivalent, or seven times our remaining budget, buried in fossil fuel reserves they intend to produce,¹⁶ and they spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year¹⁷ looking for more.

Denominational Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God’s creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its impacts on the “least of these,” and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** 1990,¹ 1996,¹⁹ 1998²⁰, 1999²¹, 2003,²² 2006,**Error! Bookmark not defined.** 2008**Error! Bookmark not defined.**²³) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Divestment is the logical next step in accomplishing these ends.

Divestment Rationale

Divestment has a long history in our denomination as part of a strategy for pursuing mission objectives of the church in the world through socially responsible management of the church’s assets.

The 196th General Assembly (1984) approved the report, “Divestment Strategies: Principles and Criteria,”²⁴ noting that we can use our investments as a powerful tool to bring about social change. Divestment is contemplated only after persistent shareholder efforts to persuade a company to change have failed.

For more than two decades,²⁵ our church’s Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment has engaged in shareholder action with fossil fuel companies.²⁶ This approach can continue to provide a seat at the table to engage with the industry, but it has had no impact in addressing climate change.²⁷

The divestment principles and criteria also recognize the importance of working with the ecumenical community and acting in solidarity with other Christian bodies. To date, Episcopalians, Unitarians, Lutherans, Anglicans, Quakers, Methodists, the United Church of Christ, some Presbyterian congregations, and the Churches of England and Scotland have committed to divestment.²⁸

Divestment also protects our financial interests. In the carbon-constrained world we are entering, the value of fossil fuel companies will decline. The International Energy Agency projects²⁹ that carbon cuts great enough to stay below the 2°C threshold could leave nearly \$300 billion in fossil fuel investments stranded by 2035.

Jobs

Divestment is a prophetic witness that challenges the country to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy efficiency as quickly as possible. Job loss in the fossil fuel industry is a serious concern, especially to our brothers and sisters in states where the industry is prevalent. We as church can advocate for sustainable jobs and worker retraining. We as church can reinvest in sustainable industries. We as church must be sympathetic and caring about job losses in a single industry, but must also consider the greater good generated for wage earners, families, and all of creation by moving away from fossil fuels. In the end, job losses will be more than offset by job creation in energy efficiency and renewable energy.^{30, 31}

More Than Symbolism

When people act singly, their impacts may be more symbolic than effective, but when many act in unison, they can bring about massive social and economic changes. Consider the powerful social changes that divestment brought about with Apartheid, tobacco, and Darfur.

Some say it is hypocritical to divest from fossil fuels while remaining dependent on them. It is equally hypocritical to gamble on the continued profitability of the fossil fuel industry while urging individuals to use less fossil fuel. Divestment and conservation go hand-in-hand, and both will work together to make renewable energy and energy efficiency more widely and economically available.

Summary

As Christians, we have the privilege and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. The power and clarity of our prophetic voice must not be undermined by the hypocrisy of our investments in fossil fuel companies that amount to nearly two hundred million dollars.

Divestment declares that we are refusing to stay neutral in the fight against climate disruption. We stand united with our brothers and sisters around the world in refusing henceforth to make money from an industry that is harming all of God's creation.

“Can we hear the grave warnings in reports like this one [Power to Change] from Christians who have carefully studied these matters? And then can we act as stewards of God's earth, witnessing to Christ in the re-direction of our lives toward a more sustainable future? I pray that we can, and that our church's good work can help in this great change”—Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, April 2009.

Endnotes

1. 1981. “The Power to Speak Truth to Power: A Public Policy Statement on Energy, Its Production and Use.” http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/power_to_speak_truth_to_power.pdf.
2. 2008. The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming. http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf.
3. 2014. Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age. http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/acswp_tax_justice_42.pdf.
4. 2006: Resolution for Presbyterians to Live Carbon Neutral Lives. http://www.climate.org/PDF/PCUSA_carbon_neutral_resolution.pdf.
5. Barnes, R. Eco-Justice Journey: The Blog of the Environmental Ministries Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA). See posts under the categories “Energy Efficiency” and “Renewable Energy.” <http://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/>.
6. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, oil and gas companies alone spent nearly \$145 million to lobby the U.S. Congress in 2013, or about \$400,000 per day. See: Center for Responsive Politics. Oil & Gas Lobbying, 2013. <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/lobbying.php?cycle=2014&ind=E01>
7. As of 12-31-2014, the Board of Pensions alone held \$160,907,670 in 37 of the top 200 coal, oil, and gas companies appearing on the Carbon Underground list [*private communication; also available in the 2014 BOP Annual Report*].
8. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group (WG) II. 2014. Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability: Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC* [Field et al., (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. http://ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/images/uploads/WG2AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf pp. 4–8, 12–25.
9. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (UNFCCC COP) Cancun Climate Change Conference—November 2010: http://unfccc.int/meetings/cancun_nov_2010/meeting/6266.php.
10. In “The Power to Change” (ref 2, above), p. 3, states: “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supports comprehensive, mandatory, and aggressive emission reductions that aim to limit the increase in Earth's temperature to 2 degrees Celsius or less from pre-industrial levels.”

11. For a popular summary of the history of the 2°C target, see “Climate: 7 questions on 2 degrees”: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/24/opinions/sutter-questions-two-degrees-climate/>.
12. “Unburnable Carbon—Are the world’s financial markets carrying a carbon bubble?” <http://www.carbontracker.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Unburnable-Carbon-Full-rev2-1.pdf>.
13. “Global Carbon Emissions”: <http://co2now.org/Current-CO2/CO2-Now/global-carbon-emissions.html>.
14. “Assessing ‘Dangerous Climate Change’: Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature”: <https://www.plos.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/pone-8-12-hansen.pdf>.
15. “Unburnable Carbon 2013: Wasted capital and stranded assets” Section 2, pp 15 ff. <http://carbontracker.live.kiln.it/Unburnable-Carbon-2-Web-Version.pdf>.
16. “ExxonMobil’s Climate Risks Report Should Embolden Policymakers”: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikescott/2014/04/08/exxonmobils-climate-risks-report-should-embolden-policymakers/>.
17. “Leading companies invest \$674 billion in potentially worthless fossil fuels”: <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/companies-invest-worthless-fossil-fuels>.
18. 1990: Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/pcusa-environmental-policy/>.
19. 1996: Hope For A Global Future: Toward Just And Sustainable Human Development: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/hope-for-a-global-future.pdf.
20. *Minutes*, 1998, Part I, SECTION THREE—Overtures, Communications and Resolutions, Commissioners’ Resolutions, *Commissioners’ Resolution 98-5. On Global Climate Change*. [The assembly approved *Commissioners’ Resolution 98-5*. See p. 81.]
21. *Minutes*, 1999 Part I, SECTION TWO—Recommendations, 1999 Overtures, *Overture 99-70. On Climate Change and the Persistence of Its Causes-From the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley*. [The assembly approved *Overture 99-70* with amendment. See pp. 50.]
22. *Minutes*, 2003, Part I, SECTION TWO—Assembly Committee Reports, Assembly Committee on Global Ministries, Item 11-07. *Overture 03-29. On Ratifying the Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol-From the Presbytery of Newton*. [The assembly approved Item 11-07. See p. 40.]
23. 2008: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Policy Brief: Environment and Energy: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/washington/pdfs/policybrief.pdf
24. The original version of this seminal document, produced in 1984 by the 196th General Assembly (1984) of the newly reunited PC(USA) can be found here, specifically paragraphs 25.199 through 25.210: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/divestment_strategy.pdf. A more readable format is reproduced as Section 2 (pages 29 ff) of the 1985 report: *Divestment for South Africa: An Investment in Hope* found here: http://www.presbyterianmission.org/media/uploads/mrti/pdfs/1984_&_1985_divestment_strategy_policy_&_south_africa_policy.pdf.
25. The PC(USA), through MRTI, has been a long-term member of Ceres: <http://www.ceres.org/about-us/coalition/coalition-members> (search on “Presbyterian”) and of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR): <http://www.iccr.org/>, both of whom have been engaged for decades in shareholder action with the fossil industry.
26. MRTI’s extensive shareholder engagement with ConocoPhillips is documented on the internet at least as far back as 2003: <http://archive.wfn.org/2003/10/msg00077.html>, and likely extends back significantly farther. In 2003, “*MRTI celebrated: [...] Urging Conoco/Phillips Petroleum to develop an aggressive program to address greenhouse gas emissions*”. In 2013, “*MRTI’s shareholder resolution called for setting a corporate-wide reduction goal for greenhouse gas emissions. [...] [T]he resolution received 29.43% of the shareholder vote, up from previous years.*” <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2013/6/19/mrti-reports-record-proxy-votes-environmental-shar/>.
27. Talk to the Hand: Engagement with Fossil Fuel Companies Offers Little Promise: <http://www.triplepundit.com/2015/01/talk-hand-engagement-fossil-fuel-companies-offers-little-promise/>.
28. GreenFaith maintains a comprehensive list of faith groups and divestment activity here: <http://www.greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest/listing-of-known-religious-divestment-efforts>.
29. 2015. *Rolling Stone*. The Logic of Divestment: Why We Have to Kiss Off Big Carbon Now: <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-logic-of-divestment-why-we-have-to-kiss-off-big-carbon-20150114?page=2>. MYTH #2: Fossil Fuels are a Safe Investment.
30. 2015. The Solar Industry Created More Jobs In 2014 Than Oil and Gas Extraction: <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/01/15/3611522/solar-jobs-report-2014/>.
31. Bread for the World Institute. 2010. Work in a Sustainable Economy. In *A Just and Sustainable Recovery: Hunger Report 2010*. Available online at: <http://files.bread.org/institute/hr10/2010-hunger-report.pdf>. pp. 20 & 33–46.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the assembly approve the alternate resolution below in answer to Item 9-01 and that Items 9-02, 9-03, and 9-04 also be answered by this resolution.

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016):

“1. Affirms the process and recommendations that the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has developed at the direction of the 221st General Assembly (2014), building on its engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (and subsequent negotiations) and coordination with the World Council of Churches and “green” investor coalitions, such as CERES (Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies). Drawing on the full range of institutional, technical, and ethical expertise represented in its membership and staff team, the committee has developed five criteria for assessing the actions of corporations on climate change as part of its usual corporate engagement process, which can lead to divestment. The five are governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy. These criteria address both the supply of carbon fuels and all stages of their extraction and use on the demand side. The committee is to be commended for its theological grounding and use of the seven guidelines for divestment approved by the 1984 General Assembly, which include consultation with Presbyterians engaged in all parts of the energy producing and consuming industries as well as with those deeply concerned to speed the shift to renewable energy sources.

“2. Expresses its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God’s creation, including its disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries; the elderly and children; and those least responsible for the emission of greenhouse gasses, including many nations most affected by rising sea levels. We share the planet with countless species whose survival is entwined with ours. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recognizes the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy economy in a way that is just, compassionate, and rapid. The scientific consensus on the impact of human causes on climate change has only become more irrefutable since the assembly’s 2008 energy policy statement, “The Power to Change.” United Nations-related efforts to set global targets for greenhouse gas reduction reflect this consensus and should be strengthened with the full support of the government of the United States. The challenge before each nation and the community of nations is to develop a credible strategy to end the era of fossil-fuel emissions and convert entirely to clean energy by mid-century at the latest. The assembly commends all of the presbyteries submitting overtures related to climate change, noting their agreement on facts despite differences in strategy and scope of potential divestment.

“3. Affirms that it is both possible and necessary to effect meaningful change related to global temperature for the sake of future generations and in accountability to God, and therefore urges individuals, congregations, councils of the church, and institutions (including without limitation the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related colleges and theological seminaries) to initiate, accelerate, and build upon steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and adopt lower-carbon and zero-carbon technologies and lifestyles. Carbon taxes or other pricing mechanisms, clear authority for the Environmental Protection Agency and other appropriate agencies to regulate energy fuel cycles, elimination of subsidies for fossil fuels, incentives for innovation, just transitions for communities whose economic bases shift, and other national policies are clearly also needed, well beyond the scope of individual and organizational action. Along with the benefits of a developed society, all U.S. citizens and institutions bear a moral burden for our dependence upon and profit from the fossil fuels that underlie so many products and technologies. Hence the assembly commends its investment agencies for enhancing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s capacity for corporate engagement through MRTI, and for developing investment vehicles that meet the concerns of the fossil-free movement.

“4. Encourages presbyteries as well as congregations to integrate the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc.’s “Restoring Creation Loans,” identified in the MRTI report, into their strategies for church building renovation, re-development, and multi-use of properties consistent with renewable energy goals.

“5. Directs the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and other programs of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and urges other Presbyterians to educate and advocate with citizens, legislators, and other decision-makers for the policies necessary to create a global price mechanism for emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, through taxes, incentives, and other means, with safeguards to reduce the costs of such measures on those with fewer resources.

“6. Directs the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in collaboration with Congregational Ministries Publishing and other programs of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and working with other organizations that have parallel goals in order to maximize effectiveness, to update policy guidance and educational materials to assist congregations and councils of the church in understanding the impact of climate change and in taking individual and collective action to slow climate change, including: shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, and

federal levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; assistance to those adversely affected by energy transition; and local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the 2008 “Power to Change” directions. This would include consideration of shared responsibilities to “climate refugees” within and among nations and the impacts of such climate-driven migration on peace, security, food production, public health, and population sustainability. The committee’s task group would consult with the range of experts and advocates in the church as represented by the overtures coming before this 222nd General Assembly (2016).

“7. Calls upon congregations and councils of the church to encourage those who disagree on energy matters to engage in respectful and evidence-based dialogue with one another and the larger community, seeking together to find and represent the will of Christ; and affirms the need for dialogue and discernment within and among our congregations, and with interested parties outside our denomination, seeking faithful individual and collective responses to climate change. Congregations and councils are encouraged to share and test reports and resources across the church, including those developed through Recommendation 6. above, and to contact the Presbyterian Office of the Environment, and participate in Presbyterians for Earth Care, for practical ideas.

“8. Directs the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) and other agencies of the church to distribute and publicize this resolution as appropriate along with the MRTI Committee’s report, with ecumenical and interfaith partners, with investment managers and corporations, and with environmental organizations and others involved in combatting climate change.”

Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of San Francisco and twenty-one other presbyteries, representing the views of the Fossil Free PC(USA) group (FFPCUSA), along with the Items 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 from New Covenant and eight other presbyteries, are united in concern for climate change. These groups, numbering twenty-two and nine presbyteries respectively, agree that the “vast majority” of climate increase is human caused as substantiated by overwhelming scientific evidence. This substitute motion seeks to honor the concerns of all proponents, seeing in MRTI’s report an adoption of the direction proposed by the fossil-free movement in 2014 although with strategies closer to those proposed by the Presbytery of New Covenant and others. MRTI’s approach puts significant attention on particular corporations for a longer period of time, while recognizing the enormous market power of the larger energy corporations. Other councils with different capacities may weigh strategy differently.

To address the moral challenge in conventional energy investing, Item 09-01 calls for almost complete divestment by the Presbyterian Foundation and the Board of Pensions from companies that extract and sell fossil fuel, particularly the firms on the Carbon Underground 200 list. In itself, this would be a clear witness, based on one particular strategy to limit climate change. In an effort to recognize the witness value of remaining an investor in energy companies, Item 9-01 would have Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) investment agencies retain minimal numbers of shares to be able to propose and vote on proxies. This subsidiary part of their proposal would not reflect the integrity of witness sought in the primary divestment strategy.

Item 9-01 also recommends investment in companies specialized in alternate energy technologies and several noninvestment measures to help reduce usage for fossil fuel. It does not, however, propose investment-advocacy strategies related to firms that are heavy users of fossil fuel or that produce equipment that consume fossil fuel. We do not enter considerations of investment strategy, index funds, securities in companies with large capitalization, except to recognize that fiduciary responsibility and the role of trusteeship in church bodies should take into account sustainability and justice within the broader economy.

Most Presbyterians in all of the presbyteries involved would recognize that divesting from firms that extract fossil fuel is not likely by itself to bring about the necessary reduction in our economy’s production of greenhouse gasses. Significant causes of the problem are on the demand side. This is especially true in the current situation of excess supply of fossil fuel. For instance, the rating agency Fitch estimates that “...China’s coal industry could have 3.3 billion tonnes of excess capacity within two years” (*Economist*, 9 April 2016, p. 66). Thus, even if all U.S. coal companies ceased to operate (several major ones are in bankruptcy), coal from the international market will be readily available and cheaper in the coming years.

The most efficient way to discourage burning fossil fuels would seem to be to apply pressure all along the chain of production and consumption—supply and demand—for fossil fuels, that is, to work on the whole chain from fossil fuel extraction to emission of carbon dioxide, methane, etc. Then the economy can adjust farthest and fastest at the places with the highest social cost (carbon emissions) and the lowest social and economic cost of adjustment. In comparison, following the strategy of Item 09-01 and putting all the pressure (divestment) primarily at one point in the carbon-fuel chain—extraction of fossil fuel—seems less effective. Nonetheless, we need to follow the item’s vision of moving to carbon-neutrality, which entails making fossil fuel extraction negligible by mid-century, maintaining enough for particular non-fuel uses.

A carbon tax would put pressure efficiently all along the chain. It is worth advocating but seems politically unlikely now in the U.S., so we need to pursue other avenues as well.

The four items on fossil fuel investments and MRTI’s report require commissioners to weigh competing claims of which divestment strategy (focused and incremental or by category) better shows integrity in message and effectiveness in impact. The position here: Investor advocacy by MRTI and other PC(USA) groups would continue and expand the effort to encourage efficient reduction of carbon usage by companies all along the chain—fossil fuel extracting (coal, oil, gas), hydro-carbon

consuming (airlines, bus and truck companies, electric utilities, etc.), and companies producing equipment to burn fossil fuel (automobile and truck manufacture, tractors, heating and cooling equipment, airplane manufacture); and so on—to get them to move to more energy-efficient and non-fossil-fuel technologies.

The “Faithful Engagement” overtures overlap and stand generally in support of MRTI’s work. They testify to the commitment of Presbyterians and others of good will in the energy industry to be part of the solution. The substitute resolution we advise adopts their suggestion of an update to the 2008 policy that would look at the massive dislocations already being caused by climate change. Naturally, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy would consult with both the Fossil-Free and the New Covenant concurring presbyteries in the development of such resources.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 09-01

Comment on Item 09-01—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions respectfully requests that the General Assembly answer overtures concerning divestment of certain fossil fuel companies (Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of San Francisco and Items 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 from the Presbytery of New Covenant) by its approval of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies, Item 09-09.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) referred the almost identical subject matter of its Item 15-01 to MRTI for action and discernment in accordance with MRTI’s long-standing and detailed procedures to engage with individual corporations to advance their actions in support of important social policy issues.

The MRTI Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies neither assumes nor precludes divestment, but rather proposes that the General Assembly not short-circuit its own process, giving MRTI time to use the time-tested, detailed procedures of corporate engagement to their full effect.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-01

Comment on Item 09-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) unanimously adopted the report from the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) who was asked by the 221st General Assembly (2014) to study categorical divestment from the oil, gas, and coal sector (also called the fossil-fuel industry) and make recommendations to the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The MRTI report includes the biblical, moral, and scientific imperatives for the church to work toward mitigating climate change. The MRTI report reaffirms the 2008 policy, “The Power to Change,” approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) on advocating for a move to renewable sources of energy production, however, the 2008 policy does not preclude owning fossil fuels in investment portfolios.

To address this, the MRTI report’s recommendations include asking the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to affirm a set of criteria of evaluating all companies including those in the oil, gas, and coal industry so that both the demand and supply side of energy production are addressed. These recommended criteria would be helpful to MRTI’s corporate engagement process because they include the potential provision to recommend divestment from a particular company who is not in compliance with the church’s policy.

Furthermore, the MRTI report lifts up its engagements with numerous corporations on environmental responsibility resulting in hundreds of companies improving environmental policies and performance, particularly related to climate change. Through commitments by corporations to lower their emissions, increase energy efficiency, and use more renewable energy, the use of fossil fuels will decrease and demand for clean energy will increase. The MRTI recommended targeted engagement strategy would be more effective in mitigating climate change than categorical divestment from the fossil fuel industry.

Item 09-02

[The assembly answered Item 09-02 with the action taken on Item 09-01. See p. 63.]

On an Alternative to Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of the New Covenant respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Proclaim that we are called to faithfully exercise stewardship over the earth and all of its creatures. Recognize the moral mandate for humanity to responsibly use the resources of the earth in a manner that will ensure future generations of Earth’s inhabitants will have long-term access to clean and sustainable energy resources. This mandate compels us to action as a denomination to implement strategies and actions that are in accordance with our responsibility to act as faithful stewards of the earth and its resources.

2. Affirm that it is both possible and practical for us to effect meaningful change that addresses the issues of climate change; urge individuals, congregations, councils of the church, and institutions (including without limitation the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly, and our colleges and theological seminaries) to initiate, continue, and build upon steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to continue approval of lower-carbon and zero-carbon technologies and lifestyles. We acknowledge that the changes in behaviors are difficult, but affirm that we are prepared to align our behaviors with our calling and our advocacy in any event.

3. Hold complete divestment from the fossil fuel industry in abeyance because it does not meet the denomination's long-standing process for consideration of divestment. To effect meaningful change that addresses climate change issues, specifically, we should:

a. Commend congregations that have committed to the "Earth Care Pledge" and encourage all congregations to consider joining the Earth Care Congregation Network of the PC(USA).

b. Request the Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of Pensions, and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to study ways that investments can best be leveraged to help care for God's creation and mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

c. Request that the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., vigorously promote and expand the new program, "Restoring Creation Loans," which provides low-interest loans that enable congregations to renovate their buildings using energy-efficient products in order to conserve energy, save on costs, and reduce carbon emissions.

d. Advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gases through the use of alternative, cleaner energy sources: natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar, and industrial-scale power storage.

e. Commend Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for its long history of engagement with companies on issues related to climate change, and instruct MRTI to continue that engagement, applying the long-standing PC(USA) principles related to consideration of divestment. Acknowledge that industry-wide divestment does not alter the consumption or investment behaviors that support greenhouse gas emissions and that divestment is therefore not an adequate response to the problems of climate change.

4. Encourage individuals, congregations, councils of the church, and institutions (including without limitation the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Office of General Assembly) to:

a. Reduce or eliminate holdings in specific companies that continue to lobby against action on climate change or support organizations that distribute false information on climate change.

b. Encourage investment in corporations that have monitored and reported their greenhouse gas emissions and have implemented specific plans to reduce their emissions.

c. Encourage investment in corporations that have invested in or make use of energy sources that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

5. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in collaboration with Congregational Ministries Publishing or The Thoughtful Christian, and working with other organizations that have parallel goals in order to maximize our effectiveness, to develop a policy paper and educational materials to assist congregations and councils of the church in understanding the impact of climate change and in taking individual and collective action to slow climate change, including: shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, and federal levels for policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the 2006 call for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 "Power to Change" recommendations.

6. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

Rationale

In 1981, our church made clear through the document, "The Power to Speak Truth to Power," the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

It is not enough simply to speak truth to power. We must enact in our individual, congregational, and denominational lives meaningful approaches that directly address concerns about climate change and that require sacrifice. Divestment has no direct effect on climate and makes no difference in individual behaviors—and it is these behaviors that directly contribute to greenhouse gases. In addition, divestment renders a moral judgment on thousands of good, moral Presbyterians who are employed within the fossil fuel sector. Damage to our relationships with those faithful Presbyterians would do great harm to our

congregations without providing any meaningful engagement with climate change. Divestment neither assures protection of the earth nor promotes the economic well-being of the disadvantaged. The PC(USA) has a responsibility to do better than divestment.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

This overture asks us not to sever our financial ties to the fossil fuel industry, but to unite all Presbyterians in directly engaging climate change with responsible, meaningful, and lasting actions that will make a difference in the future of God's creation. Through this overture, the PC(USA) will demonstrate the depth of our theological understanding of the stewardship of God's creation by promoting alternatives to divestment that unite us.

Some Positive Steps

We begin with some good news: the United States has been gradually reducing its greenhouse gas emissions in recent years. Between 2004 and 2013, emissions in total have declined nearly 9 percent, while per capita emissions are down more than 15 percent. China has made significant investments in green energy. It plans to increase its solar-energy capacity this year alone by 18 gigawatts—as much solar-energy capacity as exists in the U.S. right now. Its wind-energy production has increased tenfold in a half-dozen years, and the country is in the midst of what one analyst called “the largest build-out of hydroelectricity the world has ever seen.” The cost of solar power is rapidly declining. In the sunniest locations in the world, building a new solar-power plant now costs less than coal or natural gas, even without subsidies, and within six years, this will be true of places with average sunlight, too.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Ecology and justice are implicit in the story of creation itself: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). As the 1990 study, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*,** (“RCEJ”) observes, “tilling” requires a community effort that establishes an economy; “keeping” is an act of environmental stewardship that regards the creation as a gift to be cared for. RCEJ identifies four norms that characterize “a new faithfulness” reflecting God's love for the world: sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity.†† These highlight the inherent tensions. We cannot address only the good of the creation without also considering the good of the community. We cannot address only the good of the community without considering the good of creation. Global climate change, regardless of its cause, threatens both the community and the earth over which we are stewards. Our call is to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice.

Denominational Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God's creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its effect on the “least of these,” and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, and 2008) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Now is the time to move beyond pronouncements and symbolic actions into education and behavioral changes.

The 221st General Assembly (2014), in response to an overture from the Presbytery of Boston *et al*, referred to MRTI a proposal that the General Assembly declare our intention to categorically divest from fossil fuels within five years. However, in assessing the divestment proposal against the dual criteria of (i) economic development and justice for all people and (ii) faithful and responsible stewardship of God's creation, we believe the proposal falls short.

The divestment proposal is unlikely to achieve its expressed aims. There is no causal connection between the concern expressed—climate change—and the action proposed—sell certain stock investments. The contribution we as individuals and institutions make to the emission of greenhouse gases is the result of the consumption decisions we make, not the investments we own. Therefore, actions that alter investment portfolios but leave our consumption decisions unchanged should not be expected to change our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. To be effective, a proposal must lead to changes in our behaviors. Carbon exploration and production is driven by carbon consumption. Investment strategies that promote conservation, reduce consumption, and make political solutions more likely are a better strategy than divestment.

** https://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/environment/pdf/restoring-creation-for-ecology&justice.pdf

†† Sustainability means “the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus. Participation refers to the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator's gifts for sustenance. Sufficiency provides for all to have enough through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end. Solidarity means “steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies ... to the realization of the church's potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.”

In summary, we believe the church needs faithful alternatives to the divestment proposal because (i) divestment fails to recognize the continuing importance of economic development for the relief of poverty and the significant role low energy costs play in economic development and (ii) divestment is unlikely to achieve the result for which it aims because there is no causal link between the proposed action and that target. We believe the alternatives discussed below provide a more faithful response.

Faithful Engagement on Climate Change

How can we assess the faithfulness of alternatives? In considering what constitutes a faithful response, the church should keep in mind:

1. Does it address the problem (rather than simply make a judgment)?
2. Does it advance economic justice (both globally and domestically)?
3. Will it have a practical effect?
4. Does it propose behavior we are willing to adopt ourselves?

An Effective Approach

This overture proposes positive and inclusive investment practices that will hopefully be understood as being in the interests of all church members, more directly address the problem of divestment, and clarify behaviors consistent with reducing greenhouse emissions.

From our perspective, the root cause of the climate change issue is behaviors—both consumption and investment. We all engage in behaviors that contribute to climate change. A faithful response is to encourage ourselves and others to modify these behaviors. Many organizations and individuals have taken strong steps to reduce greenhouse emissions and they deserve our financial and moral support.

The Importance of Working Toward Unity

This approach is not one that can be undertaken along with divestment from fossil fuels. Divestment is a divisive strategy that alienates faithful Presbyterians who have strong beliefs that their work to provide inexpensive energy to the world has been a net good. Divestment drives a wedge between those faithful Presbyterians who work in or have retired from the fossil fuel industry and those for whom divestment has no personal cost. Job loss in the fossil fuel industry is a serious concern, especially to our brothers and sisters in states where this industry is prevalent. Further, divestment ignores the reality that PC(USA) congregations and missions have benefited from the access to inexpensive and reliable energy sources and from pledges and donations from faithful members who work in the fossil fuel industry.

All of us agree that living in our technological world has benefitted almost all of humanity. We understand that the over-use of fossil fuels has potentially catastrophic costs that must be avoided. However, this is most easily accomplished with the church acting as a unified body instead of as a church further diminished through the additional loss of congregations. We note also that it is the responsibility of every industry to adapt to changing dynamics of the market in which it operates. In exercising due care and their fiduciary duty, we expect investments to be shifted away from firms and industries that adapt poorly to the new economy and toward firms and industries that successfully adapt to these changes. These shifts in our investment portfolio should not require explicit direction from PC(USA).

The Consistency of Our Witness

Our actions should be consistent with our values. We are charged to consider not only the ideological purity of our response, but also its practical effect. If we decry the production and use of fossil fuels, then our actions must be consistent. If we decry the production, should we not also decry the consumption—including our own? If we choose divestment, should we not also abstain from fossil fuel products? We live in a world where we produce greenhouse gas emissions through many of our daily activities. Every member of the PC(USA) uses fossil fuels every day in hundreds of applications that significantly improve quality of life. It is more faithful on moral and ethical grounds to directly address greenhouse emissions rather than to call for divestment from fossil fuel producers, whose contributions to greenhouse emissions vary widely.

Summary

We Presbyterians approach creation with the twin perspectives of responsible use (“tilling”) and sustainable care (“keeping”). An ethic of stewardship, therefore, must consider creation both as a good in itself and as a resource for economic justice. The responsibility of holding wealth is directed toward an ethic of engagement that seeks to use the wealth to transform injustice and immorality, rather than an ethic of purity that shuns such engagement. Addressing greenhouse emissions, and discouraging activities that work to delay legislative action on climate change is more consistent with long-standing denominational policy statements and would be a faithful response to the urgent climate change issues that are before us.

Concurrence to Item 09-02 from the Presbyteries of Grace, Huntingdon, Indian Nations, Palo Duro, South Louisiana, Tres Rios, Western Reserve, and Wyoming.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that this item be answered by the substitute resolution proposed in the ACSWP Advice & Counsel to Item 09-01.

The substitute resolution seeks to combine, without repetition, the best elements of the four related overtures.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 09-02

Comment on Item 09-02—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions respectfully requests that the General Assembly answer overtures concerning divestment of certain fossil fuel companies (Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of San Francisco and Items 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 from the Presbytery of New Covenant) by its approval of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies, Item 09-09.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) referred the almost identical subject matter of its Item 15-01 to MRTI for action and discernment in accordance with MRTI's long-standing and detailed procedures to engage with individual corporations to advance their actions in support of important social policy issues.

The MRTI Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies neither assumes nor precludes divestment, but rather proposes that the General Assembly not short-circuit its own process, giving MRTI time to use the time-tested, detailed procedures of corporate engagement to their full effect.

Item 09-03

[The assembly answered Item 09-03 with the action taken on Item 09-01. See p. 63.]

On Faithful Engagement with the Issue of Climate Change—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Express its profound concern about the detrimental effects of climate change on all God's creation, including the impact on those living in poverty and in the least-developed countries, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases; and acknowledge that our behavior as stewards of God's creation has been self-centered and sinful.

2. Proclaim that we are called to repent from our inadequate stewardship of God's creation; recognize the Gospel's call and the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a long-term sustainable energy regime in ways that are both just and compassionate; and acknowledge that this mandate compels us to action as a denomination to implement strategies and actions that directly engage climate change and that offer a realistic prospect of changing the behaviors that are at the root of the issue.

3. Affirm the substantial improvements in living conditions among those in the least developed countries over recent decades, and acknowledge that reliable access to relatively inexpensive energy, largely energy from fossil fuels, has played a major role in these improvements.

4. Acknowledge that this progress, while notable, is insufficient; that too many of God's people still live in crushing poverty; that we have fallen short of our duty to care for our brothers and sisters; and that we have a duty to assure that our response to the issue of climate change does not endanger the economic progress that has been made, and enables progress to continue.

5. Proclaim the imperative for all humanity to change our behaviors; work to establish a consistent, rational, and equitable global pricing mechanism for greenhouse gases, thus supplementing the theological mandate for repentance with market-based economic structures that will reduce consumption and support investment in sustainable alternative energy sources; educate and advocate with citizens, voters, legislators, and other decision-makers to bring into effect the national and international policies necessary to create this global price mechanism for emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases; learn from and cooperate with other countries that are already putting into place measures to price greenhouse gas emissions.

6. Protect the poor by advocating to assure that the policy steps that implement emissions pricing also implement policies sufficient to offset the regressive nature of the pricing mechanism, such as per capita rebates of all taxes or fees collected through the pricing mechanism.

7. Affirm that it is both possible and practical for us to effect meaningful change that addresses the issues of climate change; urge individuals, congregations, councils of the church, and institutions (including without limitation the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of General Assembly, camps and conference centers, and our colleges and theological seminaries) to initiate, continue, and build upon steps to reduce our carbon footprint and to continue adoption of lower-carbon and zero-carbon technologies and lifestyles; acknowledge that the changes in behaviors that are required are easier to motivate when emissions are rationally and equitably priced, but affirm that we are prepared to align our behaviors with our calling and our advocacy in any event.

8. Request the Presbyterian Foundation, Board of Pensions, and Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., to study ways that investments can best be leveraged to help care for God's creation and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change; allocate funds that target climate change solutions and establish loans, such as the "Restoring Creation Loan" program, that allow congregations to renovate their buildings using energy-efficient products in order to conserve energy, save on costs, and reduce carbon emissions.

9. Commend congregations that have committed to the "earth care pledge" and encourage all congregations to consider joining the Earthcare Congregation Network of the PC(USA).

10. Advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gases through the use of alternative, cleaner energy sources, such as natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar, and industrial-scale power storage.

11. Recognize that damage is done to the Body of Christ when we vilify those who work in good faith in an industry that undergirds most of modern life; encourage collaboration with the many individuals in the fossil fuel industry who seek to engage climate change in positive and creative ways.

12. Call upon congregations and councils of the church to develop ways for those who disagree to be in dialogue with one another and the world, seeking together to find and represent the will of Christ; affirm the need for dialogue and discernment within and among our congregations, and with all the interested parties outside our denomination, seeking faithful individual and collective responses to address climate change.

13. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in collaboration with Congregational Ministries Publishing or The Thoughtful Christian, and working with other organizations that have parallel goals in order to maximize our effectiveness, to develop a policy paper and educational materials to assist congregations and councils of the church in understanding the impact of climate change and in taking individual and collective action to slow climate change, including: shareholder activism; investments in renewable energy; advocacy at local, state, federal, and international levels for policies to price and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and local efforts to reduce carbon footprint consistent with the 2006 call for denominational carbon neutrality, and the 2008 "Power to Change" recommendations.

14. Commend the Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment ("MRTI") for its long history of engagement with companies on issues related to climate change, and instruct MRTI to continue that engagement, applying the long-standing PC(USA) principles related to consideration of divestment; acknowledge that divestment does not alter the consumption or investment behaviors that create the climate change issues and that divestment is therefore not an effective response to the problems of climate change; recognize that divestment does not excuse us from the requirement for faithful responses that do alter behaviors.

15. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

Rationale

In 1981, our church made clear through the document, "The Power to Speak Truth to Power," the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document, "The Power to Change," that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God's good creation.

It is not enough simply to speak truth to power. We must enact in our individual, congregational, and denominational lives meaningful approaches that directly address concerns about climate change and that require sacrifice. Divestment has no direct effect on climate and makes no difference in individual behaviors—and it is these behaviors that directly contribute to greenhouse gases. In addition, divestment renders a moral judgment on thousands of good, moral Presbyterians who are employed within the fossil fuel sector. Damage to our relationships with those faithful Presbyterians would do great harm to our congrega-

tions without providing any meaningful engagement with climate change. Divestment neither assures protection of the earth nor promotes the economic well-being of the disadvantaged. The PC(USA) has a responsibility to do better than divestment.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

This overture exhorts us to unite all Presbyterians in directly engaging climate change with responsible, meaningful, and lasting actions that will make a difference in the future of God’s creation. Through the actions called for in this overture, the PC(USA) will demonstrate the depth of our theological understanding of the stewardship of God’s creation and community by promoting faithful alternatives that unite us in addressing the issues of climate change.

Some Positive Steps

We begin with some good news: the United States has been gradually reducing its greenhouse gas emissions in recent years. Between 2004 and 2013, emissions in total have declined nearly 9 percent, while per capita emissions are down more than 15 percent. China has made significant investments in green energy. It plans to increase its solar-energy capacity this year alone by 18 gigawatts—as much solar-energy capacity as exists in the U.S. right now. Its wind-energy production has increased tenfold in a half-dozen years, and the country is in the midst of what one analyst called “the largest build-out of hydroelectricity the world has ever seen.” The cost of solar power is rapidly declining. In the sunniest locations in the world, building a new solar-power plant now costs less than coal or natural gas, even without subsidies, and within six years, this will be true of places with average sunlight, too.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Ecology and justice are implicit in the story of creation itself: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to *till* it and *keep* it” (Gen. 2:15, emphasis added). As the 1990 study, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*,^{‡‡} (“RCEJ”) observes, “tilling” requires a community effort that establishes an economy; “keeping” is an act of environmental stewardship that regards the creation as a gift to be cared for. RCEJ identifies four norms that characterize “a new faithfulness” reflecting God’s love for the world: sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity.^{§§} These highlight the inherent tensions. We cannot address only the good of the creation without also considering the good of the community. We cannot address only the good of the community without considering the good of creation. Global climate change, regardless of its cause, threatens both the community and the earth over which we are stewards. Our call is to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice.

Denominational Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God’s creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its effect on the “least of these,” and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, and 2008) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Now is the time to move beyond pronouncements and symbolic actions into education and behavioral changes.

The Ethics of Divestment

Jesus taught that great possessions convey great responsibility. In the Gospel of Luke, the examples of the Rich Ruler and Zacchaeus (Luke 18:18–30; 19:1–10) show different responses to the obligations of wealth. In managing its corporate assets, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has recognized a dual obligation to invest in a morally responsible manner and to use its influence for the transformation of society (including its economic institutions) to become more just, humane, and environmentally responsible.

The criteria for the just investment of resources were addressed by the General Assembly in the 1984 policy, “The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria” (*Minutes*, 1984, Part I, pp. 193–207). The policy is clear that we Reformed Christians ordinarily follow an ethic of responsibility as opposed to an ethic of purity (which would be more characteristic of the Holiness and Anabaptist traditions), and that divestment, where necessary, is the final step in a process that has emphasized engagement and consultation as preceding steps.

‡‡ https://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/environment/pdf/restoring-creation-for-ecology&justice.pdf

§§ Sustainability means “the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus. Participation refers to the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator’s gifts for sustenance. Sufficiency provides for all to have enough through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end. Solidarity means “steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies ... to the realization of the church’s potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.”

Perfection and separation are not ultimate. They must be held in tension with faithfulness and effectiveness, which may involve compromise to gain some important proximate goal. Thus, Reformed churches have sought to be in the world, not withdrawn from it; to serve the perfect purpose of God in less than perfect structures in order to change them, not to live apart in communities of holiness. The church as a community seeks engagement, not isolation.

Only when the church has made every effort to fulfill its call to holiness through responsible efforts at transformation, when it is prepared to respond pastorally to those economically affected by divestment, and when it is acting in concert with other Christian bodies should withdrawal from engagement be considered as an ethical option.

The Ineffectiveness of Divestment

The 221st General Assembly (2014), in response to an overture from the Presbytery of Boston *et al*, referred to the Committee on Mission Responsibility through Investment (“MRTI”) a proposal that the General Assembly declare our intention to categorically divest from fossil fuels within five years. However, in assessing the divestment proposal against the dual criteria of (i) economic development and justice for all people and (ii) faithful and responsible stewardship of God’s creation, we believe the proposal falls short.

First, the fossil fuel divestment proposal fails to consider the importance of economic development. The criterion of economic justice seems to have no role in this divestment movement. That movement fails to recognize the importance of low-cost energy for economic development, and the divestment proposal—if it were effective in achieving its aims—would likely condemn to eternal poverty those poor who need access to low-cost energy to emerge from poverty.

Second, the divestment proposal is highly unlikely to achieve its expressed aims. There is no causal connection between the concern expressed—climate change—and the action proposed—sell certain stock investments. The contribution we as individuals and institutions make to the emission of greenhouse gases is the result of the consumption decisions we make, not the investments we own. Therefore, actions that alter investment portfolios but leave our consumption decisions unchanged should not be expected to change our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. To be effective, a proposal must lead to changes in our behaviors.

Third, we are concerned that to divest is to abandon the field and thus to abrogate our duty to engage with political and corporate powers to find effective solutions to this problem. We cannot be part of the solution if we are not at the table.

In summary, we believe the church needs faithful alternatives to the divestment proposal because (i) divestment fails to recognize the continuing importance of economic development for the relief of poverty and the significant role low energy costs play in economic development and (ii) divestment is unlikely to achieve the result for which it aims because there is no causal link between the proposed action and that target. We believe the alternatives discussed below provide a more faithful response.

Faithful Alternatives to Divestment

If divestment is not a faithful, effective, and just response to climate change, what is? How can we assess the faithfulness of alternatives? In considering what constitutes a faithful response, the church should keep in mind:

Does it address the problem (rather than simply make a judgment)?

Does it advance economic justice (both globally and domestically)?

Will it have a practical effect?

Does it propose behavior we are willing to adopt ourselves?

An Effective Approach

The actions proposed in this overture include advocacy to bring into effect consistent, rational, and equitable global pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions, together with mechanisms to protect the poor by addressing the inherently regressive nature of any such system. We believe the four questions above are all answered in the affirmative for this proposal.

From our perspective, the root cause of the climate change issue is behaviors—both consumption and investment. We all engage in destructive behaviors. We do this in part because we do not bear the full social costs of our behaviors, a problem that economists label “negative externalities.” Consistent, rational, and equitable global pricing of emissions will enlist market forces to drive those changes in individual and institutional consumption necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and will provide the economic incentive necessary to promote investment to develop and implement low-carbon or zero-carbon infrastructure and technologies. Affordable energy would continue to be available to drive responsible economic development, while global emissions driven by our consumption would decline. We thus address our dual responsibility to promote the well-being of the disadvantaged and to protect the earth.

When we evaluate the actions proposed in this overture from the perspective of the four questions above, we conclude: The actions proposed in this overture will address the problem, they will have a practical effect, we are prepared to be subject to the proposed system ourselves, and—assuming the regressive effects are properly dealt with—the proposed actions will advance economic justice.

Unity Not Divisiveness

Divestment is a divisive strategy that pits faithful Presbyterians who work in or have retired from the fossil fuel industry against those for whom divestment has no personal cost. Job loss in the fossil fuel industry is a serious concern, especially to our brothers and sisters in states where the industry is prevalent. We recognize that the consistent pricing of greenhouse gas emissions will affect the business prospects of the fossil fuel industry and industries that rely on fossil fuels, and we are not insensitive to the challenge this may create for those employed in or dependent upon those industries. We note that it is the intent of our proposal that greenhouse gas emissions be priced so as to reflect the full social cost of their production: the pricing should not be so low that the creation of emissions is subsidized by society (as is the case currently when emissions are effectively not priced); neither should the pricing be set so high as to be punitive, rather than to reflect the full social costs and risks. We note also that it is the responsibility of every industry to adapt to changes in prices in the markets in which it operates. As the global economy adapts to rational pricing of emissions, we expect our investment managers to adjust our portfolios. We expect investments to be shifted away from firms and industries that adapt poorly to the new economy and toward firms and industries that should benefit. These shifts in our investment portfolio should not require explicit direction from the PC(USA), although MRTI might wish to monitor the matter.

The Consistency of Our Witness

The social witness of the church demands that our actions be consistent with our values. We are charged to consider not only the ideological purity of our response, but also its practical effect. If we decry the production and use of fossil fuels, then our actions must be consistent. If we decry the production, should we not also decry the consumption—including our own? If we choose divestment, should we not also abstain from fossil fuel products? But fossil fuels are employed in every field of human endeavor. The enormous range of hydrocarbon-based products staggers the mind. Until nuclear, solar, and wind energy become far more commonplace than they are currently, the generation of power, including the power necessary to manufacture and recharge non-polluting electric cars, will require some form of fossil fuel. Computers, medical prostheses, even mass alternative energy technology would not be possible without hydrocarbon-based plastics and resins. The expansion of agricultural production is in part attributable to hydrocarbon-dependent processes for the production of fertilizers and pesticides. The economic development of emerging economies is tied closely to efficient, cost-effective, and readily available personal and commercial transportation. Every member of the PC(USA) uses fossil fuels every day in hundreds of applications that significantly improve quality of life. If we commit to divestment, then we should assure that those less fortunate, who do not have ready access to replacements for fossil fuels in all their applications, continue to have reliable and affordable access, even while we act consistently with that commitment by moving toward abstention from fossil fuels.

Summary

We Presbyterians approach creation with the twin perspectives of responsible use (“tilling”) and sustainable care (“keeping”). An ethic of stewardship, therefore, must consider creation both as a good in itself and as a resource for economic justice. The responsibility of holding wealth is directed toward an ethic of engagement that seeks to use the wealth to transform injustice and immorality, rather than an ethic of purity that shuns such engagement. The necessary changes in consumption and investment behavior would be greatly accelerated and facilitated by consistent, rational pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions. Action to bring about that outcome would be consistent with long-standing denominational policy statements and would be a faithful response to the urgent climate change issues that are before us.

Concurrence to Item 09-03 from the Presbyteries of Indian Nations, Upper Ohio Valley, and Western Reserve.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that this item be answered by the substitute resolution proposed in the ACSWP Advice & Counsel to Item 09-01.

The substitute resolution seeks to combine, without repetition, the best elements of the four related overtures.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 09-03

Comment on Item 09-03—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions respectfully requests that the General Assembly answer overtures concerning divestment of certain fossil fuel companies (Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of San Francisco and Items 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 from the Presbytery of New Covenant) by its approval of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies, Item 09-09.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) referred the almost identical subject matter of its Item 15-01 to MRTI for action and discernment in accordance with MRTI's long-standing and detailed procedures to engage with individual corporations to advance their actions in support of important social policy issues.

The MRTI Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies neither assumes nor precludes divestment, but rather proposes that the General Assembly not short-circuit its own process, giving MRTI time to use the time-tested, detailed procedures of corporate engagement to their full effect.

Item 09-04

[The assembly answered Item 09-04 with the action taken on Item 09-01. See p. 63.]

On Faithful Response to Climate Change—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

The Presbytery of New Covenant respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God's creation, including a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases.

2. Recognize the Gospel's call and the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy regime in ways that are both just and compassionate. This mandate compels us to action as a denomination to implement strategies and actions that directly engage climate change and that offer a realistic prospect of changing the behaviors that are at the root of the issue.

3. Work with citizens, voters, legislators, other decision-makers, and other organizations that have parallel goals^{***} to bring into effect national and international policies that create a consistent, rational, and escalating price for emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, which will reduce consumption and support investment in sustainable alternative energy sources.

4. Protect the poor by advocating to assure that the policy steps that implement emissions pricing also implement policies sufficient to offset the regressive nature of the pricing mechanism, such as per capita rebates of all taxes or fees collected through the pricing mechanism.

5. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in collaboration with the Presbyterian Mission Agency or The Thoughtful Christian, to advocate at local, state, and federal levels for policies to rationally price the production of carbon and, therefore, reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This advocacy would include the following:

- Work with other organizations that have parallel goals¹ to maximize our effectiveness in taking individual and collective action to slow climate change.

- Develop a policy paper and educational materials to assist congregations and councils of the church in understanding the impact of climate change and how to take action to slow climate change.

6. Commend Mission Responsibility through Investment (MRTI) for its long history of engagement with companies on issues related to climate change, and instruct MRTI to continue that engagement, applying the long-standing PC(USA) principles related to consideration of divestment. Acknowledge that divestment does not alter the consumption or investment behaviors that create the climate change issues and that divestment is therefore not a faithful response to the problems of climate change, but can only be a response to intransigence on the part of particular entities. Recognize that divestment does not excuse us from the requirement for faithful responses that do alter behaviors.

7. Direct the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform the denomination and the larger public of the passage and implementation of this overture.

^{***}Consultation Document Appendix B—A summary of the Citizens' Climate Lobby Proposal

Rationale

In 1981, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Speak Truth to Power,” the importance of transitioning away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

In 2008, our church made clear through the document, “The Power to Change,” that the catastrophic effects of climate change make this transition essential to the preservation of human life and God’s good creation.

It is not enough simply to speak truth to power. We must enact in our individual, congregational, and denominational lives meaningful approaches that directly address concerns about climate change and that may require sacrifice. Divestment has no direct effect on climate and makes no difference in individual behaviors—and it is these behaviors that directly contribute to greenhouse gases. In addition, divestment renders a moral judgment on thousands of good, moral Presbyterians who are employed within the fossil fuel sector. Damage to our relationships with those faithful Presbyterians would do great harm to our congregations without providing any meaningful engagement with climate change. Divestment neither assures protection of the earth nor promotes the economic well-being of the disadvantaged. The PC(USA) has a responsibility to do better than divestment.

We, as Christians, have the privilege, responsibility, and obligation to speak with moral authority on issues of great importance. This is such an issue.

This overture asks us not to sever our financial ties to the fossil fuel industry, but to unite all Presbyterians in directly engaging climate change with responsible, meaningful, and lasting actions that will make a difference in the future of God’s creation. Through this overture, the PC(USA) will demonstrate the depth of our theological understanding of the stewardship of God’s creation by promoting alternatives to divestment that unite us.

Some Positive Steps

We begin with some good news: the United States has been gradually reducing its greenhouse gas emissions in recent years. Between 2004 and 2013, emissions in total have declined nearly 9 percent, while per capita emissions are down more than 15 percent. China has made significant investments in green energy. It plans to increase its solar-energy capacity this year alone by 18 gigawatts—as much solar-energy capacity as exists in the U.S. right now. Its wind-energy production has increased tenfold in a half-dozen years, and the country is in the midst of what one analyst called “the largest build-out of hydroelectricity the world has ever seen.” The cost of solar power is rapidly declining. In the sunniest locations in the world, building a new solar-power plant now costs less than coal or natural gas, even without subsidies, and within six years, this will be true of places with average sunlight, too.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Ecology and justice are implicit in the story of creation itself: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to *till it and keep it*” (Gen. 2:15, emphasis added). As the 1990 study, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, (“RCEJ”)^{†††} observes, “tilling” requires a community effort that establishes an economy; “keeping” is an act of environmental stewardship that regards the creation as a gift to be cared for. RCEJ identifies four norms that characterize “a new faithfulness” reflecting God’s love for the world: sustainability, participation, sufficiency, and solidarity.^{†††} These highlight the inherent tensions. We cannot address only the good of the creation without also considering the good of the community. We cannot address only the good of the community without considering the good of creation. Global climate change, regardless of its cause, threatens both the community and the earth over which we are stewards. Our call is to address these threats responsibly, with meaningful effect, while promoting economic justice.

Denominational Rationale

Our denomination has long recognized a moral obligation to be faithful stewards of God’s creation. We have acknowledged the realities of climate change and its effect on the “least of these,” and the need to take action. Previous General Assemblies (1981, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2006, and 2008) have passed overtures, resolutions, and reports warning us of the dangers of climate change and calling on us to reduce our energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. Now is the time to move beyond pronouncements and symbolic actions into education and behavioral changes.

^{†††} https://www.presbyterianmission.org/site_media/media/uploads/environment/pdf/restoring-creation-for-ecology&justice.pdf

^{†††} Sustainability means “the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus. Participation refers to the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator’s gifts for sustenance. Sufficiency provides for all to have enough through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end. Solidarity means “steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies ... to the realization of the church’s potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.”

The Ethics of Divestment

Jesus taught that great possessions convey great responsibility. In the Gospel of Luke, the examples of the Rich Ruler and Zacchaeus (18:18–30; 19:1–10) show different responses to the obligations of wealth. In managing its corporate assets, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has recognized a dual obligation to invest in a morally responsible manner and to use its influence for the transformation of society (including its economic institutions) to become more just, humane, and environmentally responsible.

The criteria for the just investment of resources were addressed by the General Assembly in the 1984 policy, “The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria” (*Minutes*, 1984, Part I, pp. 193–207). The policy is clear that we Reformed Christians ordinarily follow an ethic of responsibility as opposed to an ethic of purity (which would be more characteristic of the Holiness and Anabaptist traditions), and that divestment, where necessary, is the final step in a process that has emphasized engagement and consultation as preceding steps.

Perfection and separation are not ultimate. They must be held in tension with faithfulness and effectiveness, which may involve compromise to gain some important proximate goal. Thus, Reformed churches have sought to be in the world, not withdrawn from it; to serve the perfect purpose of God in less than perfect structures in order to change them, not to live apart in communities of holiness. The church as a community seeks engagement, not isolation.^{§§§}

Only when the church has made every effort to fulfill its call to holiness through responsible efforts at transformation, when it is prepared to respond pastorally to those economically affected by divestment, and when it is acting in concert with other Christian bodies, should withdrawal from engagement be considered as an ethical option.

The Ineffectiveness of Divestment

The 221st General Assembly (2014), in response to an overture from the Presbytery of Boston *et al*, referred to MRTI a proposal that the General Assembly declare our intention to categorically divest from fossil fuels within five years. However, in assessing the divestment proposal against the dual criteria of (i) economic development and justice for all people and (ii) faithful and responsible stewardship of God’s creation, we believe the proposal falls short.

First, the divestment proposal fails to consider the importance of economic development. The criterion of economic justice seems to have no role in the divestment movement. That movement fails to recognize the importance of low-cost energy for economic development, and the divestment proposal—if it were effective in achieving its aims—would likely condemn to eternal poverty those poor who need access to low-cost energy to emerge from poverty.

Second, the divestment proposal is highly unlikely to achieve its expressed aims. There is no causal connection between the concern expressed—climate change—and the action proposed—sell certain stock investments. The contribution we as individuals and institutions make to the emission of greenhouse gases is the result of the consumption decisions we make, not the investments we own. Therefore, actions that alter investment portfolios but leave our consumption decisions unchanged should not be expected to change our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. To be effective, a proposal must lead to changes in our behaviors.

Third, we are concerned that to divest is to abandon the field and thus to abrogate our duty to engage with political and corporate powers to find effective solutions to this problem. We cannot be part of the solution if we are not at the table.

In summary, we believe the church needs faithful alternatives to the divestment proposal because (i) divestment fails to recognize the continuing importance of economic development for the relief of poverty and the significant role low energy costs play in economic development and (ii) divestment is unlikely to achieve the result for which it aims because there is no causal link between the proposed action and that target. We believe the alternatives discussed below provide a more faithful response.

Faithful Alternatives to Divestment

If divestment is not a faithful, effective, and just response to climate change, what is? How can we assess the faithfulness of alternatives? In considering what constitutes a faithful response, the church should keep in mind:

- Does it address the problem (rather than simply make a judgment)?
- Does it advance economic justice (both globally and domestically)?
- Will it have a practical effect?

^{§§§}*Minutes*, 1984, Part I, p. 201.

- Does it propose behavior we are willing to adopt ourselves?

An Effective Approach

The actions proposed in this overture include advocacy to bring into effect consistent, rational pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions, together with mechanisms to protect the poor by addressing the inherently regressive nature of any such system. We believe the four questions above are all answered in the affirmative for this proposal.

From our perspective, the root cause of the climate change issue is behaviors—both consumption and investment. We all engage in destructive behaviors. We do this in part because we do not bear the full social costs of our behaviors, a problem that economists label “negative externalities.” Consistent rational pricing of emissions will enlist market forces to drive those changes in individual and institutional consumption necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and will provide the economic incentive necessary to promote investment to develop and implement low-carbon or zero-carbon infrastructure and technologies. Affordable energy would continue to be available to drive responsible economic development, while emissions driven by our consumption would decline. We thus address our dual responsibility to promote the well-being of the disadvantaged and to protect the earth.

When we evaluate the actions proposed in this overture from the perspective of the four questions above, we conclude: The actions proposed in this overture will address the problem, they will have a practical effect, we are prepared to be subject to the proposed system ourselves, and—assuming the regressive effects are properly dealt with—the proposed actions will advance economic justice.

Even if the more disastrous scenarios of climate change do not materialize, pricing carbon (reducing our consumption and investing more in renewable energy sources) has little downside. Pricing carbon can therefore be seen as insurance against the potential of the more dire consequences of climate change. It will also conserve our hydrocarbon resources for that many more generations.

An effective method of pricing is a Carbon Fee and Dividend as developed and advocated by Citizens’ Climate Lobby.

Citizens’ Climate Lobby’s Carbon Fee and Dividend Proposal

The Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) has developed and is advocating for a comprehensive approach to implement such a plan. Full details may be found at the CCL website <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>. The fee is collected on the major greenhouse gases (which include CO₂ and methane) when they are produced (at the well or mine) or imported, and the amount is based on the amount of CO₂-equivalent produced when burned or emitted. The dividend is the return of 100 percent of the fees to the public on a per capita basis. The carbon fee and dividend should be implemented as soon as practical at a moderate level of \$15/MT to \$35/MT. (The current official CCL proposal starts at \$15/MT, while others advocate starting somewhat higher.) That level is increased every year (at a rate of \$10 per MT per year) to provide clear price signals to consumers and industry.

The CCL plan phases in the emissions price over time, rather than jumping from an effective price of zero to the full social cost all in one step, and then raises the fee annually to continually increase the incentive to shift to cleaner energy sources.

This predictable increase will allow industry to make the large investments necessary to expand alternative energy sources and become more efficient while providing the energy we and the world need. The fee assures that market prices favor lower carbon energy sources, while the dividend redresses the inherently regressive nature of the fee. For example, electricity produced by natural gas generates a bit less than 50 percent of the CO₂ produced by generating from coal. A \$35/MT carbon fee will add about 3.7¢/kwhr to the price of electricity from coal, but only 1.5¢/kwhr for electricity from natural gas-based electricity (assuming a U.S. average price of 10¢/kwhr. After a decade the fee will have increased to \$135/MT, adding 14.2¢/kwhr for coal but only 5.9¢/kwhr for natural gas. Looking at the example of gasoline, a \$35/MT fee will add about 35¢/gallon at the pump, increasing to \$1.35/gallon over a decade.

In the CCL plan, the dividend would be allocated based on “shares,” with one share per person up to 4 shares per family and a half share for children under 18. At the current levels of consumption and energy mix, the dividend would start at several hundred dollars per year (distributed monthly) and would rise to more than a thousand dollars in a decade. A carbon fee and dividend transfers money from capital intensive to more labor intensive segments of the economy, and is projected to provide an economic stimulus.

A third implementation detail that a carbon fee and dividend must address is a system of border adjustments to assure that production of energy-intensive products is not forced off shore. These import fees on products imported from countries without a carbon price (along with rebates for countries with a higher price of carbon) will create a fair competitive environment for exporters. A carbon fee and dividend is the most transparent, predictable, and transportable method of pricing greenhouse gases around the world. When the United States enacts such a proposal, our huge economy will be a powerful driver for the countries without a price on carbon to adopt similar carbon pricing policies.

There is tremendous energy inequality around the world. The developed nations (which have contributed the most to the carbon emissions that are driving climate change) need to lead the development of low-carbon and no-carbon alternatives. A carbon fee and dividend will drive the growth of alternative energy sources and efficiency improvements that will benefit developing countries, allowing them to have greater access to lower-carbon energy sources and thus partially leap frog the “carbon stage.” A key requirement of any energy and climate action is that it must support developing countries to provide greater access to energy and allow all people to reach their full potential.

Unity Not Divisiveness

Divestment is a divisive strategy that pits faithful Presbyterians who work in or have retired from the fossil fuel industry against those for whom divestment has no personal cost. Job loss in the fossil fuel industry is a serious concern, especially to our brothers and sisters in states where the industry is prevalent. We recognize that the consistent pricing of greenhouse gas emissions will affect the business prospects of the fossil fuel industry and industries that rely on fossil fuels, and we are not insensitive to the challenge this may create for those employed in or dependent upon those industries. We note that it is the intent of our proposal that greenhouse gas emissions be priced so as to reflect the full social cost of their production: the pricing should not be so low that the creation of emissions is subsidized by society (as is the case currently when emissions are effectively not priced); neither should the pricing be set so high as to be punitive, rather than to reflect the full social costs and risks. We note also that it is the responsibility of every industry to adapt to changes in prices in the markets in which it operates. As the global economy adapts to rational pricing of emissions, we expect our investment managers to adjust our portfolios. We expect investments to be shifted away from firms and industries that adapt poorly to the new economy and toward firms and industries that should benefit. These shifts in our investment portfolio should not require explicit direction from PC(USA), although MRTI might wish to monitor the matter.

The Consistency of Our Witness

The social witness of the church demands that our actions be consistent with our values. We are charged to consider not only the ideological purity of our response, but also its practical effect. If we decry the production and use of fossil fuels, then our actions must be consistent. If we decry the production, should we not also decry the consumption—including our own? If we choose divestment, should we not also abstain from fossil fuel products? But fossil fuels are employed in every field of human endeavor. The enormous range of hydrocarbon-based products staggers the mind. Computers, medical prostheses, even mass alternative energy technology would not be possible without hydrocarbon-based plastics and resins. The expansion of agricultural production is in part attributable to hydrocarbon-dependent processes for the production of fertilizers and pesticides. The economic development of emerging economies is tied closely to efficient, cost-effective, and readily available personal and commercial transportation. Every member of the PC(USA) uses fossil fuels every day in hundreds of applications that significantly improve quality of life. If we commit to divestment, then we should assure that those less fortunate, who do not have ready access to replacements for fossil fuels in all their applications, continue to have reliable and affordable access, even while we act consistently with that commitment by moving toward abstention from fossil fuels.

Summary

We Presbyterians approach creation with the twin perspectives of responsible use (“tilling”) and sustainable care (“keeping”). An ethic of stewardship, therefore, must consider creation both as a good in itself and as a resource for economic justice. The responsibility of holding wealth is directed toward an ethic of engagement that seeks to use the wealth to transform injustice and immorality, rather than an ethic of purity that shuns such engagement. The necessary changes in consumption and investment behavior would be greatly accelerated and facilitated by consistent, rational pricing of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions. Action to bring about that outcome would be consistent with long-standing denominational policy statements and would be a faithful response to the urgent climate change issues that are before us.

Concurrence to Item 09-04 from the Presbyteries of Cimarron, Indian Nations, Northern Kansas, Western Reserve, and Winnebago.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that this item be answered by the substitute resolution proposed in the ACSWP Advice & Counsel to Item 09-01.

The substitute resolution seeks to combine, without repetition, the best elements of the four related overtures.

BOP COMMENT ON ITEM 09-04

Comment on Item 09-04—From the Board of Pensions (BOP).

The Board of Pensions respectfully requests that the General Assembly answer overtures concerning divestment of certain fossil fuel companies (Item 09-01 from the Presbytery of San Francisco and Items 09-02, 09-03, and 09-04 from the Presbytery of New Covenant) by its approval of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies, Item 09-09.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) referred the almost identical subject matter of its Item 15-01 to MRTI for action and discernment in accordance with MRTI's long-standing and detailed procedures to engage with individual corporations to advance their actions in support of important social policy issues.

The MRTI Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies neither assumes nor precludes divestment, but rather proposes that the General Assembly not short-circuit its own process, giving MRTI time to use the time-tested, detailed procedures of corporate engagement to their full effect.

Item 09-05

[The assembly approved Item 09-05 with amendment. See pp. 13, 63–64.]

On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of the Encyclical “Laudato Si”—From the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

The Presbytery of Santa Fe overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to [direct the Stated Clerk] do the following:

1. Communicate [gratitude] [appreciation] to Pope Francis I for his efforts in preparing and courageously circulating the encyclical, “Laudato Si,” [and to encourage its study and use throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)] [and to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for their positive reception of the same (<http://www.usccb.org/news/2015/15-094.cfm>)].

[2. To encourage its study and use throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in dialogue with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) statements of environmental theology that have led us to create environmental justice ministries since the early 1970s;]

[2.] [3.] Inform all churches within the PC(USA) where copies of the encyclical are available for free. (It is accessible on http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_eniclica-laudato-si.html)] [~~http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_eniclica-laudato-si.html~~] and in printed form from booksellers; another is available at <http://presbypeacefellowship.org/laudatosi>].

[3.] [4.] [Ask synods, presbyteries, and congregations to] [E] [e]ncourage nonpartisan, ecumenical and interfaith groups to carefully study and discuss the document through use of a study guide. ([H] [One] is accessible at no cost at [~~ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/readers-guide-laudato-si~~] [<http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/readers-guide-laudato-si>]; [another is available at <http://presbypeacefellowship.org/laudatosi>]; and also in printed form at booksellers[; and]]].

[4.] [5.] [Ask synods, presbyteries, and congregations to] [E] [e]ncourage nonpartisan, ecumenical and interfaith groups to act to alleviate the crisis and suffering [[caused by environmental damage and climate change](#)].

[6. The PC(USA) joins Pope Francis' call for all Christians to support an ecumenical day of prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1 annually. This day was first proposed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation is to be included on PC(USA) Program Calendars and resources are to be made available online on the PC(USA) website.]

Rationale

As people who believe in a loving Creator, we are deeply concerned by the ecological crisis facing humankind due to global warming, which we understand is caused by destructive, anthropocentric human activity.

As people who believe God desires justice and the well-being of all, we are grieved by the unjust suffering of billions whose concerns are not heard and who are being harmed by global technocratic, profit-oriented economic systems that fuel the crisis and ignore the suffering.

As people who are followers of Jesus, we are hearing theological, biblical, scientific, socioeconomic and ecological voices calling us to unite with others in honest study and dialogue in order to produce timely action to decrease both the crisis and the suffering it causes.

As members of the “one holy, catholic church,” we find the Papal Encyclical “Laudato Si,” composed by Pope Francis I, to be a very compassionate, comprehensive and compelling document that educates, inspires, motivates, and suggests specific actions to combat effects of this global crisis.

As humans who share this common home, Earth, we sense the urging of the Spirit of God to share this encyclical and the urgent concern it describes with brothers and sisters of this beloved Church and beyond.

Concurrence to Item 09-05 from the Presbyteries of Cimarron and Heartland.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-05 from the Presbytery of Santa Fe requests that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) communicate gratitude to Pope Francis I for the preparation and circulation of “Laudato Si,” encourage its study and use throughout the denomination and in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith groups, and encourage groups to alleviate the climate crisis and attendant suffering.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 09-05 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Santa Fe overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to [direct the Stated Clerk to] do the following:

“1. Communicate [appreciation] [~~gratitude~~] to Pope Francis I for his efforts in preparing and courageously circulating the encyclical, “Laudato Si,” [and to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for their positive reception of the same (<http://www.usccb.org/news/2015/15-094.cfm>)] [~~and to encourage its study and use throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)~~];

“2. To encourage its study and use throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in dialogue with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) statements of environmental theology that have led us to create environmental justice ministries since the early 1970s;]

“~~2.~~ [3.] Inform all churches within the PC(USA) where copies of the encyclical are available for free. (It is accessible on [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_ enciclica-laudato-si.html] [~~http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papafrancesco_20150524_ enciclica-laudato-si.html~~] and in printed form from booksellers.

“~~3.~~ [4.] [Ask synods, presbyteries, and congregations to encourage] [~~Encourage~~] nonpartisan, ecumenical, and interfaith groups to carefully study and discuss the document through use of a study guide. ([~~One~~] [4] is accessible at no cost at [<http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/readers-guide-laudato-si>] [~~<http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/readers-guide-laudato-si>~~]); and also in printed form at booksellers; [another is available at <http://presbypeacefellowship.org/laudatosi>]; and

“~~4.~~ [5.] [Ask all synods, presbyteries, and congregations to encourage] [~~Encourage~~] nonpartisan, ecumenical, and interfaith groups to act to alleviate the crisis and suffering [caused by environmental damage and climate change].”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs that *Laudato Si* is a valuable contribution to discussion, education, and encouragement to action on the topic of human-caused environmental damage, and of why this should be an issue to all Christians. It is in line with PC(USA) environmental statement such as the 2008 policy document *Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming* and the 1990 policy document *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*. We would also recognize the effective ecumenical environmental justice program developed by the National Council of Churches of Christ, representing considerable consensus among U.S. Protestant and Orthodox churches.

The changes proposed by ACSWP clarify who is to take what action in response to the overture, add appreciation to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for their positive response to the document, correct the web links, and add a Presbyterian-developed study guide to *Laudato Si* as an additional resource.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 09-05.

In reading this overture, we find the recommendations consistent with the general policies and statements approved by the 1990 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (1990 “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice” policy) that is the foundational policy for the work of the Environmental Ministries program of the PC(USA).

This overture is in line with the ecumenical policies of PC(USA) that emphasize our ecumenical commitment and encourage us to join efforts with other Christians to stop the climate change and the general deterioration of our environment. Robina Winbush, director of ecumenical relations of PC(USA) has said about the Encyclical *Laudato Si*: “While there is much that still separates Christians, people of faith and people of no faith, we share life in this created world and are called by God to be stewards of the created order. We welcome the opportunity to join with our Orthodox and Roman Catholic brothers and sisters in praying for the whole of creation and committing ourselves and our resources to act and live in ways that respect and care for the world entrusted to us and generations yet unborn” (<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/8/27/pc-usa-environmental-ministries-program-supports-w/>). The earth is our house, and we share this common home with other men and women around the world. The study of the Encyclical recommended by the overture will help Presbyterians to understand our common responsibility for our planet and promote concrete actions to protect, preserve, and impact our inhabited earth.

For these reasons, ACREC strongly advises the approval of this overture.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-05

Comment on Item 09-05—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

As the General Assembly considers this overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe, the following information may be useful to commissioners:

Laudato Si, Pope Francis’ encyclical, “On Care for our Common Home,” outlines the Holy See’s concern for “the environmental challenge that we are undergoing, and its human roots” (p. 5). Pope Francis explores the roots of the problem and he advances proposals for dialogue and action. *Laudato Si* is a long and detailed encyclical at eighty-two pages.

The most recent General Assembly policy paper is, “The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming,” (218th General Assembly (2008)). The 217th General Assembly (2006), in Item 07-06 commended to the whole church for study, reflection, and action “Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth” and the Accra Confession, which was approved by the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (now the World Communion of Reformed Churches) in 2004. The PC(USA) continues to lend leadership in this global movement. We commend to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) a renewal of commitment to reflection, study, and action to “Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth” and the Accra Confession.

The major concerns and calls to action of *Laudato Si* and “Power to Change” are consistent; however, there are some distinctions that should be noted: (1) there is a seven-year gap between publications, thus the contexts are not identical; (2) each builds on the their own distinctive theological traditions; (3) each explores the causes and calls to action for the environmental crisis caused by climate change in detail—the level of detail means that the emphases and specific proposals diverge at points. Pope Francis invites everyone into “a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of the planet” (p. 5).

On June 18, 2015, Gradye Parsons, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, wrote a letter (<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/6/18/presbyterian-church-us-welcomes-papal-encyclical/>) commending Pope Francis for *Laudato Si*’ writing, “We celebrate the faithful witness and words of Pope Francis today as he encourages responsible, loving care for God’s creation in the release of his papal encyclical *Laudato Si*’. We affirm its echo of the great St. Francis’ reverence for nature.” Parsons concludes his letter with these words:

Pope Francis’ leadership, wisdom, and pastoral care are evident in the encyclical, and we deeply appreciate this powerful, faith-filled encouragement for all people to join together to care for God’s creation. We affirm the moral conviction that we must turn from individual and corporate practices that harm the creation and participate in healing, protecting, and caring for the world. We will continue to work in partnerships with other faith communities and in the public sector as we all seek to better care for all people and all creation. Finally, we applaud the inspiring leadership of Pope Francis and look forward to seeing what transformative commitments will result from this ethical mandate to care for creation.

Item 09-06

[The assembly approved Item 09-06 with amendment. See pp. 62, 64.]

On Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or Internally Displaced—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Respond to the ancient biblical directive to provide for the stranger and the sojourner by directing appropriate PC(USA) agencies, offices and staff (e.g., the Stated Clerk, the Office of Immigration Issues, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of Public Witness, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) to provide leadership for the whole PC(USA) in diligently advocating for and seeking to improve matters related to United States government refugee resettlement policies and related issues. This would include, but not be limited to advocacy for:

a. A shortened overseas processing period—one measured in months not years—for refugees approved for admission to the United States. Beyond security checks, the process should include an expanded plan for reuniting families in this country.

b. Increased federal funding to support necessary services for an expanded number of refugees—especially the most vulnerable.

c. Admitting refugees as lawful permanent residents to increase their personal security and to ensure that they not slip through administrative gaps in the immigration system.

2. Direct appropriate PC(USA) entities and staff to urge the United States government and other member nations of the United Nations to honor and increase their funding to support humanitarian agencies, international refugee camps, and direct financial support that is often indispensable for internally displaced families in countries such as Iraq and Syria, and the multitude of other people, forced by fear and violence, to flee their national boundaries. This would include, but not be limited to:

a. Integration by the United States Refugee Resettlement Office of all services provided for refugees such as medical assistance, job training, job placements, micro enterprise loans, and mental health services in addition to living expenses. Such integration would promote charting the actual cost of refugee resettlement and give guidance for realistic funding based on the number of refugees admitted per year.

b. Establishment of trauma services for refugee children. Trauma is epidemic in refugee camps, and funding is inadequate to address needs. Also, since only about half of refugee children live in refugee camps, similar assistance should be made available through appropriate service agencies and responsible governmental entities where refugees live outside of camps.

c. ~~Dramatically increased~~ Increase support by governments, religious entities, private organizations, and individuals for direct refugee services.

3. Joining denominational entities and staff named above, PC(USA) presbyteries, sessions, and pastors should encourage congregations to host, co-sponsor, and/or support refugee families.

a. Churches can provide basic support such as clothing, housing, furniture, language teaching, and food.

b. Churches can provide a social connection for refugees to assist their acclimation to the community—including a welcoming voice for Muslims and persons of all other religious views.

4. Direct PC(USA) entities and staff to work with PC(USA) mission partners in affected countries and regions to advocate for political resolutions to situations that displace people internally or force them to become refugees.

5. Direct PC(USA) entities, including the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to advocate for an end to and prevention of conflicts that cause people to be internally and externally displaced from their homes.

6. Reaffirm the actions taken on immigration by the 216th, 217th, and 220th General Assemblies (2004), (2006), and (2012).

Rationale

The present world refugee crisis is the greatest in over a quarter century. Worldwide, 59.5 million people are displaced from their homes. Among the displaced are half the Syrian population, including 4.1 million who have fled to surrounding

countries—living in camps, with families, or on their own (USAID, Fact Sheet #8 for 2015 and report of the *Washington Post*, Aug. 30, 2015, p. A13.).

While the number of refugees grows, funding for their needs continues to fall short and even diminish. The UNHCR (the UN agency for refugees) reports that as of August, 2015, only 37 percent of necessary funds have been forthcoming from governments. The privately funded World Food Program was forced to reduce the per person monthly food allowance from \$40 to \$13.50 and faced cutting off all aid to 200,000 of the neediest 1.6 million refugees it seeks to serve (*Washington Post*, Aug. 30, 2015, p. A13).

The United States government is the largest donor to United Nations refugee work and has contributed \$4.1 billion for Middle East efforts since 2012. That amounted to \$3.1 million per day in 2014 while \$10.5 million per day was being spent by the U.S. on the air war against the Islamic State (Ibid.). Spending priorities, even in a time of military conflict, are a moral issue not merely a financial consideration.

Our biblical faith has deep roots in and strong commitments to the refugee reality. “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there . . .” (Deut. 26:5). Fleeing centuries of persecution, the Hebrew people lived the refugee reality of establishing a new life in a new place. Centuries later, Mary and Joseph fled the terrors of Herod to save the infant Jesus. When he began his ministry, the stranger and the outcast and the downtrodden had a special place in his teaching. It is not surprising then that his early followers were instructed, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Heb. 13:2). And so the church remains conscious of its refugee roots, of the calling to seek justice for the oppressed and the unexpected joys in doing so.

General Assemblies of the PC(USA) have sought in many statements and calls to the churches to be faithful to the mission of compassion and justice to refugees.

In approving the resolution on “Transformation of Churches and Society through Encounter with New Neighbors,” the 211th General Assembly (1999) noted that:

The Christian confession of Jesus Christ as Lord transforms “strangers” into neighbors who are welcome into our communities.

Churches are called to ministry with refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants, and to public witness on their behalf.

Christians have the responsibility to challenge and to shape government policy regarding refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. . . .

[They] should be treated humanely and justly in government policies and in our communities. . . .

Sovereign nations should exercise their authority to regulate immigration with a presumption toward generosity rather than restrictiveness.

The action of the 211th General Assembly (1999) also reaffirmed the action of the 209th General Assembly (1997) that “urges presbyteries and congregations to respond to the plight of refugees and immigrants . . . and to advocate” on their behalf so that their basic needs will be met.

Refugees are distinguished from migrants in that refugees are seeking to escape violence and other threats to their well-being. Like migrants, they seek a better life in a new land, but refugees typically come with few or no financial resources of their own.

Most refugees are almost completely dependent on international funding and support. Without help, many will not survive; with help millions of people can make a new beginning.

The United Nations, supported by the United States and other governments, remains the primary channel of funding for the present wave of international refugees.

Since 1947, the Presbyterian church has advocated on behalf of refugee resettlement in the United States and supported strengthening laws toward that end.

The PC(USA) has often called for the U.S. government to increase the number of refugees received (*Minutes*, UPCNA, 1947, Part I, p. 1110; *Minutes*, PCUS, 1947, pp. 162–64; *Minutes*, PCUSA, 1948, Part I, p. 204; *Minutes*, PCUSA, 1950, Part I, pp. 89, 247). These early calls for generous admission policies have been bolstered by General Assemblies dealing with compassionate immigration and refugee policies for arrivals from various countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (see *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation*, p. 52), and now the Middle East, particularly Syria and Iraq.

The General Assembly Office of Immigration Issues exists to advocate for and support Presbyterian efforts to treat refugees with compassion and respect while helping to meet their resettlement needs. The office is responsive to congregations, networks, and individuals who seek to become involved around issues of refugee justice and well-being.

Teresa Waggner
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
100 Witherspoon Street

Louisville, KY 40202
502-569-5372
Teresa.Waggner@pcusa.org

Every congregation's mission could include assisting a refugee individual or family.

Concurrence to Item 09-06 from the Presbyteries of Cascades, Grace, Los Ranchos, Muskingum, Providence, and Upper Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 12-04 be approved with amendment by adding a new Recommendation 5 to read as follows:

“[5. Direct PC(USA) entities including but not limited to the office at the United Nations and the Office of Public Witness in Washington, DC to advocate for an end to and prevention of conflicts that cause people to be internally and externally displaced from their homes.]”

Since the end of World War II, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has expressed concern for and called itself to care for refugees around the world, as well as prevent political situations that create refugees. Beginning in 1947, the PCUSA stated “We believe that it is the will of God that the hungry be fed, the naked clothed, the homeless sheltered. God’s will is our duty. We seek to serve God’s purpose in our lives and in our national policy. No policy of government is either right or wise that denies help to the homeless and hungry. ...”¹

The call to the American church to help resettle refugees is not new. A 1966 PCUS statement called on churches to “prepare to expand greatly their services to refugees and to those injured or affected by the war, and to play their full role in the gigantic task of reconstruction and reconciliation.”²

The 1982 PCUS Statement on the World Refugee Crisis called on the congregations to engage in a time of study of the root causes (social, economic, and political) as well as the theological task from Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves. Once refugees arrive in the United States, the PCUS called on its congregations to help their communities support refugees so that they could gain self-sufficiency and have the opportunities to be part of the community while maintaining their religions and other cultural ties.³

The requested amendment to direct our ministries at the United Nations and in Washington, D.C., reflects our common commitment to international and domestic policies that live out the call to love our refugee neighbors, whether settling in or outside the United States.

Endnotes for ACSWP Advice

1. 1947 PCUSA Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (USA), 2000), 53.
2. 1966 PCUS Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (USA), 2000), 54.
3. 1982 PCUS Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (USA), 2000), 56.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Item 09-06.

This is a well-written and motivated overture.

Item 09-07

Item 09-07 has been moved to 14 Assembly Committee on Theological Issues and Institutions and has been reassigned the following item number: Item 14-13. See p. 1015.

Item 09-08

[The assembly approved Item 09-08 with amendment. See pp. 63, 65.]

On Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources—From the Presbytery of Seattle.

[The Presbytery of Seattle overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to empower the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of Public Witness (OPW) in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry to the United Nations,] to witness against environmental degradation and to affirm public policy that supports good stewardship of natural resources. With firm biblical foundation and the policies of twenty General Assemblies to build upon, they may give voice to threats to air and water quality[;] and to the well-being of humans and all God’s creation, including carefully documented threats from fracking; threats from ~~erude oil transport and storage and, indeed,~~ all modes of fossil fuel extraction[;] processing, transport, and storage; and threats from methane and other destabilizing and harmful byproducts that results from industrial processes. This empowers ~~both~~ the offices to speak for the church to uphold the integrity of creation and speak against emerging or worsening environmental injustices.

Rationale

Our charge is clear:

Hosea declared in times of no faithfulness, “... the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing” (Hos. 4:3).

Jesus heard the lawyer reply, “... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” and told him “...do this, and you will live” (Lk. 10: 27–28).

Calvin lifted up the “lively image of his [God’s] wisdom, power, and goodness in the creation of the world, and in the order of nature, encourages us to praise him for the manifestation he has made of himself as a father to us in this frail and perishable life” (Calvin on Psalm 104).

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) advanced social policies to preserve the environment, including global warming, water quality, protecting wildlife and wildlands, solid waste and hazardous waste management, and sustainable agriculture. Why? “That all people may know justice” (*Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, 1990, p. 26).

The 218th General Assembly (2008) advanced social policies to preserve God’s creation in the face of global warming and the need to improve our nation’s energy policy. “We will stand with ‘the least of these’... and advocate for the poor and oppressed ... who are often the victims of environmental injustice ...” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 935, *Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, 2008)

The 221st General Assembly (2014) affirmed the Precautionary Principle as a method of “preventing irreversible ecological impacts” to the planet. The principle represents “a part of the basis for responsible, moral, and scientifically-informed human flourishing, affirming the sacred in societal and creation care, and protecting the earth for future generations” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 1021, Item 15-02).

The obstacle is real:

In the last decade, the decision to shift from historic annual assemblies to biennial assemblies was grounded in the logic of cost savings; greater time for governing bodies, agencies, and committees to act upon assembly decisions; and, expanded space for discerning God’s will within the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A consequence of the shift, however, has been a reduced opportunity to respond swiftly through General Assembly actions to the accelerating pace of world and national events. The shift has placed even greater weight on the reasoned and well-deliberated policy positions of prior assemblies. Yet, if an event or development presents itself unexpectedly, it may not have been addressed within previous policy guidance. This is true for environmental issues that are emerging as climate changes unfold. For Example, the COP 21 talks in Paris offers faith leaders an opportunity to join their voices on issues that affect those most impacted by those environmental changes. The PC(USA) voice needs to be an immediate part of that. To wait for policy to come to the 223 General Assembly (2018) is to be left out of the very call Jesus gives to love our neighbors. To wait until 2018 to address critical fossil fuel extraction that drives climate change may mean irreversible damage for our planet and God’s people.

The foundation is firm:

We are called by God to uphold the integrity of creation. Across the years, General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have repeatedly called for the protection of the environment. “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice

(1990),” “Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming (2008), and the 221st General Assembly (2014) affirmation of the Precautionary Principle are contemporary, landmark positions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

With the firm foundation of biblical charge and the established environmental policies of General Assemblies, leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are called to faithfully address rising threats to air and water quality that may emerge from industrial processes, including, but not limited to, fracking; crude oil shipment, storage, and export.

We are called as witnesses. With this empowerment, the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations can communicate with the president of the United States and Executive Departments; members of Congress and their staffs; state and local officials; and, corporate leaders when a new and arising threat to creation is presented.

Why an overture on empowering a national voice on fossil fuels/green-house gasses:

Two years ago, the Presbytery of Seattle sponsored an overture supporting treaty rights of the Lummi Nation as they said “no” to one of the largest coal export facilities in the country. The overture addressed the transport of coal by rail.

Last year, while all eyes were on coal, trains carrying volatile crude oil began traveling those same rails. There were multiple disasters in Canada and the U.S.—the largest of which was in Lac Megantic where forty-seven people died in a fiery blaze. At a scoping session in Olympia, firefighters from Seattle stated that they are unable to fight a fire like the ones happening elsewhere should a train derail underground from King Street Station to Pike Place Market. The organization for ship pilots spoke to the hazards of increased ship traffic carrying fuels through the straights of San Juan de Fuca.

Faith leaders began to speak out about the poor rail standards. The voice of those speakers gave powerful witness to the extra risks for the poor, for people of color, for children exposed to increasing amounts of pollution from increasing rail transport. Rail line locations and low income go hand-in-hand. Two people from the northwest wrote a letter to Anthony Foxx, Secretary of the Department of Transportation. The idea was to let Secretary Foxx to know where PC(USA) stood on the issue. The letter was sent to the Office of Public Witness (OPW) asking that office to initiate the letter. The hope was that the overture that spoke to coal transport would give OPW the necessary policy to speak to oil-by-rail. They welcomed the effort and looked for some policy that would allow their sponsorship. Alas, they did not have it. Oil transport needed its own policy. Policy comes after an overture is sent to our General Assembly and is taken up by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). (As an aside, once the overture from 2014 was known to ACSWP, a woman in that office rewrote it, giving it much greater power for advocacy. When it was presented to the delegates on committee 15 they could choose which version to approve—if any. The overture advocates [OA’s] asked them to use the ACSWP document. They did and it passed.)

The woman who assisted with the rewriting of the coal export letter was also the one working on the letter to Sec. Foxx. She was leaving her position (therefore able to speak as she pleased). She encouraged us to write an overture that would allow our Presbyterian Mission Agency offices to address issues arising from the many different areas of concern, to include extraction, transport, and storage of fossil fuels.

A consistent question asks if this overture negates the deliberative nature of Presbyterian polity in allowing a few to act quickly and, potentially, improperly represent the views of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a whole? The offices empowered by this overture fall under the Presbyterian Mission Agency, which maintains a robust governance structure, including a large and active board. The PMA’s established processes include both policy and structured review processes that safeguard the church from importunate actions.

Concurrence to Item 09-08 from the Presbyteries of Great Rivers and Northern Plains.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-08 from the Presbytery of Seattle requests that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) empower the Office of Public Witness (OPW) in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry to the United Nations to continue and broaden witness against environmental degradation and to affirm public policy that supports good stewardship of natural resources, upholds the integrity of creation, and speaks against injustices.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 09-08 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“The Presbytery of Seattle overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to empower the Office of Public Witness (OPW) in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry to the United Nations to witness against environmental degradation and to affirm public policy that supports good stewardship of natural resources. With firm biblical foundation and the policies of twenty General Assemblies to build upon, they may give voice to threats to air and water quality[;]

[and to the wellbeing of humans and all God’s creation, including: carefully documented] threats from fracking; threats from [~~erude oil transport and storage and, indeed,~~] all modes of fossil fuel extraction[, processing, transport, and storage]; and threats from methane [~~and other destabilizing and harmful byproducts~~] that result[s] from industrial processes. This empowers both offices to speak for the church to uphold the integrity of creation and speak against [~~emerging or worsening environmental~~] injustices.”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) notes that Item 09-08 is well-founded upon existing PC(USA) policy, in particular upon the 1990 policy document *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* and the 2008 document *Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*. The committee would note in particular the principles that are derived from the biblical witness in these texts, including sustainability and sufficiency. Going back to the 1976 report, Economic Justice within Environmental Limits, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has recognized the need to pay increasing attention to the impact of “externalities” on the biosphere.

We support Item 09-08 because it makes explicit, and thus authorizes advocacy for emerging concerns not specifically mentioned in previous policy. In particular, it recognizes that our energy-policy concerns need to extend beyond the extraction of fossil fuels to include processing, transport and storage, and chemical byproducts that may interact with and intensify each other’s effects. The ACSWP amendments make more explicit the broadening of witness proposed by this overture, while limiting “speak against injustices” to “environmental.” The assembly, in its deliberations, should consider carefully how broad it wishes the church’s advocacy remit to be in this area.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-08

Comment on Item 09-08—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

This overture builds upon much of our existing energy policy, most notably a 1979 General Assembly statement:

But concern for the future cannot allow us to withhold care for “the least” who live now. We have no right to choose who lives and who dies in order to serve current economic ideologies or a privileged posterity. We have no right to squander the world’s energy resources for short-term self-benefit. We are called to live simply and share liberally, while advocating the common good of all.

The church especially should evaluate all energy policy choices in terms of their impact on the poor and powerless, as well as their impact on future generations, and insist that governments and institutions observe this basic principle of justice. The needs of the poor have priority over the comfort of the rich.

We are a community of hope in God’s kingdom; in light of where history is going, we can help to evaluate and reorient energy production and consumption. A less energy-intensive way of life is consistent with the values of the Kingdom; reduced material consumption may actually enhance an abundant life. The Bible envisions a peaceful world of people with claims and needs satisfied, living amiably in the community of creation and in communion with the Creator (Is. 11:69, Hos. 2:18–23, Rev. 21:2–4). A faithful response involves creative action. (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1979, Part I, p. 275; see also *Minutes*, PCUS, 1979, Part I, p. 191)

New policy that focuses on the impact of crude oil transport and methane extraction and processing would give the Presbyterian Mission Agency additional tools to address the specific harms related to fossil fuel reliance but not directly part of fossil fuel extraction.

Item 09-09

[The assembly answered Item 09-09 with the action taken on Item 09-01. See pp. 63, 65.]

Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report on Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016), upon recommendation from the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, do the following:

1. Receive the report of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) on its extensive engagement of corporations in response to the referral from the 221st General Assembly (2014).
2. Commend all corporations, especially those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, that have addressed climate change by adopting policies and practices that have reduced greenhouse gas emissions in their operations and/or in the use of their products.
3. Call upon all corporations to increase their efforts to address climate change through vigorous action in line with the following expectations:
 - a. Governance: Clearly define board and management governance processes that acknowledge the scientific evidence of climate change, ensure adequate oversight of climate change risk, and the strategic implications of a transition to low carbon energy systems.

b. **Strategy:** Integrate the management of climate change risks and opportunities into business strategy with a commitment to manage operations in a manner consistent with the internationally agreed-upon goal of limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius, above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

c. **Implementation:** Incorporate scenario analysis and measurement, including risk assessment, within key business processes and investment decisions, to include: incorporating carbon pricing decisions regarding long-term projects and products; setting robust goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that include increased use of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency investments, and putting a price on carbon; and more rapid integration of new technologies designed to reduce the company's overall carbon footprint.

d. **Transparency and Disclosure:** Issue annual reports on the company's view of and response to its material climate change risks and opportunities including the comprehensive outlook on energy reflected in the company's strategy; how the company's strategy can adjust for significant changes (upwards and downwards) in demand for oil, gas, and coal; and the carbon intensity of proven and probable reserves (including breakeven oil price) categorized by nature of projects' environment (ultra-deep waters, oil sands, etc.).

e. **Public Policy:** Engage constructively with public policymakers and other stakeholders in support of cost-effective policy measures to mitigate climate change risks and support low-carbon investments; ensure there is broad oversight and transparency about the company's lobbying activity and political spending, including activity by trade associations to which the company belongs, on this topic and related energy and regulatory issues; and disclose company positions on policy issues such as carbon pricing, renewable energy targets, and international negotiations on climate change.

4. Commend the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Inc., for providing, through its New Covenant Trust Company subsidiary, the option of fossil-free managed portfolios to congregations, institutions, and individual clients desiring such a customized approach; the Board of Pensions for exploring a fossil-free option for plan members participating in its voluntary retirement savings plan options; Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for creating the "restoring creation loans" for congregations seeking to pursue reducing their carbon footprint.

5. Encourage continued respectful discussion in the church and civil society on the critical issue of climate change, and how it should be addressed not only through the responsible use of investments, but also as individuals, churches, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) working together to reduce our carbon footprint.

6. Direct MRTI to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, particularly with those in the oil, gas, and coal sectors, and report back to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations, including possible divestment if significant changes in governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy are not instituted by the corporations during the engagements of MRTI and ecumenical partners.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:

2014 Referral: Item 15-01. On Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies. Refer the Subject Matter to the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for Action and discernment in Accordance with Its Long-Standing and Detailed Procedures to Engage with Individual Corporations to Advance Their Actions in Support of Important Social Policy Issues—From the Presbytery of Boston (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 56, 1013–21; p. 319 of the print copy).

Background

Biblical, Theological, Ethical, and Policy Background

MRTI understands that its role as a committee is guided by the Holy Spirit, which calls us into being and sustains us in relationship with one another. As Presbyterians, we understand that we operate within a polity structure that seeks mutual responsibility and accountability. We sought to be guided in our work by biblical and Reformed theological principals. As such, we understand the following:

Faithful concern for the environment is rooted in the Word of God, spoken into creation. As the creator and sustainer of all life, Reformed Christians have always affirmed God's sovereignty over the whole of creation. Even before creating humans, God created the earth and the universe of which it is a part, and called it "very good" (Gen.1:31). Like other living creatures, humans are formed of the earth and intimately intertwined with all of God's creation (Gen. 2:7, 9, 19). Creation is God's handiwork, the earth and all that is in it, belongs to God (Psalm 24:1 and Psalm 104). As Christians who have covenanted in relationship with God, we are called by God to care and maintain the fragile order that God has entrusted us with (Gen. 2:15).

Creation cries out in this time of ecological crisis (Rom. 8:18–22). The sustainability of creation, human life, and well-being depend upon “the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained” (Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, 1990, p. 2). When creation is violated, so too are human communities, particularly the most vulnerable in our midst. Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40). As members of the human family, Jesus exhorts us to show great care in the way that we treat the least, the lost, and the lonely of our world. As the church, we are called to respond to Jesus prodding through prophetic witness and action.

Thus, our vocation becomes making the vision of ecojustice—the well-being of all humankind on a thriving earth—a reality as justice and peace among human beings are inseparable from right relationships with and within the natural order.

The first two chapters of Genesis illumine the right relationship of human beings to their Creator and the non-human creation. God put man and woman, created in God’s own image, in the garden “to till it and to keep it.”

“Tilling” symbolizes everything we humans do to draw sustenance from nature. “Keeping” the creation means tilling with care—maintaining the capacity of the creation to provide the sustenance for which the tilling is done. But humans have failed to till with care. The ecojustice crisis is the consequence of tilling without keeping, together with the unfair distribution of the fruits of tilling. The Creator’s gifts for sustenance have not been taken carefully and shared equitably.

From this vision of earth-keeping emerge ethical norms to guide our faithful response to God’s new doing. Justice is the overarching requirement and leads to four sub-norms. Sustainability—the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus. Sufficiency, a standard upholding the claim of all to have enough, is to be met through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end. Participation requires the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator’s gifts for sustenance. Community in our time requires the nurture of solidarity, leading to steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies, and to the realization of the church’s potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.

Referral Assignment from the 221st General Assembly (2014)

The General Assembly’s action read as follows:

Request the 221st General Assembly (2014) to refer the subject matter of this overture to the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for action and discernment in accordance with its long-standing and detailed procedures to engage with individual corporations to advance their actions in support of important social policy issues. MRTI is asked to make a report to 222nd General Assembly (2016). The Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues (15) is deeply concerned about both the need for action and the need to remain in dialogue with companies that are in the fossil fuel industry. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 56, 1013)

The original overture referred to MRTI called for the General Assembly to:

1. Express its profound concern about the destructive effects of climate change on all God’s creation. Climate change has had a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and in the least developed countries, the elderly and children, and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases. The 221st General Assembly (2014) thus recognizes the moral mandate for humanity to shift to a sustainable energy plan in a way that is both just and compassionate. This mandate propels us to action as a denomination: to divest from the fossil fuel industry even as we reduce our use of fossil fuels and shrink our carbon footprint.
2. Call upon the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to
 - a. immediately stop any new investment in fossil fuel companies and instruct asset managers in their work for the denomination to do the same;
 - b. ensure that within five years none of its directly held or commingled assets includes holdings of either equities or corporate bonds in fossil fuel companies as determined by the Carbon Tracker list; and
 - c. incorporate, into already existing financial reports, regular updates detailing progress made towards full divestment. These reports will be made available to the public.
3. Call upon the Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) to inform those fossil fuel companies of the passage and implementation of this resolution. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 1013)

The Carbon Tracker list identified the top 200 fossil fuel companies (oil, gas, and coal).

Summary of Climate Change Science and Implications for Carbon Use

Soon after the 221st General Assembly (2014), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) finalized its Fifth Assessment Synthesis Report (AR5) providing an integrated view of climate change. The report confirms that “Human influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history.” It states that “It is *extremely likely* that more than half of the observed increase in global average temperature from 1950 to 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic increase in GHG concentrations and other anthropogenic forcings together.” The report describes the impacts from different scenarios of emissions levels including the scenario needed to meet the goal of lim-

iting the increase of global average surface temperature to 2 degrees Celsius. Increases beyond 2 degrees Celsius carry high to very high risk of “severe, widespread and irreversible impacts” from climate change globally by 2100. These disruptions include sea level rise, drought, heat waves, changes in rain patterns and storm intensity, increased vector borne diseases, among others. All this disproportionately affects the vulnerable populations who have contributed little to the problem, but will suffer the most, and the natural world for which we are responsible. However, in order to keep warming below 2 degrees Celsius, over the 21st century relative to pre-industrial levels, will require “40 to 70% global anthropogenic GHG emissions reductions by 2050 compared to 2010, and emissions levels near zero or below in 2100.”

The challenge is that GHG emissions continue to rise. This presents serious difficulty in meeting the 2 degree Celsius goal. In its *World Energy Outlook 2012*, the International Energy Agency (IEA) noted that “almost four-fifths of the CO2 emissions allowable by 2035 are locked in by existing power plants, factories, buildings, etc. If action to reduce CO2 emissions is not taken before 2017, all the allowable CO2 emissions would be locked in by energy infrastructure existing at that time.”

In fact, the IEA found that “No more than one-third of the proven reserves of fossil fuels can be consumed prior to 2050 if the world is to achieve the 2 degree C goal unless carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology is widely deployed.” Unfortunately, the pace of CCS deployment remains “highly uncertain.” This is the source of the carbon budget concept that undergirds the need to reduce emissions.

Given the probable inability of the climate system to absorb safely the carbon emissions from more than one-third of the proven reserves, Carbon Tracker Initiative (CTI) analyzed the impact upon fossil fuel companies if production restraints occur. CTI’s contention is that fossil fuel companies run serious risk of having some current assets “stranded,” particularly if they continue to explore for and develop additional reserves. Some in the industry dispute the concept of stranded assets.

The initial look into the 200 largest coal, oil, and gas companies that consolidated the research about the magnitude of their proven reserves led to the call for divestment. It aggregated the proven reserves to address the macro issue of bringing overall emissions down to the safe limit, but did not address all the questions posed by those seeking comprehensive strategies to effect the necessary changes. All reserves were treated equally while science shows that some result in releasing more carbon into the atmosphere than others. Examples would be coal and tar sands as compared with natural gas. The research showed that a very high percentage of the proven reserves are controlled by state-owned companies over which investors have very little influence. However, the fossil fuel divestment movement can be credited with building public awareness of the magnitude of the challenge in transitioning to lower-carbon fuels and eventually to renewable energy sources.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) History of Climate Change Work

MRTI’s work on climate change has been integrated into the broader work of the church. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been an integral part of the World Council of Churches involvement in the climate change process since the Earth Summit in 1992 where the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted, and includes participation in all but one of the annual negotiations on implementation of the Framework Convention (known as the Conference of the Parties or COP for short). Particular attention has been paid to engaging business coalitions active at the COP’s.

In addition, the church has been involved in domestic public policy advocacy in support of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol as called for by four different General Assemblies, encouraging investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency standards, funding for research and funding for adaptation measures by developing countries. This advocacy included educational conferences in several states, national training meetings, organized visits to congressional offices, and petition drives.

Theological and biblical study materials were developed for congregations along with guidebooks on how to make congregations more energy efficient or powered by renewable energy. Carbon offsets were purchased for meetings of the General Assembly.

History of Corporate Engagement on Climate Change by PC(USA) and Partners

From 1990 to 2014, MRTI and other faith-based investors engaged numerous companies on environmental issues. In the beginning, most companies did not have a policy on environmental responsibility, and did not publish information on their environmental performance. Consequently, engagement focused on comprehensive policy development and reporting.

In 1989 in response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill, several socially responsible investors formed Ceres, a coalition dedicated to promoting a comprehensive set of environmental principles for corporations. The principles sought a commitment to continuous improvement on environmental performance, and consistent, comprehensive reporting. MRTI was involved since the early days seeking corporate adoption of the principles.

Meetings were held with numerous companies. MRTI held dialogues and filed shareholder resolutions with a number of these companies including Phillips Petroleum, Tosco, and Burlington Resources (all now part of ConocoPhillips), Occidental Petroleum, Union Pacific, Cinergy (now part of Duke Energy), First Energy, Southern Company, Intel Corporation, Advanced Micro Devices, Dow Chemical, Texaco (now part of Chevron), Nucor, Norfolk Southern, CSX, Southern Company,

and Chevron. In the case of Chevron and Tosco, MRTI supported community organizations concerned about air emissions from refineries in the San Francisco Bay Area.

As the Ceres program progressed, MRTI participated in stakeholder teams meeting with companies seeking advice on improving their environmental performance. These companies included American Electric Power, Sun Microsystems, Brown-Forman, Duke Energy, Timberland, and Con Edison.

Notable achievements included Advanced Micro Devices issuing its first environmental report (Advanced Micro Devices is now a member of the Ceres company coalition), air emissions reports issued by First Energy and Cinergy (Cinergy also devoted its 2003 Annual Report to a significant discussion of climate change), and significantly reduced emissions by Sun Microsystems, Intel and Timberland.

2013 to Present

In September 2013, an international group of seventy-five institutional investors, including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with \$3.5 trillion in assets wrote to the world's forty-five largest companies in the oil and gas, coal and electric power sectors, raising these issues, and asking them to assess their exposure to carbon asset risk. The investors asked that they assess both the risks to their undeveloped fossil fuel reserves due to lower fossil fuel demand as the world transitions to a low-carbon energy system, as well as risks to their operations from climate change impacts.

Supported by Ceres and Carbon Tracker Initiative, this coordinated investor engagement with oil and gas, coal and electric power companies, called the *Carbon Asset Risk Initiative*, included participants from the Investor Network on Climate Risk (INCR) in North America, the UK-Europe Institutional Investor Group on Climate Change (IIGCC), and the Australia-New Zealand Investor Group on Climate Change (IGCC).

Since then, the Asia Investor Group on Climate Change (AIGCC) has been formed to join in collaborative endeavors.

The letters produced several substantive disclosures including: BHP Billiton, an extractives firm, said it accepts the IPCC's science assessment, and that warming must be limited to the lower end of IPCC's scenarios; Eni, an energy firm, said its portfolio had an average breakeven oil price of \$45 to \$55 that would be resilient even under a 2 degree warming scenario; FirstEnergy, a U.S. utility, indicated that it intends to achieve emissions reductions consistent with the U.S. government's goals; Royal Dutch Shell uses an oil price range of \$70 to \$110 and a carbon price of \$40 per ton for planning; Statoil, an energy firm, has admitted to its investors that its oil sands assets are economically marginal; and Vale, an extractives firm, discussed its prioritization of investments in metallurgical coal and divestment of its thermal coal assets.

In 2014 and 2015, the number of engagements with companies on climate change issues increased sharply with sixty-eight shareholder resolutions filed in 2015 addressing greenhouse gas reduction goals, carbon asset risk, hydraulic fracturing (fracking), and sustainability reporting. MRTI participated in dialogues, and filed and co-filed shareholder resolutions. Companies included ExxonMobil, Chevron, Marathon Oil, Marathon Petroleum, Noble Energy, ConocoPhillips, Phillips 66, Ultra Petroleum, and Hess Corporation.

These engagements have taken place within a context of evidence that an energy transition towards lower carbon energy sources is occurring. This shift is characterized by major macroeconomic and technological trends, is partly driven by the policy implications of the goal to keep the global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, and presents material risks and opportunities for all companies, and particularly for the fossil fuel energy sector.

Other Strategic Initiatives on Climate Change by PCUSA and Partners

In addition to continued engagement and possible divestment of some or all fossil fuel companies, MRTI has informed itself about a range of strategic responses, which include, but not limited to the following:

1. Increased engagement with non-fossil fuel companies lacking a policy on energy efficiency and/or use of renewables with time-bound targets to reduce demand for energy from fossil fuel companies. Ceres research in 2014, that has guided the work of MRTI and its ecumenical partners, indicates significant potential for this effort as 212 of the 613 largest companies fall into this category. Home Depot and 3M made major commitments in 2014. Apple, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Best Buy, Ikea, and Hershey's, among others, added significant commitments in 2015.

2. Addressing carbon risk from fossil fuel investments.
 - a. Assess carbon footprint of the portfolio for current and embedded emissions (Montreal Pledge). After substantial engagement by MRTI and its partners, ConocoPhillips announced a goal for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions in 2014.
 - b. Assess stranded asset and high carbon emissions risks.
 - c. Selective divestment of highest carbon, highest risk companies (e.g., thermal coal and tar sands) as done by Stanford University, Church of England, and United Methodist General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.

3. Reducing portfolio carbon footprint through investment.
 - a. Create or utilize passive strategies alternatives for fossil fuel free or low-carbon investments as done by United Church Funds and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.
 - b. Utilize active portfolio strategies by using best in class Environment, Sustainability and Governance (ESG) criteria or policies on climate change and carbon reduction for stock selection and/or weighting.
 - c. Explore joining the “Portfolio Decarbonization Coalition.”
4. Investing in solutions to climate change. The Presbyterian Foundation has allocated at least 1 percent of the Presbyterian Endowment Fund for investments that target climate change solutions.
 - a. Clean energy/clean tech equities funds or indexes.
 - b. Fixed income investments in “Green” bonds.
 - c. “Green” real estate investments such as done by Prudential Financial.
 - d. Renewable energy funds.
 - e. Clean tech venture capital or private equity funds.
 - f. Sustainable forestry and agriculture.
5. Engaging with service providers on climate change.
 - a. Ask investment managers and consultants for advice on carbon risk, low carbon investment opportunities.
 - b. Include climate and Environment, Sustainability and Governance (ESG) criteria in asset manager procurement and review process. Both the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation communicate regularly with their investment managers on ESG issues.
 - c. Consider longer term mandates with climate and clean energy criteria.
6. Engaging in policy advocacy.
 - a. Participate in investor sign on letters on climate and clean energy with Investor Network on Climate Risk (INCR) and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). MRTI has joined with other investors in public appeals on international policies, increased investment in renewable energy sources, and seeking proxy vote support for shareholder resolutions.
 - b. Engage in direct communications with members of Congress, state legislatures, state public utility commissions, etc. For example, MRTI has joined in letters to government officials urging the Securities and Exchange Commission to require annual corporate disclosure on climate change risk, supporting energy policy legislation, and fuel economy standards. MRTI has also participated in INCR Lobby Days in Congress on energy policy including seeking equitable treatment of renewable energy projects.
 - c. Urge portfolio companies to stop anti-climate lobbying, and to support responsible climate and clean energy policy. MRTI has joined other investors to engage companies belonging to the Western States Petroleum Association, including organizing a dialogue with Phillips 66 on California’s clean energy policies.
 - d. Organize and team with other faith-based investors on climate policy. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including MRTI staff, participated in the United Nations Climate Change Negotiations (COP21) in December 2015 where faith-based investors and public pension plans were prominent in advocating for a strong agreement.
7. Disclosure and communication on climate strategies.
 - a. Disclose carbon footprint of portfolio, low carbon investments (Registry of Low Carbon Investments).
 - b. Respond to Asset Owner Disclosure Project survey
 - c. Publicly communicate to peers and market the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s climate and clean energy investment strategies.

Review of General Assembly Criteria for Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy

The 196th General Assembly (1984) adopted a policy entitled “The Use of Divestment as an Ethical Strategy” (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, Part I, pp. 193–207). It included seven criteria suggested as a guide for making recommendations concerning divestment, and to serve as an aid to trustees of related institutions and organizations throughout the church. MRTI’s work on the referral has been guided by this policy, and a review of the criteria below is appropriate.

1. The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one reflecting central aspects of the faith.

MRTI believes faithful caring for God’s creation is an essential element of our Christian vocation, and the current and future threat of climate change to God’s creation is well established.

2. The issue on which divestment is proposed should be one that the church has addressed by a variety of educational and action efforts, such as: correspondence with companies, discussion with company managers and directors, statements, questions, and shareholder resolutions at stockholder meetings, and legal action against companies.

As summarized in the report, MRTI and its ecumenical partners for decades have engaged many corporations regarding environmental responsibility, particularly involving climate change. This engagement has produced positive changes in corporate policies and practices, and current engagements are moving forward in numerous instances. Obviously, the faith-based investor community acknowledges that much more remains to be done.

3. The analysis supporting the proposed action: (a) should be clearly grounded in the church’s confession and unambiguously present in the social policy of the General Assembly; (b) should clearly define the behavior and stance of the corporate entities whose policies or practices are at issue; and (c) should state the ends sought through divestment.

MRTI’s work since the 221st General Assembly (2014) has been focused on several key components of a robust response to climate change: governance, strategy, implementation, transparency and disclosure, and public policy. Additional detail is set out in the recommendations, and would provide benchmarks for how and whether or not a corporation is contributing to positive solutions to the climate change challenge. MRTI believes its work will be strengthened by the General Assembly’s affirmation of these criteria.

4. The decision should be taken after consultation with the ecumenical community, whenever possible. The implementation of a divestment action should ordinarily be in solidarity with other Christian bodies.

MRTI works with many partners both within and outside of the faith community. Engagements are frequently carried out in partnership. Some partners have adopted positions on divestment of fossil fuel companies, and some of them have actually sold stock in some companies. Other partners have not. All are committed, however, to working on the issue.

5. Efforts should be made to examine the probable effects and consequences of the action with affected communities, particularly Presbyterians.

Recognizing the differing views expressed at the General Assembly and in subsequent communications, MRTI held its fall 2014 meeting in Boston in order to meet with Presbyterians and members of other churches who support divestment from fossil fuel companies. The Presbytery of Boston was the first to adopt the original overture. In addition, MRTI members and staff attended a symposium sponsored by the Synod of the Sun held in Houston entitled “Addressing Climate Change: Faithful Alternatives to Fossil Fuel Divestment.” MRTI has also been in communication with other Presbyterians regarding this issue.

Clearly, while the issue of global climate change and fossil fuel divestment finds church members and others holding differing views, well-meaning and faithful Christians share a calling to be good stewards of God’s Creation, one of our core of beliefs. The fossil fuel debate is being had because we all take the call to stewardship seriously. The divestment from energy companies discussion is being had by brothers and sisters in Christ who sincerely care about our world. We all agree that we must do something. The disagreement comes around this question: What is the most effective way to witness and accomplish change to the threat posed by climate change and our dependence on fossil fuels?

It is also apparent that church members and others recognize the magnitude of the challenge ahead, and how pervasive fossil fuels are in our society. We all use them. They power our cars; provide electricity; heat and air condition our homes; are used to make medicine, cosmetics, plastic water bottles, televisions, tires, and even the toothpaste you use to clean our teeth. Yet, most acknowledge that action is required, even as we disagree on what the most appropriate action is.

So while people are discussing divestment and engagement as strategies, it has to be noted that solutions cannot be focused solely on those involving investments. Transitions to a low carbon economy will require changes throughout society. These changes will include reductions in demand as well as supply, development of reasonable alternatives, disincentives for fossil fuel use including putting a price on carbon, deforestation issues, and the technology of carbon capture and storage. We cannot discuss investment options without simultaneously calling for broader changes and admitting our own responsibilities.

6. The proposed action should be sufficiently precise that the effect of its application can be evaluated.

This is why MRTI has proposed focused criteria for General Assembly affirmation.

7. Any proposed divestment action should include provision for: (a) informing appropriate church constituencies; (b) giving appropriate public visibility to the action; (c) engaging other governing bodies and members in advocacy for the ends that prompt the divestment; (d) giving pastoral care to those directly affected.

Since there is no divestment recommendation being brought to this General Assembly, no such provision has been made.

In sum, since the last General Assembly, MRTI has worked diligently on the referral through increased corporate engagements reflected in the committee's work plan, meeting with Presbyterians who hold a variety of views on the issues, and increased allocation of committee and staff time to the subject. MRTI is committed to continue this focus through the next General Assembly.

Note: The Biblical, Theological, Ethical and Policy Background section draws upon General Assembly policies such as "Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice" (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, pp. 646–90) and "The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 934–58), and interpretative materials such as *Keeping and Healing the Creation* by the Reverend William Gibson for the Eco-Justice Task Force, Committee on Social Witness Policy, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1989; and *And the Leaves of the Tree Are for the Healing of the Nations: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Eco-Justice* by the Reverend Dr. Carol Johnston, published by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1997.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 09-09.

Item 09-10

[The assembly approved Item 09-10. See pp. 62, 65.]

Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship—From the Board of Pensions, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

The Board of Pensions, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) endorse the Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship.

Collaborative Agenda for Environmental Stewardship



I. Our Common Call to Care for God's Creation

A. Biblical Principles

Blessing

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers." (Ps. 24:1–2)

Every reflection on our care for the world we inhabit must begin with this fundamental principle. The earth is a gift from God, the Sovereign Creator, and we, God's creatures, are called to celebrate and honor its manifold glory. Our Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with the question: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever" (Book of Confessions, 7.001). There is no more visible way for us to glorify God than in caring for the creation we see all around us, and of which we are a part.

Stewardship & Sustainability

And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”... And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. ... Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so... And God saw that it was good. ... [And] “let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, ... and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image. ... God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:20–28)

Not only are we called to give thanks for God’s glorious creation, we are given the task by God to oversee what God has created. We are, according to scripture, God’s overseers and caretakers of the whole creation, which includes ourselves.

Unfortunately, we have too often misconstrued God’s call to “subdue” and to “have dominion” as license to exploit the manifold gifts of creation. The sad results of our exploitation are all around us. As God’s agents, rather than owners of the created order, we must understand that these two notions of “subduing” and exercising “dominion” derive directly from the sovereignty of God, and therefore must reflect the kind of just, loving oversight that is the very nature of God’s “dominion” over us and the creation.

We are, at the most basic level, called to be just, loving stewards of all creation, serving and preserving the earth. (Gen 2:15). Our commitment must be to the sustainability that God has willed for God’s creation, which means ensuring that all people and all of creation experience sufficiency in the resources they need to thrive, not only now, but for generations to come.

God’s Concern for The Poor

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king’s son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. ... For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight. (Ps. 72:1–4, 12–14)

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (Jas. 2:15–17)

A central theme that runs throughout Scripture is God’s concern for the poor, the most vulnerable, the ones Jesus called “the least of these who are members of my family” (Mt. 25:40). It is central to God’s mandate for earthly rulers and a “bottom line” issue for God’s people. We cannot faithfully address environmental concerns without acknowledging the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on those least able to defend themselves from the pollution of our air and water, the impact of many extractive industries, and the unjust distribution of wealth derived from the exploitation of our global resources.

Whatever plans we devise for addressing our environmental concerns, we must begin by asking how our actions will affect the most vulnerable of God’s children and maintain our commitment to stand with them in the decisions we make.

Justice & Judgment

Now the Lord is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. ... The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and ... the inhabitants of the earth dwindle, and few people are left. (Isa. 24: 1, 4–6)

The Scriptures are clear. There are consequences when we forget our role as God’s agents charged with care for the earth and we exploit the riches God has given us. It is no coincidence that the condemnations by the prophets in the face of the unfaithfulness of God’s people and their leaders often include God’s promise of terrible judgment made visible in the destruction of creation and the created order.

Restoration

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river, is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:1–2)

In contrast to the terms of judgment in the prophetic warnings, God promises both a “new heaven” and a “new earth,” indeed a full restoration for all who have sought to be faithful in the stewardship of what God has created. That includes both our care for all sorts of human communities and individuals but also the created order that God declared good at the beginning.

It is this vision of God’s future that sustains us and moves us forward in our caring for others and for the whole earth.

Response

As the people of God, we are therefore called to work, in response to God's calling, to see that all of God's creation is protected, nurtured, and enabled to reach the potential for which God has created it. The concrete implications of that for those of us who are a part of God's family in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) include a call to prayer, education, advocacy, and other forms of direct action to glorify God in our care of creation.

What follows are theological and pragmatic guidelines that have been embraced over many years to guide us in our efforts to be God's faithful stewards. Also included are descriptions of some of the concrete ways that we who represent national agencies of our church have attempted to be faithful to our calling in this regard.

We urge all who are a part of our great church to join us in strengthening our witness to the world and in working for greater change in the care and keeping of the earth we inhabit.

B. Historical Witness

Caring for God's creation, particularly those who are most vulnerable to environmental injustice and climate change because of poverty, hunger, violence, health, or other circumstances, has been a long-time commitment of General Assemblies. General Assembly statements dating back to the 1950s on good stewardship of resources to more recent statements on clean water and sustainable farming are all a part of this long history of caring for all God's world. Particularly we lift up the ongoing witness of the 1990 and 2008 General Assemblies:

1990 Restoring Creation Policy

- God's work in creation is too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful, too good to be desecrated.
- Restoring creation is God's own work in our time, in which God comes both to judge and to restore.
- The Creator-Redeemer calls faithful people to become engaged with God in keeping and healing the creation, human and non-human.
- Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained.
- The love of neighbor, particularly "the least" of Christ's brothers and sisters, requires action to stop the poisoning, the erosion, the wastefulness that are causing suffering and death.
- The future of our children and their children and all who come after is at stake.
- In this critical time of transition to a new era, God's new doing may be discerned as a call to earth-keeping, to justice and to community.

2008 Power to Change Policy

Energy choices, more than ever, are moral choices. As our planet grows warmer, our Christian witness must become bolder. As individuals, families, congregations, and church administrative bodies, we must become the change we want to see in our nation. We must put our own houses in order even as we call on our nation to accept its moral responsibility with regard to energy policy and climate change. Together we must radically reduce our carbon footprint.

II. Our Common Activities to Care for God's Creation*A. Individuals*

Encouragement for individuals and families was included in the 2008 policy "Power to Change" and remains a relevant invitation today:

Excerpt from 2008 Power to Change Policy:

2. Urge individuals and families in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:
 - a. Pray, asking for God's forgiveness and for the power and guidance to enjoy and care for creation in new ways.
 - b. Study energy sources, their advantages and disadvantages, and the impacts they have on human communities, all species, and the ecological systems that support life on Earth.
 - c. Practice energy conservation as a form of thanksgiving and sharing by adjusting thermostats, walking, biking, carpooling, using mass transit, turning off lights and appliances, recycling, minimizing the use of plastic water bottles and other wasteful packaging, etc.
 - d. Purchase energy-efficient appliances and fuel-efficient vehicles for use at home and at work.

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- e. Purchase sustainably grown food and other products from local producers in order to reduce the energy associated with producing, and shipping goods.
- f. Reduce consumption of meat because the production of grain fed to most livestock is fossil fuel-intensive and their waste emits methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas.
- g. Purchase Green-e certified energy and/or carbon offsets in the pursuit of a carbon-neutral lifestyle. Green-e certification ensures these payments result in additional installations of renewable energy generation capacity as well as verifiable and permanent environmental benefits.
- h. Invest personal funds in the renewable energy industry and also in companies that demonstrate concern for the well-being of their workers, their communities, and the environment.
- i. Advocate for change and leadership within the church and in all forms of government regarding energy policy and global climate change. (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 934)

B. *Congregations*

PC(USA) congregations are engaged in a multitude of faithful actions to care for God's creation. In education, facilities and grounds, worship life, mission, and community outreach, churches are finding their own way to participate in environmental stewardship as part of daily Christian discipleship.

Earth care ministry in churches include:

- energy-efficiency audits and changes,
- EPA ENERGYSTAR certifications,
- donning solar panels or installing geothermal,
- doing international mission including environmental foci,
- planting community gardens,
- hosting Vacation Bible School,
- signing up for the new Presbyterian Foundation fossil-free investment vehicle,
- celebrating the new PILP loan that will encourage churches to make green changes, and more!

Read stories at: <http://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/2015/1/23/earth-care-church-stories/>.

C. *Church Agencies*

Collectively, church agencies have implemented General Assembly recommendations from 2008 and continue to commit to new projects and collaborative efforts. After the 221st General Assembly (2014), all six agencies of the PC(USA) came together to share, learn, and vision this collaborative agenda and to report on past and current accomplishments, many of which are shared below.

The agencies offer program and resources that can help congregations, mid councils, and other PC(USA)-related entities become better stewards of the environment we share. They also provide models that together we can follow and implement throughout the church. Together, we can work towards the goal of high-efficiency facilities for all of our ministries, strive for carbon neutrality, and advocate before local, state, and federal governments for public policies that encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.

Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc.

For a number of years the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc., (PILP) has been offering loans for churches to improve their energy efficiency. PILP is pleased to broaden this incentive in 2015, by partnering with churches across the denomination to help collectively reduce our carbon footprint through the new Restoring Creation Loan program. Loans are available to qualifying congregations engaged in projects that purposefully render our churches more energy efficient.

With lower interest rates and equity requirements, congregations will be encouraged to renovate their buildings using energy efficient products and renewable energy sources—saving on energy costs while reducing their carbon footprint. Projects could include: energy efficient lighting systems, solar panel additions, energy efficient heating, and cooling systems, geothermal systems.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (Foundation) already has a few environmentally friendly options for investment: a positive investment of a solar installation in Jericho, and New Covenant Funds with a positive screen for

companies working on sustainability. More recently, the Foundation has created an optional fossil-free investment option for individuals and congregations.

In addition:

The Foundation's investment committee has allocated an initial investment of at least 1 percent of the Presbyterian Endowment Fund into investments that target climate change solutions.

The Foundation has directed its investment managers to consider environmental factors in their security selection process. New Covenant Funds (a family of mutual funds created and sponsored by the Foundation) adopted ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) positive screening in 2014.

The Foundation continues to work with MRTI in dialogue with energy companies to bring about change.

The Foundation is utilizing a portion of the Church Loan Program, for which the Foundation is the fiduciary, for loans that implement renewable energy or carbon reduction solutions. This effort is in partnership with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., which administers the loans, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Mission Development Resource Committee, which sets terms for loans and grants.

The Presbyterian Foundation subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, provides fossil-free managed portfolios to congregations, institutions, and other clients desiring a customized approach.

Office of the General Assembly (OGA)

Since the 1950s, General Assemblies have offered statements about wise use of natural resources, recycling, combating climate change, curbing carbon emissions, protecting water, and more, and had a presence advocating for social witness policies in Washington D.C. since 1946. OGA has a commitment to negotiate sustainable conferencing spaces with facilities used for General Assemblies and Big Tent conferences, and has worked to increasingly print and use less paper and energy for its meetings.

In addition, OGA will:

- place a high priority on using a conference venue that offers recycling and other sustainability factors,
- ensure some level of recycling and other eco-friendly options even if the conference venue is unable to do so,
- offer optional carbon offset purchase for attendees each assembly and other churchwide gatherings it coordinates, and
- promote in its materials the way attendees can engage in the available earth-friendly options.

Presbyterian Mission Agency

In the Presbyterian Mission Agency, environmental justice ministry has been in effect for decades, including work by the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN, the Office of Public Witness, Mission Responsibility Through Investment, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Environmental Ministries among others. Through these various offices, programs, and networks, PMA has been working on environmental justice, climate change, and other earth care issues since before the first Earth Day. In addition to public policy, the church has engaged corporations on climate change, attended every United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change "Conference of the Parties" (COP) meeting since their inception, published great worship and educational resources on a host of sustainability concerns, resourced numerous local congregations as well as individual Presbyterians and presbyteries on environmental ministry, worked in cooperation with ecumenical partners (such as National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Working Group, now Creation Justice Ministries), offset carbon emissions of many General Assemblies (prior to attendees purchasing their own offset), and taken environmental study-action trips with Presbyterians.

Currently, with the Presbyterian Hunger Program/Environmental Ministries, the denomination has certified and resourced more than 170 Earth Care Congregations. Through work with MRTI, PC(USA) has obtained commitments from corporations to reduce emissions, advocate for effective public policies, and invest in climate-friendly initiatives. Through the Office of Public Witness, all General Assembly commitments to care for God's creation are communicated to Congress and the White House. Meanwhile, PMA is primarily housed at the national church office building at 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, Kentucky, which received the ENERGYSTAR designation in 2009.

In addition, PMA will:

- continue the long-held witness of earth care and environmental sustainability,

- update and maintain the ENERGYSTAR designation at 100 Witherspoon St.,
- recycle more, reduce paper use, and green the building and grounds, and
- support a Green Team of volunteer staff to organize various educational events and worship around care for God's creation at the Center chapel.

Board of Pensions

The Board of Pensions has worked with MRTI for more than thirty years in the areas of sustainability and climate change and remains committed to that work. Specifically, the Board of Pensions supports MRTI with elected members who serve on the committee, with staff support from its investment area, and with direct funding of the staff and ministry of MRTI.

The Board of Pensions also votes more than six hundred proxies of publicly held companies each year, a process that is increasingly focused on environmental and social (E&S) issues. During the first half of 2014 (the last period for which data are available), Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) reports that "a record number of E&S proposals were submitted at corporations." According to ISS, more than 460 E&S resolutions were filed in 2014, a 15 percent increase from 2013 and a 25 percent increase from the number filed in 2012. Of those filed in 2014, a record 57 were directly related to climate change. An additional 25 have already been withdrawn, which ISS notes, includes "some due to constructive engagement between the proponents and issuers." These constructive engagements are the heart of the many successes MRTI has had in sustainability awareness and corporate care for the environment.

The Board of Pensions is a charter member of the Greater Philadelphia Green Business Program and achieved Silver Member status in 2010.

In addition to continuing these efforts, specifically including the continued funding to MRTI, the Board of Pensions is committed to further shift its business away from paper-based models to electronic communication and administration. An ongoing service delivery model redesign, slated for implementation in 2016, will both improve service to members and employers and dramatically reduce the Board of Pensions' dependence on paper.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

PPC has moved to printing most of its title on a print-on-demand basis, only printing books as they are purchased and thereby reducing waste. Contracts are no longer printed and mailed but rather emailed, saving paper and carbon pollution from shipping. Production no longer prints out and mails manuscripts back and forth between editor, copyeditor, and author but uses electronic communication in most all instances, again saving paper and carbon pollution. Cover material for the latest Presbyterian hymnal was partly made of recycled plastic.

From this point forward, PPC will continue to:

- utilize production methods that are as environmentally friendly as possible,
- investigate ways to use digital means of communication, and
- publish books and resources that help readers understand their vital place in the care of God's gift of creation.

III. Resources for Ongoing Work

A. *Bibliography of works from Westminster John Knox Press*

Books

50 Ways to Help Save the Earth—2009

Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos—2007

Renewing The Face Of The Earth: A Theological and Pastoral Response to Climate Change—2008

Inhabiting Eden: Christians, The Bible, and The Ecological Crisis—2013

Downloadable "Thoughtful Christian" Studies

The Global Study Pack (six sessions—all available for individual purchase as well)

What Would Jesus Drive?—2006

An Inconvenient Truth—2007

Genesis and the Goodness of Creation—2011

What the Bible Says About Ecology—2012

Serve, Not Rule—2014

(Above resources linked also from <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/education/>)

B. *PC(USA) Policy Statement Highlights*

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/pcusa-environmental-policy/>

C. *Social Witness Policy Compilation*

Search the [Social Policy Compilation](#), [GA Minutes](#), or [PCUSA Constitution](#) here.

Rationale

Noting the deep concern about urgent environmental challenges expressed by many commissioners at the 221st General Assembly (2014), chief executives of the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) appointed a working group to develop a joint response. The group—consisting of at least one staff member per agency—was asked to craft a positive statement of what each agency, and the agencies together, have done and plan to do regarding environmental stewardship. This document is designed to call attention to ongoing efforts by the PC(USA) to confront the underlying causes of climate change, and to resources available through the six agencies to congregations, mid councils, and other mission and ministry groups wishing to join in the effort. The working group, meeting together regularly over a period of nine months, has produced the following document—“Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship.” It has been reviewed by each of the agency boards, which have each endorsed the document as a whole and recommended that the General Assembly also endorse it as a helpful resource to the whole denomination. This effort is particularly noteworthy as it is unusual for an item of business to come to the assembly from a collaboration of all six agencies.

Item 09-11

[The assembly approved Item 09-11. See pp. 62, 65.]

On Amending G-1.0304, “The Ministry of Members,” by Adding “Caring for God’s Creation”—From the Presbytery of New Castle.

The Presbytery of New Castle overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-1.0304 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“G-1.0304 The Ministry of Members

“Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ’s mission. A faithful member bears witness to God’s love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ’s Church. Such involvement includes:

“proclaiming the good news in word and deed,

“taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,

“lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,

“studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,

“supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,

“demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,

“responding to God’s activity in the world through service to others,

“living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,

“working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,

“caring for God’s creation,

“participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and

“reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one’s membership, and considering ways in which one’s participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.”

Rationale

Climate change and the care for all God’s creation has become a critical concern for our world. For people of faith and for Presbyterians in particular, the biblical mandate for creation care, our Reformed tradition as expressed in the confessions

and the *Book of Order*, and the latest scientific research all support the need for the addition of the words “caring for God’s creation” to section G-1.0304 of the *Book of Order* at the earliest possible time.

Biblical Mandate

The fundamental mandate for creation care comes from Genesis 2:15, where God places Adam in the garden to “till it and keep it” (NRSV). A better translation from the Hebrew is “to serve it and to preserve it.” In Genesis 1:26–28, God blesses humankind with dominion over the earth. This acknowledgement that humanity is the most powerful species on earth does not, however, give license to dominate and exploit the planet. Indeed, the following verses affirm the right of animals to share in the bounty of the earth’s produce (Gen 1:29–30). Human “dominion” as intended in Genesis is best practiced in care for creation, in stewardship, which according to Genesis Noah fulfills best by implementing God’s first endangered species act. Moreover, the great creation psalm of the Psalter views humanity as one species among many animal species, all meant to flourish together (Psalm 104:14–23). The psalmist exclaims, “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (v. 24).

Scripture affirms that God created the world in wisdom and out of love, and it is also out of love for the world that God gave Christ to redeem it (John 3:16). In Christ “all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17), and “every creature under heaven” is to receive God’s good news (v. 23). According to Revelation, God’s work in the world is “make all things new” (21:5), to bring about a new creation that does not destroy the old but transforms it, renews it. If the church is the sign of the new creation, then the church must lead the way in caring for creation.

—(Dr. William P. Brown, William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary). (“Sept 1 World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation,” by Rebecca Barnes, August 25, 2015; <https://www.pcusa.org/blogs/eco-journey/2015/8/25/sept-1-world-day-prayer-care-creation/>)

Reformed Confessional Background

The Confession of 1967 of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was one of the first creeds to lift up environmental concerns:

“God’s redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of man’s life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes *man’s natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin*. It is the will of God that his purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from his creation.” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.53, emphasis added; see related issues in 9.45–47).

A Brief Statement of Faith (1991) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was the first to state that poor environmental stewardship has the potential to do global harm in very severe terms:

“Ignoring God’s commandments.

“we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,

“accept lies as truth,

“*exploit neighbor and nature,*

“*and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.*” (*Book of Confessions*, 10.3, Lines 34–38, emphasis added)

Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Background

W-7.5000

5. Caring for Creation and Life

W-7.5001 God’s Mandate

God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God’s work of creation and preservation. God has given humankind awesome power and perilous responsibility to rule and tame the earth, to sustain and reshape it, to replenish and renew it.

W-7.5002 Worship and the Use of Creation

In worship Christians rejoice and give thanks to God, who gives and sustains the created universe, the earth, all life, and all goods. They acknowledge God’s command to be stewards. They confess their own failures in caring for creation and life. They rejoice in the promise of the redemption and renewal of the creation in Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the Word and sealed in the Sacraments. They commit themselves to live as God’s stewards until the day when God will make all things new. (W-1.0000)

W-7.5003 Stewardship of Creation

As stewards of God’s creation who hold the earth in trust, the people of God are called to

- a. use the earth’s resources responsibly without plundering, polluting, or destroying,
- b. develop technological methods and processes that work together with the earth’s environment to preserve and enhance life,
- c. produce and consume in ways that make available to all people what is sufficient for life,
- d. work for responsible attitudes and practices in procreation and reproduction,
- e. use and shape earth’s goods to create beauty, order, health, and peace in ways that reflect God’s love for all creatures.

In gratitude for the gifts of creation, the faithful bring material goods to God in worship as a means of expressing praise, as a symbol of their self-offering, and as a token of their commitment to share earth’s goods. (*Book of Order*, W-7.5000–.5003)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Background

The most comprehensive PC(USA) study was the 218th General Assembly (2008) study paper, *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, (See: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf)

Science Background

“Changes in the greenhouse gas concentrations and other drivers alter the global climate and bring about myriad human health consequences. Environmental consequences of climate change, such as extreme heat waves, rising sea-levels, changes in precipitation resulting in flooding and droughts, intense hurricanes, and degraded air quality, affect directly and indirectly the physical, social, and psychological health of humans. For instance, changes in precipitation are creating changes in the availability and quantity of water, as well as resulting in extreme weather events such as intense hurricanes and flooding. Climate change can be a driver of disease migration, as well as exacerbate health effects resulting from the release of toxic air pollutants in vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with asthma or cardiovascular disease.” *The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, is one of 27 research institutes and centers that comprise the National Institutes of Health (NIH).*

The Synthesis Report (of the UN IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]) finds that the world will have to end its growth of carbon emissions within seven years and become mostly free of carbon emitting technologies in about four decades to avoid widespread extinctions of species, slowing of global currents, decreased food production, loss of 30 percent of global wetlands, flooding for millions of people and higher deaths from heat waves” (“Milestones in Climate Change Policy,” *washingtonpost.com*, December 3, 2007).

Multiple studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals show that 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree: Climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities. In addition, most of the leading scientific organizations worldwide have issued public statements endorsing this position. Notable among them are:

American Association for the Advancement of Science, “The scientific evidence is clear: global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society” (2006).

American Chemical Society, “Comprehensive scientific assessments of our current and potential future climates clearly indicate that climate change is real, largely attributable to emissions from human activities, and potentially a very serious problem” (2004).

American Geophysical Union, “Human-induced climate change requires urgent action. Humanity is the major influence on the global climate change observed over the past 50 years. Rapid societal responses can significantly lessen negative outcomes” (Adopted 2003, revised and reaffirmed 2007, 2012, 2013).

American Medical Association, “Our AMA ... supports the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s fourth assessment report and concurs with the scientific consensus that the Earth is undergoing adverse global climate change and that anthropogenic contributions are significant” (2013).

American Meteorological Society, “It is clear from extensive scientific evidence that the dominant cause of the rapid change in climate of the past half century is human-induced increases in the amount of atmospheric greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), chlorofluorocarbons, methane, and nitrous oxide” (2012).

American Physical Society, “The evidence is incontrovertible: Global warming is occurring. If no mitigating actions are taken, significant disruptions in the Earth’s physical and ecological systems, social systems, security and human health are likely to occur. We must reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beginning now” (2007).

U.S. National Academy of Sciences, “The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify taking steps to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere” (2005).

U.S. Global Change Research Program, “The global warming of the past 50 years is due primarily to human-induced increases in heat-trapping gases. Human ‘fingerprints’ also have been identified in many other aspects of the climate system, including changes in ocean heat content, precipitation, atmospheric moisture, and Arctic sea ice” (2009, 13 U.S. government departments and agencies).

Conclusion

Although a “green church movement” has long remained at the grassroots level in the U.S., the PC(USA) leads with a robust environmental ministry and “Earth Care Congregation” program. We recognize the importance of earth care issues and action, and we have an opportunity to add the concern to to an important section of our constitutional documents.

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ and in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ’s mission. A faithful member bears witness to God’s love and grace and promises to be

involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church. Caring for God's Creation is a critical act of faith in today's world and should be included in G-1.0304, "The Ministry of Members," of the *Book of Order*.

Concurrence to Item 09-11 from the Presbyteries of Boston, the Cascades, Lake Michigan, Monmouth, and Northern New England.

Concurrence to Item 09-11 from the Presbytery of Heartland (with Additional Rationale)

Biblical Background

The fundamental mandate for creation care comes from Genesis 2:15, where God places Adam in the garden to "till it and keep it" (NRSV). A better translation from the Hebrew is "to serve it and to preserve it." In Genesis 1:26–28, God blesses humankind with dominion over the earth. This acknowledgement that humanity is the most powerful species on earth does not, however, give license to dominate and exploit the planet. Indeed, the following verses affirm the right of animals to share in the bounty of the earth's produce (Gen 1:29–30). Human "dominion" as intended in Genesis is best practiced in care for creation, in stewardship, which according to Genesis Noah fulfills best by implementing God's first endangered species act. Moreover, the great creation psalm of the Psalter views humanity as one species among many animal species, all meant to flourish together (Ps. 104:14–23). The psalmist exclaims, "O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Ps. 104:24).

Scripture affirms that God created the world in wisdom and out of love, and it is also out of love for the world that God gave Christ to redeem it (Jn. 3:16). In Christ "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17), and "every creature under heaven" is to receive God's good news (Col. 1:23). According to Revelation, God's work in the world is "make all things new" (Rev. 21:5), to bring about a new creation that does not destroy the old but transforms it, renews it. If the church is the sign of the new creation, then the church must lead the way in caring for creation. —Dr. William P. Brown, William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary

Reformed Confessional Background

The Confession of 1967 of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was one of the first creeds to lift up environmental concerns:

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of man's life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes man's natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. It is the will of God that his purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from his creation. (9.53; see related issues in 9.45–47.)

Our Song of Hope (1978) by the Reformed Church in America continued this theme in the following decade:

We know Christ to be our only hope. We have enmeshed our world in a realm of sin, rebelled against God, accepted inhuman oppression of humanity, and even crucified God's son. God's world has been trapped by our fall, governments entangled by human pride, and nature polluted by human greed. (II.2)

A Brief Statement of Faith (1991) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) was the first to state that poor environmental stewardship has the potential to do global harm in very severe terms: "Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care" (Book of Confessions, 10.3, Lines 34–38)

A New Creed of the United Church of Canada was revised in 1994 to add "to live with respect in Creation": "We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope."

Our World Belongs to God (2008) by the Christian Reformed Church of North America is the most recent Reformed creed to be updated. It states:

In Genesis 1:28–31 and 9:1–7, God gives to humanity the right and responsibility to develop and care for creation; for a reflection on the limitations of human technology and need for divine wisdom, see Job 28; for the continuing goodness of creation and the need for a prayerful approach to what we use of it, see 1 Timothy 4:4–5. 51. We lament that our abuse of creation has brought lasting damage to the world we have been given: polluting streams and soil, poisoning the air, altering the climate, and damaging the earth. We commit ourselves to honor all God's creatures and to protect them from abuse and extinction, for our world belongs to God.

Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Background

In the section, "Caring for Creation and Life" (W-7.5000)

09 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

W-7.5001 God's Mandate

God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's work of creation and preservation. God has given humankind awe-some power and perilous responsibility to rule and tame the earth, to sustain and reshape it, to replenish and renew it.

W-7.5002 Worship and the Use of Creation

In worship Christians rejoice and give thanks to God, who gives and sustains the created universe, the earth, all life, and all goods. They acknowledge God's command to be stewards. They confess their own failures in caring for creation and life. They rejoice in the promise of the redemption and renewal of the creation in Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the Word and sealed in the Sacraments. They commit themselves to live as God's stewards until the day when God will make all things new. (W1.0000)

W-7.5003 Stewardship of Creation

As stewards of God's creation who hold the earth in trust, the people of God are called to

- a. use the earth's resources responsibly without plundering, polluting, or destroying,
- b. develop technological methods and processes that work together with the earth's environment to preserve and enhance life,
- c. produce and consume in ways that make available to all people what is sufficient for life,
- d. work for responsible attitudes and practices in procreation and reproduction,
- e. use and shape earth's goods to create beauty, order, health, and peace in ways that reflect God's love for all creatures.

In gratitude for the gifts of creation, the faithful bring material goods to God in worship as a means of expressing praise, as a symbol of their self-offering, and as a token of their commitment to share earth's goods. (W-2.5000; W-3.3507; W-5.5005; W-5.6000)

Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly Background

The most comprehensive study was the 218th General Assembly (2008) study paper, *The Power to Change: U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/energyreport.pdf.

Science Background

The Holy Spirit can work through "secular" sciences to help Christians move toward environmental stewardship. John Calvin pointed out the benefits of secular science in the 16th century in his most famous work:

If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in slight esteem, we condemn and reproach the Spirit himself. But if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic and mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. For if we neglect God's gift freely offered in these arts, we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloths. (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.15–16).

So Christians have an opportunity and even an obligation to learn from scientific findings as we seek to be faithful in God's world. The Confession of 1967 teaches us "... effective preaching, teaching, and personal witness require disciplined study of both the Bible and the contemporary world" (*Book of Confessions*, 9.49).

Unfortunately scientific findings are increasing in their level of alarm and calling for significant changes in the way we have lived:

Worldwide levels of carbon dioxide—the gas scientists say is most responsible for global warming—reached a significant milestone for the month of March, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Wednesday. The global monthly average for carbon dioxide hit 400.83 parts per million in March, the first time the average surpassed 400 ppm for an entire month since such measurements began in the late 1950s, NOAA said. "It's both disturbing and daunting," said NOAA chief greenhouse gas scientist Pieter Tans. "Daunting from the standpoint on how hard it is to slow this down." The burning of the oil, gas and coal for energy releases "greenhouse" gases such as carbon dioxide and methane. These gases have caused the Earth's temperature to rise over the past century to levels that cannot be explained by natural variability. "Carbon dioxide levels reach global milestone," *USA Today*, May 7 2015

"Changes in the greenhouse gas concentrations and other drivers alter the global climate and bring about myriad human health consequences. Environmental consequences of climate change, such as extreme heat waves, rising sea-levels, changes in precipitation resulting in flooding and droughts, intense hurricanes, and degraded air quality, affect directly and indirectly the physical, social, and psychological health of humans. For instance, changes in precipitation are creating changes in the availability and quantity of water, as well as resulting in extreme weather events such as intense hurricanes and flooding. Climate change can be a driver of disease migration, as well as exacerbate health effects resulting from the release of toxic air pollutants in vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with asthma or cardiovascular disease." The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, is one of twenty-seven research institutes and centers that comprise the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has online web pages on how health is impacted by climate change: <http://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/AssessingHealthVulnerabilitytoClimateChange.pdf>.

The information on health effects has been excerpted from the Third National Climate Assessment's Health Chapter. Additional information regarding the health effects of climate change and references to supporting literature can be found in the Health Chapter at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/sectors/human-health>.

Humans can cause extinction of a species through overharvesting, pollution, habitat destruction, introduction of invasive species (such as new predators and food competitors), overhunting, and other influences. Explosive, unsustainable human population growth is an essential cause of the extinction crisis.[18] According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 784 extinctions have been recorded since the year 1500, the arbitrary date selected to define "recent" extinctions, up to the year 2004; with many more likely to have gone unnoticed. Several species have also been listed as extinct since 2004.[19]" A 2003 review across 14 biodiversity research centers predicted that, because of climate change, 15–37% of land species would be "committed to extinction" by 2050.[33][34][35] The ecologically rich areas that would potentially suffer the heaviest losses include the Cape Floristic Region, and the Caribbean Basin. These areas might see a doubling of present carbon dioxide levels and rising temperatures that could eliminate 56,000 plant and 3,700 animal species.[36] ("Extinction" Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinction>)

"Climate change will likely affect human health in the future. Potential impacts include heat stress, increased air pollution, and lack of food due to drought or other agricultural stresses. Climate change can also influence the spread of infectious diseases" (Understanding and Responding to Climate Change: Highlights of National Academies [USA] Reports, October 2005, page 16).

"Nov. 17, 2007: The UN IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] releases its final assessment paper in Valencia, Spain. The Synthesis Report finds that the world will have to end its growth of carbon emissions within seven years and become mostly free of carbon emitting technologies in about four decades to avoid widespread extinctions of species, slowing of global currents, decreased food production, loss of 30 percent of global wetlands, flooding for millions of people and higher deaths from heat waves" ("Milestones in Climate Change Policy" [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), December 3, 2007)

Newsweek reported in its July 7–14, 2008, issue that scientists have found "Global Warming Is a Cause of This Year's Extreme Weather." "Climate Change and its Impacts on the Poor" is a moving workshop presentation by Andrew Kang Bartlett available as a PowerPoint presentation that can be downloaded from the Presbyterian Hunger Program web site. If energy-wasting lifestyles of individuals (and churches) are hurting the poor around the world through climate change and its resulting changes, one wonders if a modern Amos might proclaim they offer no acceptable worship (Am. 5:21–24).

The directors of the Environmental Protection Agency for Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush, and Ronald Reagan all urge action on climate change (Republican EPA chiefs to Congress: Act on climate, *USA Today*, June 18, 2014).

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 09-11

Advice on Item 06-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that Item 06-03 presents the following matters the General Assembly should consider.

There are several points already in G-1.0304 that encourage church members to live out faithful stewardship of God's creation. The responsibility for caring for God's creation already is included in our confessional documents, as noted in the rationale, and this should be instructive for all church members.

The *Book of Order* is a constitutional document, not a manual of operations. Although there is no impediment to approving this overture, there is no compelling reason to add this to the *Book of Order*.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 09-11

Advice and Counsel on Item 09-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 09-11 from the Presbytery of New Castle, requests that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Stated Clerk to send to the presbyteries, for affirmative or negative vote, an amendment to G-1.0304 The Ministry of Members, adding the clause "caring for God's creation."

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 09-11 be approved.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) acknowledges the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) that there is neither impediment to approving this overture nor compelling reason to do so. It also notes the rationale presented by both the Presbytery of New Castle and the concurring presbyteries for both the biblical basis and the current urgency of recognizing church members' call to care for creation. The ACSWP also commends the 2008 PC(USA) policy document, *The Power to Change—U.S. Energy Policy and Global Warming*, which urges "individuals and families in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to ... Pray, asking for God's forgiveness and for the power and guidance to enjoy and care for creation in new ways" (<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/power-change-us-energy-policy-global-warming/>, p. 1). Further, the 1990 PC(USA) policy document, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, "recognizes and accepts restoring creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level" (p. 9). While the ACC suggests that G-1.0304 already contains "several points ... that encourage church members to live out faithful stewardship of God's creation," ACSWP notes that existing elements of G-1.0304 can all be read in an entirely human-centric manner. For this reason, and in light of the accelerating dangers of climate change, we think adding "caring for God's creation" would indeed encourage a substantially broadened sense of responsibility to all of God's creation.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 09-11

Comment on Item 09-11—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Recognizing that caring for God's creation is rooted in scripture, Reformed theology, and PC(USA) policies, congregations currently are living out their ministry in relationship to God's creation in a multitude of ways (in worship, education, facilities, and outreach efforts). Naming "caring for God's creation" to the "Ministry of Members" section of the *Book of Order* (G-1.0304) makes explicit this aspect of Christian discipleship already recognized and practiced in a great many congregations nationwide.

Item 09-12

[The assembly approved Item 09-12 with amendment. See pp. 62, 65–66.]

On Advocacy Against Factory Farming—From the Presbytery of Monmouth.

The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

~~1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate wherever possible in favor of alternatives to [CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) or] IFAP[S] (Industrial [Food] [Farm] Animal Production [Sites]), [commonly known as] [also known as CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) or] factory [farms] [farming], and to advocate against measures that support industrialized animal farming[, with specific attention to large scale vertical integration/coordination in the meat industry, recognizing that large scale farming is necessary for producing the large amount of food needed to sustain our growing population.]~~ 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to responsibly advocate wherever possible in favor of humane treatment of animals on all size of farms. Furthermore, as an assembly of Christians, it is our duty to promote environmental stewardship and additional public regulations within reason, such as CAFO, which encourage minimizing the impact that modern production practices have on God's beautiful earth: acknowledging that large scale farming is necessary to produce sufficient food to feed the world's growing population.]

2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate in support of farm and processing plant workers, 'fence line' communities surrounding [factory farms] [IFAP sites], racial ethnic farmers, and family farmers and ranchers.

3. ~~[Remind the church of]~~ [Apply to industrialized animal farming insights from] the 1990 ~~[proclamation]~~ [report], "Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice," which asserts that humanity and nature are so inextricably bound that the suffering of one affects the other. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a history of affirming that protection of the environment is an essential part of the Christian faith.

[4. Apply insights from the 2002 report, "We Are What We Eat," which was prepared by and with farmers, ranchers, and those involved in rural ministry, and which reminds us of our need to be aware of the impact of choices related to the food we produce, process, and consume. It calls us to put faith in action by praying, advocating, and acting for rural communities.]

~~[4. Encourage all levels of the denomination (presbyteries, congregations, and individual members) to purchase only meat that carries the minimal certification of "Certified Humane Raised & Handled."]~~ [5. Recognize that damage is done to the Body of Christ when we vilify those who work in good faith in an industry that undergirds most of modern life; encourage collaboration with the many individuals in the food industry who seek to engage food production in positive and creative ways.]

*Rationale**The Confession of 1967: Reconciliation in Society*

“In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations” (*Book of Confessions*, Confession of 1967, 9.43).

These current particular challenges:

- a safe and sustainable food supply in the United States,
- environmental degradation from our current ways of industrialized farming,
- risks to humans from what is fed to food animals, and
- global hunger from an imbalance in what we in the United States take from the earth and what we give back point us toward changes that are necessary in our food production. One of those necessary changes is to end factory farming of animals and the farming monoculture of corn and soy, which is done in large part to support factory farming of food animals.

Web of Creation

We can talk about the web of creation that binds us to all living things and to the earth through lifting up common biblical themes from our Judeo-Christian tradition. And in so doing, we can speak of sin, as Barbara Brown Taylor has, as “wrecked relationships” within that web. During the past half-century, as industrialized farming of food animals has developed, we have broken relationships with the earth, with other living things, with other human beings, and with food itself as a gift from God (Taylor, *Speaking of Sin*, cited in “Just Eating?,” p. 43).

Psalm 145:15–16: The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

Genesis 9:16–17: “‘When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.’”

Matthew 22:37–40: [Jesus] said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Romans 8:21–22: “that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now.”

“What role can the church play in shaping the future? We are called to participate in and influence this agricultural revolution by breathing fresh life into the values of sustainability, stewardship, compassion, and community” (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 549). The issues are so complex, however, that the directive of this overture is very broad. But as Keeve Nachman, PhD, of Johns Hopkins University has observed, we can identify certain populations that pay the price for the inexpensive animal protein in our food markets. Those vulnerable populations bear the brunt of many risks that are hard to measure because large corporations generally own impenetrable vertically integrated “farms.” Vertical integration means that one entity owns the animals, controls the inputs (food, chemicals, antibiotics, hormones), and owns the processing plants. Therefore that entity controls access to the market as well. These CAFO/IFAPS combinations are becoming legally impenetrable due to what are known as “Ag-Gag” laws. These laws make it a crime for undercover investigators or whistle-blowers to expose illegal activity on the grounds of one of these corporate properties. (In other words, it becomes illegal to expose illegal activity, and in some cases, not just a misdemeanor.)

So, once we have identified the vulnerable populations, it will then be important to consider what areas of concern might offer potential for impacting the people, the land, and the humane treatment of the food animals (“We Are What We Eat,” PC(USA) Report, *Minutes*, 2002, Part I, pp. 13, 17, 533ff; Nachman lectures, Johns Hopkins “Introduction to U.S. Food Systems”).

First, are the workers in U.S. IFAPS. It may come as a shock to us that they are not under the oversight of OSHA. (Nachman; PC(USA), 15) There is, in this industry, a high rate of injury among workers. But the lack of OSHA regulations is particularly disturbing because their work involves many chemicals in both the feed for and waste from the animals, in the air of both CAFOs and slaughterhouses, and in fertilizers with which crop workers are in contact. Perhaps the most concerning and best documented chemical is inorganic arsenic. Often there is no personal protective equipment available, nor any decontamination facility for use after a shift. In addition to this lack of oversight, many workers are immigrants, both documented and undocumented, which adds another layer of vulnerability—language, insurance, legality, education, and economics.

The church has an additional concern over that of the secular world. Government agencies should indeed be concerned with physical safety, economic and racial ethnic concerns, and so forth. But for those who work in the violent and desensitizing atmosphere of the slaughterhouse or in the mind-numbing and soul-stealing CAFO environment where the expectation is solely to produce animals as commodities in as low-cost manner as possible, the church needs to minister to the emotional and spiritual wounding of the workers. We have nurtured them to be compassionate; and as a society, we have surrounded them with media images of heroes and rescuers. And then we have abandoned them.

Isaiah 1:15: When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

“People must have renounced, it seems to me, all natural intelligence to dare to advance that animals are but animated machines. ... It appears to me, besides, that [such people] can never have observed with attention the character of animals, not to have distinguished among them the different voices of need, of suffering, of joy, of pain, of love, of anger, and of all their affections. It would be very strange that they should express so well what they could not feel” (*History of Vegetarianism*, Voltaire).

The second population is the “Fence Line” and surrounding communities, mostly concentrated in the Southeast United States, mostly rural, and generally in depressed economic areas. Negative consequences of living in proximity to an IFAPS or CAFO fall into three general areas:

1. Respiratory and mental health issues (asthma, allergies, depression, etc.)
2. Odors (compromised quality of life)
3. Economic effects (property damage and diminished property values) (Nachman)

We who are committed to those living in poverty, to those without access to power and privilege, to those living in oppressive circumstances, need to take note of this population whose lives are disrupted, and whose land and water are polluted by vast quantities of animal waste, containing chemicals, antibiotics, viruses, bacteria, heavy metals, and hormonal substances.

The water sources for about 43 percent of the U.S. have had pathogen contamination associated with manure. Twenty-nine states have identified other pollution problems from CAFOs. Groundwater constitutes 40 percent of public water supplies, but a full 97 percent of rural water supplies (<http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/data-visualizations/infographic-cleaning-up-cafo-permit-rules-85899431053>, and Nachman). Although focusing only on poultry, the Pew Charitable Trust describes it best, in a summary of their 2011 report, “Big Chicken: Pollution and Industrial Poultry Production in America.” The report compiles and analyzes fifty years of federal and state government data to describe a business that has been remade by industrialization:

The broiler industry has changed drastically over the last 50 years and now produces more than 8 billion birds—an increase of more than 1400%—despite the loss of 98% of broiler operations. The typical broiler chicken comes from a facility that produces more than 605,000 birds a year. The majority of these massive operations—millions of chickens and the billions of pounds of waste they produce—are concentrated in a handful of states that comprise the American Broiler Belt.” (<http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/video-library/the-rise-of-industrial-scale-chicken-production-85899362476>)

The shift from the traditional diversified family farm to a more industrialized system of raising animals has contributed to the transformation of food production and rural communities in the United States. Family farms have been replaced by an industry that dictates how the animals will be raised but leaves farmers liable for waste disposal and the financial burdens associated with housing thousands of hogs or tens of thousands of chickens. Marketing power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of large, vertically integrated companies that own, process and sell the animal products and bear none of the responsibility for environmental degradation.

Across the country, water and air pollution from industrial livestock operations have compromised the health of communities and the surrounding environment. Huge volumes of manure are commonly stored in open lagoons and applied to nearby land without treatment to control excess nutrients, pathogens and other contaminants.

The largest industrial operations also use the most restrictive confinement methods, such as battery cages for laying hens and gestation crates for sows. These confinement types are not only among the least humane of farming practices but also contribute to the need for nontherapeutic application of antibiotics and the looming health crisis of antibiotic resistance. (<http://www.pewenvironment.org/campaigns/reforming-industrial-animal-agriculture/id/8589940398>)

The third population is African American and other racial ethnic farmers. These “farmers and ranchers have suffered economic losses for a longer time than their white counterparts. ... and if present land loss continues, there will be virtually no African American farmers by the end of the first decade of this century.” Native American farmers have a similar situation, which may be more devastating, since farming is one of the primary occupations both on and off reservation lands. Asian Americans have a mixed story: Japanese Americans lost their farm ownership during World War II detentions, but Southeast Asian immigrants have found a niche in meat processing plants. Most interesting, however, is the Hispanic population, which has the largest number of new farmers. And yet, “the concerns of the lack of younger, beginning farmers may be shared by all groups” (“We Are What We Eat,” 11). Small farms, it seems, are doomed unless something changes and changes soon.

Control of Farm Decisions

Control of farm decisions are no longer predominantly in the hands of traditional farmers. Decisions are made in boardrooms, far from the smell of manure, the feel of soil, the warmth of a cow's breath. What kinds of issues might the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness seek to influence in order to benefit these three vulnerable populations? This list is not in any particular order, and it is wide-ranging, but it is certainly not exhaustive:

Worker Protection Advocacy

EPA policies

Immigration Reform

OSHA

Farm Policy

So-called "AG-GAG" legislation (making reports of criminal activity within IFAPS a criminal act)

International Trade Agreements

Clean Water and Clean Air Acts

There are Presbyterians everywhere—in boardrooms, in sessions, in presbyteries, and in voting booths in communities across this nation. It is our responsibility to listen to what comes from our eyes and ears in Washington, and to stand by our brothers and sisters who are part of these vulnerable populations because we, too, are a vulnerable population. We are consumers of the products of the industrialized farms.

Resources / Suggestions for Further Study

Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis, Patricia K. Tull, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2013).

"Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options," Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM>.

"Factory Farming in America," series of six very accessible articles by Traci Hobson sponsored by the Ian Somerhalder Foundation (begin here: <http://www.isfoundation.com/campaign/factory-farming-america-introduction>).

Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology, Jennifer R. Ayers (Baylor University Press, 2013).

"Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table" Presbyterian Distribution Service, Advocate Health Care, Church World Service, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program/PC(USA).

"We Are What We Eat"—Report approved by the 214th General Assembly (2002). Published by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Rural Ministry Office, PC(USA).

"The Hands That Feed Us," a report from the Food Chain Workers Alliance, funded in part by the PC(USA) Hunger Program. It documents the situation of workers, mostly in their own words, in factory farms and along the food chain.

The Pew Charitable Trust—<http://www.pewenvironment.org/campaigns/reforming-industrial-animal-agriculture>.

"Introduction to U.S. Food Systems"—An annual four-hour course, <https://www.coursera.org/course/foodsys> through the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future: <http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/education/opencourseware/>

"Green House Gas Emissions from Animal Agriculture," <http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/farm/hsus-fact-sheet-greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-animal-agriculture.pdf>

"Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice," <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/information-and-advocacy-links/>.

Humanely Raised Farm Animal Certification, <https://www.aspc.org/fight-cruelty/farm-animal-cruelty/welfare-conscious-choices>.

Item 10-01

[The assembly approved Item 10-01 with amendment. See pp. 13, 42.]

On Seeking to Eradicate Slavery from the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business—From the Presbytery of Newark.

The Presbytery of Newark respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be aware of the presence of slavery [and forced labor] in international chains of commerce.
2. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to inquire of each vendor with which they do business (a) that the vendor [ascertain and/or] disclose the nature and extent of slavery [and forced labor] in its supply chains, (b) that the vendor disclose the programs and strategies that it has adopted to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from its supply chains, and (c) that the vendor provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the vendor's representations.
3. Encourage the ministries and agencies that invest in companies to inquire of each company in which they make an investment (a) that the company [ascertain and/or] disclose the nature and extent of slavery [and forced labor] in its supply chains, (b) that the company disclose the programs and strategies that is has adopted to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from its supply chains, and (c) that the company provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the company's representations.
4. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do business with and make investments in those companies that (a) have a rigorous program intended to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from their supply chains and (b) disclose those reports and other information that enable the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and such other persons as may be interested, to understand and evaluate the program that is intended to eradicate slavery [and forced labor] from the company's supply chains.

Rationale

As Christians, we have a biblical mandate to establish justice, to care for the powerless, and to break the yokes of oppression (Micah 6:8, Isaiah 58:6). The General Assembly has recognized and affirmed that mandate and has approved reports and statements condemning and addressing modern forms of slavery and human trafficking including, "A Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue" (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 890ff) and "A Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking" (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 1167ff).

The presence of slavery in international chains of commerce has been well-documented. Slavery has been reported in the fishing industry; in the mining of gold, tantalum, tin, and tungsten; in the cocoa industry; in the manufacturing of clothes, rugs, and other textile products; and in the production of other goods and products. The taint of slavery follows products through the supply chain to the consumer. For example, gold ore is transformed and used in cell phones, computers, jewelry, and medicine (U.S. Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2015, "Preventing Trafficking in Global Supply Chains"; Siddharth Kara, "Eyewitness Account: Child Labor in North India's Hand-Woven Carpet Sector"; "Revealed: Asian slave labour producing prawns for supermarkets in US, UK," *The Guardian*, June 10, 2014; Free the Slaves, "Congo's Mining Slaves, Enslavement of South Kivu Mining Sites" (2013).

Increasingly, governments, consumers, businesses, civil society groups, and others have sought to develop those programs and strategies that will eradicate slavery from international chains of commerce.

This overture asks that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with its ministries and agencies, begin to take those steps as consumers, as investors, and as followers of Jesus Christ, to help to ensure that the scourge of slavery is eradicated, at least, from the supply chains of those with whom we do business.

Concurrence to Item 10-01 from the Presbytery of Hudson River with additional rationale.

As Christians, we have a biblical mandate to establish justice, to care for the powerless, and to break the yokes of oppression. Micah 6:8, Isaiah 58:6. The General Assembly has recognized and affirmed that mandate and has approved reports and statements condemning and addressing modern forms of slavery and human trafficking including, "A Resolution on De-

veloping a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue” (221st General Assembly (2014), *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 890ff), “A Resolution to Expand the Church’s Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking” (218th General Assembly (2008) *Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 1167ff), and a “Resolution in Support of Ongoing Partnership Work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Campaign for Fair Food” (217th General Assembly (2006) *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 887ff).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 20.9 million men, women, and children are working in situations of forced labor globally, trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they cannot leave—here in the U.S. and around the world.¹

The presence of slavery in supply chains of commerce has been well documented. Slavery has been reported in the fishing industry; in the mining of gold, tantalum, tin, and tungsten; in the cocoa industry; in the manufacture of clothes, rugs, and other textile products; and in the production of other goods and products. The taint of slavery follows products through the supply chain to the consumer. For example, gold ore is transformed and used in cell phones, computers, jewelry, and medicine. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2015*, “Preventing Trafficking in Global Supply Chains,” Siddharth Kara, “Eyewitness Account: Child Labor in North India’s Hand-Woven Carpet Sector,” “Revealed: Asian slave labor producing prawns for supermarkets in US,UK”, *The Guardian*, June 10, 2014, Free the Slaves, “Congo’s Mining Slaves, Enslavement of South Kivu Mining Sites” (2013).

Increasingly, governments, consumers, businesses, civil society groups, worker organizations, and others have sought to develop those programs and strategies that will eradicate slavery from international chains of commerce.

Corporations have a critical role to play in ensuring their business practices, at minimum, do not contribute to creating conditions in which slavery flourishes in *both* their domestic and international supply chains. Addressing and preventing modern slavery in corporate supply chains is paramount and policies that have been adopted by companies should be evaluated for whether they possess, in design and function, the standards, monitoring, enforcement, and supplier consequences necessary for actually eliminating and preventing slavery and the conditions in which it flourishes.

Such evaluation is a work in progress in the global arena and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can meaningfully contribute to such efforts by evaluating those programs or efforts that do exist among those corporations in which it is invested or with which it does business.²

The PC(USA) actually has experience with the only program and model in the world that has proven effective at ending, and now preventing, modern slavery in corporate supply chains: the Coalition of Immokalee Workers’ Fair Food Program and its model of Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR).³ The 216th General Assembly (2006) passed a “Resolution in Support of Ongoing Work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Campaign for Fair Food” to address modern slavery in corporate supply chains and eliminate the conditions in which it flourishes by bringing together corporations, their suppliers, workers, and consumers to create a sustainable and binding commitment to this end. That commitment eventuated in the development of the Fair Food Program in 2011.

The Fair Food Program, in which some of the most powerful corporations in the world such as Wal-Mart and McDonald’s participate, and its WSR model have been uniquely promoted as a singularly effective paradigm by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights and the Clinton Global Initiative among others. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) was awarded the Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Modern Slavery in 2015 for the program’s and model’s unparalleled effectiveness in eliminating and preventing slavery. The Fair Food Program and WSR model have served as a blueprint for the development of the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Safety, and governments, NGOs, and worker organizations around the world are using their lessons to design corporate accountability programs that will actually end human rights violations. Using this WSR model as a benchmark, the church is on solid ground for evaluating and engaging corporate efforts to address modern slavery in domestic and international supply chains.

This overture asks that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), together with its ministries and agencies, begin to take those steps as consumers, as investors, and as followers of Jesus Christ, to help to ensure that the scourge of slavery is eradicated, at least, from the supply chains of those with whom we do business.

¹ International Labour Organisation, 2012 Global estimate of forced labour, Executive Summary, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_181953.pdf

² See Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Evaluation Benchmarks (Dec. 2015) <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/211146>, and OSCE, “Ending Exploitation: Ensuring that businesses do not Contribute to Trafficking in Human Beings: Duties of States and the Private Sector,” (Nov. 2014) <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/126306>.

³ Fair Food Standards Council, “Fair Food Program 2015 Annual Report,” <http://fairfoodstandards.org/15SOTP-Web.pdf>

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 12-04 be approved with amendment as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“~~[The Presbytery of Newark respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following]~~ [The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)]:

“1. Encourage[s] the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be aware of the presence of ~~[slavery]~~ [trafficked or forced labor] in international chains of commerce.

“2. Encourage[s] the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to inquire of each vendor with which they do business (a) that the vendor [ascertain and/or] disclose the nature and extent of ~~[slavery]~~ [forced labor] in its supply chains, (b) that the vendor disclose the programs and strategies that it has adopted to eradicate ~~[slavery]~~ [any such forced labor] from its supply chains, and (c) that the vendor provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the vendor’s representations.

“3. Encourage[s] the ministries and agencies that invest in companies to inquire of each company in which they make an investment (a) that the company [ascertain and/or] disclose the nature and extent of ~~[slavery]~~ [forced labor] in its supply chains, (b) that the company disclose the programs and strategies that is has adopted to eradicate ~~[slavery]~~ [any such forced labor] from its supply chains, and (c) that the company provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the company’s representations.

“4. Encourage[s] the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do business with and make investments in those companies that (a) have a rigorous program intended to eradicate ~~[slavery]~~ [forced labor] from their supply chains and (b) disclose those reports and other information that enable the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and such other persons as may be interested, to understand and evaluate the program that is intended to eradicate ~~[slavery]~~ [forced labor] from the company’s supply chains.”

The 221st General Assembly (2014) tasked the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns to update the 2006 policy on sex trafficking and expand it to include other forms of trafficking including, but not limited to, forced labor. Item 11-21 provides the requested report, which contains a discussion of the terms and their use by the International Labor Organization and other bodies.

The term “forced labor” reflects the larger reality that not all immoral labor practices are forms of slavery. This includes situations where the laborer is held captive by their social and economic status, but are not held in bondage by their employer. This definition broadens the focus that the term “slavery” limits. Slavery implies that the individual is owned by another individual or classified as property. Forced labor includes situations where the laborers are coerced into staying to work, but they are not owned, so their situation does not fall into the category of slavery, despite the unfair and immoral situation that many laborers find themselves in, both in the United States and around the world.

It is the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s understanding that the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) and the Trafficking Roundtable are able to include the actions requested in their ongoing work, partly by working ecumenically to support the adoption of codes of conduct where (as this item indicates) law and law enforcement do not currently prevent the behavior noted.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-01

Comment on Item 10-01—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture seeks to eradicate slavery from the supply chains of vendors and other businesses that the PC(USA) and its various bodies do business.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation has been tasked by the assembly to track supplier diversity and be an advisor to the church. The GACOR respectfully recommends that the six agencies of the PC(USA) work cooperatively to identify one representative to meet with two GACOR members to research, identify, and develop practices to certify vendors’ supply chains are free of slavery. The GACOR is responsible for receiving and reviewing AAEEEO reports from the agencies as well as supplier diversity reports. They are mandated partners in any adjustments to policies in these areas.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 10-02

Item 10-02 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 10-03

[The assembly approved Item 10-03 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 41, 42–43.]

[Comment: This concern prevails in the U.S.A. beyond the African American communities and applies to Hispanic, Native American, and all poor communities.]

On Taking Specific Action to Address the Worsening Plight of the African American Male—From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh.

The Presbytery of Pittsburgh overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Take specific action, not just in word, but also in deed, to address and improve the worsening plight of the African American male in [any of the] five specified cities as a pilot initiative pointing toward future and further nationwide intervention. Micah 6:8, with its powerful words to “Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly [with your God],” calls us to action and not only proclamation. The following are the five cities where the plight of the African American male is especially egregious, including one where a future General Assembly will be held, and are the ones designated for specific action:

- Baltimore, Maryland [site of the 224th General Assembly (2020)]
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Cleveland, Ohio
- New York, New York
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Specific actions to be taken include:

~~[f.]~~ [a.] Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to advocate for policies at the local and state levels that will change the structures that contribute to the demise of the black male;

~~[a-]~~ [b.] [Encourage the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), mid councils, and congregations to develop] ~~[P]~~[p]rograms that address recidivism;

~~[b-]~~ [c.] [Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to develop] ~~[P]~~[p]rograms that address and engage local congregational and community members that speak the language of and to African American males aged 6–25 years;

~~[e-]~~ [d.] [Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to develop] ~~[P]~~[p]rograms that empower African American males to develop hireable skills so that all of the beloved community benefits;

~~[d-]~~ [e.] [Encourage the PMA, mid councils, and congregations to collaborate with] ~~[Programs of partnership between the congregations, presbyteries, and synods of the]~~ PC(USA) ~~[with]~~ established agencies/groups such as [National Black Presbyterian Caucus,] My Brother’s Keeper, 100 Black Men of America, Amachi, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Boy Scouts of America: Scoutreach (an urban emphasis program), and the Open Table;

~~[e-]~~ [f.] Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to provide resources for the establishment and support of programs ~~[within their bounds]~~ that provide for prevention and rehabilitation in the areas of substance abuse and job placement and security;

g. Request synods, presbyteries, and congregations to celebrate particular black males who are role models and members of extended families for the contributions to the whole society.

2. ~~[Access the Hawkins-Buchanan Fund for Racial Justice for at least a portion, if not all, of the five million dollars anticipated to be necessary to support this overture.]~~ [Request that congregations and mid councils join in this ministry by offering the funding received by congregations in the Peace & Global Witness offering to fund this initiative.]

Rationale for Recommendation 2

Jesus proclaims, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mt. 6:21). Five million dollars is requested to fulfill this overture, \$1,000,000 per city. The Fund for Racial Justice and Reconciliation is a permanent endowment fund established to support ministries of racial justice, reconciliation, and healing in church and society. In the prophetic words of Edler Hawkins, “This is the time to ... follow the present leading of the Holy Spirit ... and put sufficient resources to work as the symbol of our intent to provide real leadership in the challenge of race.”¹ Additionally, the Walton Family Foundation may be a partner and supporter of this effort to address the plight of the African American male through education.

3. Encourage presbyteries to partner with concurring presbyteries by participating in a one-time special offering challenging each presbytery to raise at least \$30,000 to address the worsening plight of the African American male.

4. Establish a ministry partnership fund with the Presbyterian Foundation to be administered by the five pilot presbyteries.

5. Partner with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) in its public violence disaster responses when those community events are rooted in the plight of African American males.

Overall Rationale

The Time is NOW. Ecclesiastes 3:7 tells us there is a time for everything, including a time for silence and a time to speak. Now is the time not only for speaking but also acting and doing regarding the continually plummeting plight of the African American male. Now is the time for the PC(USA) to adhere to Matthew 25:45 and act on behalf of the least of these, the African American male, as we simultaneously do for Jesus.

In 1990, the Presbytery of Pittsburgh sent an overture to the 202nd General Assembly (1990) urging the assembly to take notice of and respond in a positive way to the plight of the African American male. The African American male was referred to as “an endangered species” because at that time *The Sentencing Project* reminded America and the church that there were more African American males between the ages of 16 and 25 in jail and the criminal justice system than there were in colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning. That overture was adopted by the General Assembly and became known as *Overture 90-90*.² Although the overture was adopted, minimal action was taken and documented. Each unit of the General Assembly reviewed the approved overture for action within their own unit. Congregations, presbyteries, and synods were charged with providing financial support and conducting inquiries. Little is known of those results. The time is now. What are we doing?

The 211th General Assembly (1999) approved *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Country*, a comprehensive policy document that was to guide the church’s ministry of “racial justice” into the twenty-first century. This document was to aid the PC(USA) to move beyond the task of legally dismantling racism to removing it from our lives and communities.³ The time is now. What are we doing?

We are now living in 2016, twenty-six years since the passing of *Overture 90-90* and we find that the plight of the African American male in this country has not improved but indeed has gotten worse as evidenced by:

- The shootings and beatings of African American males, including: Michael Brown, 17-year-old, Ferguson, Missouri; Eric Garner, 43-year-old, New York City, New York; Freddie Gray, 25-year-old, Baltimore, Maryland; Kimani Gray, 16-year-old, New York City, New York; Miles Jordan, 18-year-old, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Trayvon Martin, 17-year-old, Sanford, Florida; Tamar Rice, 12-year-old, Cleveland, Ohio; Tyree Woodson, 38-year-old, Baltimore, Maryland.

- Murder as a rising and prolific cause of death in African American males: While only 6 percent of the overall population, black males accounted for 43 percent of murder victims in 2011.⁴ Among youth ages 10 to 24, homicide is the leading cause of death for black males.⁵

- The escalating and excessive incarceration of African American males: Nearly 3 million black adults were arrested in 2012.⁶ As of November 2015, blacks make up 37.8 percent of the jailed population but just 13.2 percent of the U.S. population.⁷ Of the 526,000 black males in state and federal prisons in 2013, 14.3 percent, or roughly 75,000, were between the ages of 18 and 24.⁸ There were 261,500 black people in local jails in mid-2013.⁹ In 2012, black males were six times more likely to be imprisoned than white males.¹⁰

- Deteriorating educational and employment opportunities for African American males: Blacks make up 32 percent of the students being suspended and/or expelled from grade schools, while blacks make up 16 percent of the student population.¹¹ During the summer months (June–August) of 2013, just 17 percent of black teenage boys (ages 16–19) were employed, compared to 34 percent of white teenage boys.¹² Overall in 2013, half of young black men (ages 20–24) were employed, compared to more than two-thirds of young white men. This employment gap persists as men get older.¹³

Moreover, it is as true now as it was more than three decades ago that “in the United States African American men are still involved in the establishment of significant firsts, such as: first jailed, first killed in the streets, first under-employed, first fired, first confined to mental institutions, first imprisoned, first lynched, first involved with drugs and alcohol, first misad-justed, first denied medical treatment, first in suicide, first to be divorced, first denied normal benefits of this country, first to be blamed for [the] Black problem[.]”¹⁴

These statistics continue to demonstrate that the African American male is an endangered species, perhaps even bordering on extinction. The time is now. What are we doing?

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now.” writes Martin Luther King Jr in *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*.¹⁵ Our efforts to date have been small steps toward changing the plight of the African American male. We recognize that these steps were necessary to bear witness to the kingdom of heaven on earth. But now there is true urgency in taking larger steps and really moving forward. The time is now. What are we doing?

Our Confessions, the Creeds by which we practice our faith, recognize racial injustice as contrary to the Gospel and call us to action:

Confession of 1967: “In each time and place there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations. ...” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.43).

Belhar Confession: “We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word *and by deed* [emphasis added] to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. ... We believe ... that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.”¹⁶

The time is now. What are we doing? Because discipleship necessarily involves advocacy, the PC(USA) Office of Public Action calls us to action: “We must be willing to challenge the culture that tells African American boys that their lives are worth less than the lives of white boys. We live in a culture that attempts to justify itself by claiming ‘self-defense’ when we really mean fear and bigotry, or pride or individualism. ... Churches must provide a moral compass for the nation by getting outside their buildings, engaging in their communities and shaping public policies that will move our whole nation towards justice, peace and reconciliation for all people....”¹⁷ We contend that discipleship is also action. The time is now. What are we doing?

Time and time again, history has proven that regardless of the identity of the person bringing a contagious disease into a community, everyone there is affected by it; likewise, failure to implement means of rectifying the practices that have led to the crisis of this endangered segment of humanity is an invitation to the deterioration of all people, regardless of sex, race, color, or creed, and the church can no longer ignore the wide recognition of this social tragedy and fail to lead in the development of comprehensive ministry programs to ameliorate the destructive conditions that currently threaten the African American male.¹⁸

Endnotes

1. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/racialjustice/hawkins-buchanan-fund-racial-justice/>.
2. *Overture 90-90, Minutes*, 1990, Part I, pp. 94, 523, 784.
3. Parson’s Cover Letter, http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/facing-racism.pdf.
4. http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/File/AA%20Men%20and%20Boys/my_brothers_keeper_task_force_report_to_the_president.pdf, page 6.
5. Ibid.
6. <http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2015/may/05/ben-carson/more-black-men-criminal-justice-system-college-pre/>.
7. US Census bureau—quickfacts.census.gov.
8. <http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2015/may/05/ben-carson/more-black-men-criminal-justice-system-college-pre/>.
9. Ibid.
10. http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/File/AA%20Men%20and%20Boys/my_brothers_keeper_task_force_report_to_the_president.pdf, page 6.
11. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights—Civil Rights Data Collection.

12. [http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/File/AA%20Men%20and%20Boys/my brothers keeper task force report to the president.pdf](http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/File/AA%20Men%20and%20Boys/my%20brothers%20keeper%20task%20force%20report%20to%20the%20president.pdf), page 6.
13. Ibid.
14. Howard University Institute for Urban Affairs, *Urban Research Review*, vol. 6. No. 1, 1980.
15. King Jr., Martin Luther, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2010.
16. http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/belhar.pdf, 10.5 and 10.7.
17. Nelson, J. Herbert, “A Call for More Than Judicial Remedies to the Killing of African American Boys and Men”, *Advocacy as Discipleship*, August 21, 2014.
18. *Overture 90-90, Minutes*, 1990, Part I, pp. 94, 523, 784.

Concurrence to Item 10-03 from the Presbyteries of Charleston-Atlantic, Lake Erie, New York City, Upper Ohio Valley, and Western Reserve.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-03 as amended by adding a new Recommendation 3. to read as follows: [Text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“[3. Request that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministry area and the Racial Ethnic and Women’s ministry area, do the following:

“(a) Consult with the presbyteries named about existing mission partnerships and programs, administrative capacity, urban mission strategy, and use of foundation as well as church funding, for the purposes such as the specific actions in Recommendation 1.(a) through (g).

“(b) Be informed by the recommendations in Item 11-20 (requested follow-up to ‘The Gospel from Detroit’ action of the 221st General Assembly [2014]).

“(c) Charge the Urban Roundtable (established to implement ‘The Gospel From Detroit’) to develop a response that takes into account the presbytery capacities and funding sources in their consideration of urban mission possibilities or strategies, including funding proposals.

“(d) Request the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Self-Development of People program, as in 1995, to consider the African American urban context identified in this item in determining future directions and relationships with African American Presbyterian congregations.”

As stated in this Item’s rationale, “Churches must provide a moral compass for the nation by getting outside their buildings, engaging in their communities and shaping public policies that will move our whole nation towards justice, peace, and reconciliation for all people.” The recommendations specified in this overture advocate for actions and programs sorely needed in primarily urban African American areas. The presbyteries supporting this initiative understand the challenges involved and the scope of the need is undebatable.

The amendment proposed recognizes the challenges involved in developing effective programming and funding for those good actions, both within and outside the church itself. Each presbytery has its own urban strategy and “The Gospel From Detroit” provides additional mission thinking. Presbyteries in general share ideas of how to manage and transform existing church properties in African American and other communities of color, and new nonprofit enterprises may be needed to help presbyteries manage resources and fund programs with their existing congregations. “The Gospel from Detroit” emphasizes how strengthening congregations and communities can go together. The new Recommendation 3. proposes ways that the Presbyterian Mission Agency might partner with the presbyteries named. Commissioners may see other possible strategies and relationships, including additional promotion of the Hawkins-Buchanan Fund.

The 207th General Assembly (1995) approved several recommendations concerning the PC(USA)’s commitment to African American males. One of the approved recommendations was to “Urge the Self-Development of People Fund (SDOP) to give consideration to supporting programs designed to increase employment opportunities for young African American males—especially for summer employment.” It is for this reason that we propose noting the concerns of this overture in SDOP’s assessment of its strategies.

In the 2010 PC(USA) policy on public education, “Loving Our Neighbors,” we find these words relating the correlation of level of integration and black student performance: “The reversal of the trend of increased integration coincides closely with the reversal of the trend of increasing scores for Black students in math and reading. Many studies have shown that

Black students perform better in integrated environments, possibly because of better teachers and more parental involvement. ... Since several U.S. Supreme Court rulings were followed by the rapid exit of Whites into suburban areas, public schools in cities all over the country have a student population that is overwhelmingly racial ethnic and low-income.” The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Education Initiative may also be relevant to the concerns of this item.

A 2013 Economic Policy Institute Report, “For Public Schools Segregation Then, Segregation Since: Education and the Unfinished March,” by Richard Rothstein recounted the goals of the 1963 March on Washington: access to public accommodations, voting rights, end of racial discrimination in employment, decent housing, adequate and integrated education, jobs for all, and a minimum wage above \$13 per hour (see <http://www.epi.org/publication/unfinished-march-public-school-segregation/>). While steps for attaining several of these goals have moved forward, several that greatly impact young urban black males have stalled and moved backwards.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-03.

The compelling evidence contained in the rationale for the Presbytery of Pittsburgh overture speaks for itself. Citing more current evidence, such as the 72% rise in homicides reported in the city of Chicago in 2016 lends irrefutable validity to the aspirations to reach beyond the five cities targeted by this overture. The other cities and communities plagued by the worsening plight of the African American male deserve no less attention. Exacerbating the dilemma are reports of Disproportionate Media Coverage of Black Crime that serves to crystallize negative images and myths, lower self-esteem, expand the social/economic/racial divide and disintegrates the African American family—all of which also plague many African American communities. The ACREC strongly concurs with the overture and advises its approval.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-03.

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns supports Item 10-03 and commends the Presbytery of Pittsburgh for its efforts to address and improve the lives of African Americans, focused in Baltimore, Charlotte, New York, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. The ACWC agrees that there is urgency in addressing the plight of blacks in the United States. However, this should not be limited to a focus on African American men, but should also include African American women.

Although African American women are subject to significant racial disparities, including state violence, their experiences are rarely lifted up in popular discourse. Just as demonstrated with young African American boys, in 2010, African American women were incarcerated three times the rate of white women, with patterns of disproportionate discipline beginning at a young age (<http://www.aapf.org/publications/>). Further, although police shootings of black males have drawn significant media attention, research indicates that black women are routinely beaten, raped, and abused while in police custody (<http://www.aapf.org/sayhernamereport/>). Ignoring this reality leaves black women invisible and unnamed in the midst of this crisis.

As Christ’s primary concern in his ministry among us was always focused on the least, the lost, and the lonely—the most vulnerable in our midst—we strongly encourage the approval of this overture, amended to include black women.

FOUNDATION COMMENT ON ITEM 10-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-03—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

The Hawkins-Buchanan Fund referenced in Recommendation 2 is a permanent endowment fund held by the Presbyterian Foundation. Donors established the fund in 1997 with the following restriction:

The Foundation shall reinvest net income so that Net income becomes principal until the principal reaches One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000.00). Thereafter, the Foundation shall continue to reinvest ten percent (10%) of the net income into principal in perpetuity so that net income becomes principal and the Foundation shall pay ninety percent (90%) of the net income therefrom (hereinafter Net Income) after the expiration of each calendar quarter (or at any regular time interval as established by the Board of trustees of the Foundation from time to time) to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be used for the Racial Justice Program area, or its successor.

The Foundation welcomes the opportunity to be part of the funding discussion for this worthy initiative, and offers its tools and services to those who will lead the effort, should the assembly choose to approve this overture. The current market value of the fund (a combination of gifts and reinvested interest) has not yet reached the \$1,000,000 threshold. The terms of

the gift restriction and the governing law do not permit the principal to be invaded. Therefore, no money is available from the Hawkins-Buchanan Fund at this time.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 10-03

Comment on Item 10-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

African American males face serious challenges and encounter discrimination in many facets of their lives due to institutional racism in North America. The gap between African Americans and white Americans is wide in employment, income, wealth, and health.

This overture asks that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) take specific action to address and improve the worsening plight of the African American male, and it urges the church to provide “real leadership in the challenge of race.”

The challenge for this overture is funding. The overture reads, “Five million dollars is requested to fulfill this overture, \$1,000,000 per city. Realizing that the proposed actions require a financial investment, the Presbytery of Pittsburgh overtures the General Assembly to access the Hawkins-Buchanan Fund for Racial Justice for at least a portion, if not all, of the five million dollars anticipated to be necessary to support this overture. The Fund for Racial Justice and Reconciliation is a permanent endowment fund established to support ministries of racial justice, reconciliation, and healing in church and society.”

The Hawkins-Buchanan Fund at year-end 2015 totaled \$129,311.19. The fund restriction requires the fund to reach \$1M, and after this amount is reached, then the Presbyterian Mission Agency can use interest off of the principal.

Since the fund has not yet reached the \$1M amount, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is unable to utilize this fund. To date, the fund is being reinvested until it reaches the \$1M threshold.

Item 10-04

[The assembly approved Item 10-04. See pp. 13, 43.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the revised *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations*. [Changes appear in I.B. and in IV.] [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

I. Introduction

- A. As an agency of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency implements policies established by the General Assembly, coordinates the work of the General Assembly Ministries in light of General Assembly mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities; works in partnership with synods and presbyteries; and develops and proposes a comprehensive budget to the General Assembly. Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are elected by the General Assembly and are representatives of synods, presbyteries, and the church at-large. [See Organization for Mission, Section I., History of the Structure for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)]

The Manual of Operations shall be in compliance with the Book of Order, the General Assembly Deliverances, the Organization for Mission, and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may change those appendixes to the Manual of Operations that are within its purview following a first reading, which may be electronic, and adoption at a subsequent plenary session. First reading and action may take place during the same session of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee shall submit a written report of changes to the appendixes to the next General Assembly (See Appendix 11 for the Process and Procedure for Submitting Changes to the Manual of Operations.)

- B. Use of Robert’s Rules of Order (Revised)

The meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and related bodies are held in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order. As specified in ~~G-9.0302~~ *G-3.0105*, “... the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order . . .” is used.

II. Composition of the Board

A. Membership:

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is currently composed of 57 members (40 voting and 17 non-voting). Elected members of the Board serve a six-year, non-renewable term:

1. Voting Members

a. Elected Membership (36)

- 6 General Assembly commissioners (2 from current assembly, 2 from the two immediate past assemblies)
- 4 young adults (ages 18–35)
- 3 ordained presbytery staff
- 2 ordained synod staff
- 21 from recommendations of presbyteries

b. Ex-officio Members (4)

- Current Moderator of the General Assembly
- Immediate past Moderator of the General Assembly
- The current moderator of the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women
- A representative from the National Council of Presbyterian Men, Inc.

2. Non-Voting Members—with voice:

a. Corresponding Members (15)

- Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
- Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency
- Representative from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA)
- Chair of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)
- Chair of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC)
- Chair of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)
- Representative from the Committee on Theological Education (COTE)
- Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) President
- Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Chair or designee
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation President
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Chair or designee
- Presbyterian Publishing Corporation President
- Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Chair or designee
- Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. President
- Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Chair or designee

Corresponding members are not assigned to a committee and may attend any committee meeting that is conducting business of interest to them. Corresponding members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board have voice but not vote in Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and committee meetings.

b. Ecumenical Advisory Members (2)

Ecumenical advisory members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee for election by the General Assembly for two-year terms, with eligibility for two additional terms, on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. One ecumenical advisory member shall serve on the Justice Committee and one shall serve on the Worshiping Communities Committee, with voice and vote in committee. Ecumenical advisory members to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall not be elected to the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

3. At-large Committee Members

The General Assembly Nominating Committee nominates for General Assembly election, in consultation with the committees, two persons to serve on the Audit Committee and two persons to serve on Finance Committee, with voice and vote. These at-large members serve a two-year term, and are eligible for re-election twice. These members are nominated from the church at-large for their special expertise in each of these areas. While they are not members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, they are granted the privilege of the floor during Presbyterian Mission Agency Board plenary sessions on matters related to their special expertise.

B. Inclusiveness and Diversity

General Assembly policies ensure that elected bodies represent the wealth of diverse gifts found in the church and provide a means to share responsibilities and decision making. The General Assembly Nominating Committee provides for diversity and inclusiveness in the Board's membership. The General Assembly Committee on Representation monitors their work as well as the appointment of committees and task forces by the Board.

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to use expansive language when referring to God and inclusive language when referring to God's people.

C. Areas of Service:

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may change the names, number, and structure of Board committees in order to carry out the goals and objectives of the Mission Work Plan using the process delineated in Appendix 11. The work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board is carried out by elected members who may serve on Board committees as well as in liaison relationships.

III. Role of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall have the following responsibilities

- A. To cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church.
- B. To provide resources to support equal employment opportunity and affirmative action for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, for persons regardless of marital condition (married, single, widowed, or divorced), and for persons with disabilities.
- C. To develop and propose for GA approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for GA approval, an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
- D. To act in those specific matters assigned to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board by the General Assembly, acting always according to previously enacted General Assembly policies, reporting fully to each subsequent General Assembly its actions.
- E. To perform such additional responsibilities and duties as may be assigned by the General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, in consultation with appropriate individuals and groups, establishes such committees, task forces, and work groups as are necessary to conduct its business. Current committees are recorded in Appendix 1 of this manual.

The Executive Director reports to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee and the Board itself. The Executive Director shall provide direction, leadership, and coordination for the total mission program and shared services including review and evaluation.

IV. Citation of Major Documents

The following documents guide the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and are maintained in offices engaged in work related to their subject matter. Unless appended, these documents are available on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Website, with printed copies available by request.

- ~~A. Mission Policy Guide: Text of policies is available in the Minutes of prior General Assemblies. The guide is prepared by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.~~
- ~~B. A.~~ Churchwide Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Plan Approved by General Assembly. The plan is available from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Office of Human Resources.
- ~~C. B.~~ "Policies Regarding Public Statements by the Board" approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Appendix 3).
- ~~D. C.~~ Current Mission Work Plan.
- ~~E. D.~~ Organization for Mission.
- ~~F. E.~~ Seeking to be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement.

V. Presbyterian Mission Agency Staffing

- A. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board fulfils its work, in part, through staff led by the Executive Director. For the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff organization, refer to Appendix 2.
- B. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, upon recommendation of the Executive Director, is authorized to restructure the staff organization, always in alignment with the mission direction of the General Assembly. Any such organizational changes will be reported to the next General Assembly.

VI. Election and Confirmation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Executive Director

The Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to a four-year term subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Upon election, the Executive Director serves with the full authority of the office until confirmed by the next General Assembly. (Organization for Mission, Section V.G.)

Rationale

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approved the above changes. Changes to the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* must be approved by the General Assembly.

The Mission Policy Guide was a resource that contained brief descriptions of major actions of the General Assembly (GA) from 1973 through the current GA. The policy guide was intended to assist persons doing research on actions of the General Assembly by directing them to the appropriate General Assembly *Minutes* for the full official action. It was available in print format until four years ago when it became an online product with the database accessible through the website. A lot of work each year went into keeping it current with GA actions. After the 221st General Assembly (2014), we made the decision to continue doing the work but to take down the online link in order to determine if it was widely used. We went over a year, and had only one request from someone within the Executive Director's Office. This told us that no one was using it, and that the impact of all that work to update it each year was negligible. Actions taken by GA are available on the web at <http://index.pcusa.org>. It covers 1987–2014 *Minutes*.

Item 10-05

[The assembly approved Item 10-05. See pp. 13, 43.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) rescind the 1990 “General Assembly Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures,” which includes specific ratios regulating the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund, and replace it with a “Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy.”

Rationale

This 1990 policy revision is necessary because over the past fifteen years, the finances of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) have significantly declined. In particular, the Presbyterian Mission Agency unrestricted funds known as PMPF (Presbyterian Mission Program Funds), have been a topic of discussion and a source of financial concern for the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board for some time. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) requests that the new policy be approved to address the situation and reverse the trend of the fund.

In the intervening years, the “202nd General Assembly (1990) Mission Program Budget Policy and Procedures” have guided the financial life cycle of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, while the other General Assembly agencies created separate financial policies. The major principles and guidelines contained in the 1990 policy were strictly adhered to by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Shared Services Finance & Accounting department.

PMA's outside auditor, Crowe Horwath, provided two documents that describe the need for reserves at nonprofit institutions and an overview of best practices. Crowe Horwath emphasizes there is no cookie-cutter formula for financial reserves. Each organization is different and needs to come up with a plan that works in their environment.

Unrestricted Funding Reserves

The PMA finance and accounting staff have consistently monitored and reported to the board the PMPF or Unrestricted Reserve balance compared to the 1990 policy. The PMA finance and accounting staff communicated to the Finance Committee the fact that most of the sections within the 1990 policy are no longer contextual or relevant to the management of the PMA finances due to declining funds, and the dissolution of the centralized treasury organization. In September 2015 the Finance Committee created a subcommittee (PMPF Subcommittee) to update the 1990 policy section 30.597.3 Presbyterian

Mission Program Fund. In its action, the Finance Committee requested that the subcommittee develop a comprehensive reserve plan linked to the strategic plan and annual operating and capital budgeting processes of the PMA.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency will continue to solicit and accept large unrestricted gifts (\$500,000 or more) that will be placed in PMPF and allocated to ministry and operations in future year budgets that are approved by the Board. These large unrestricted gifts are by nature sporadic and unpredictable.

Unrestricted reserves are needed by the PMA to cover emergencies or exigent matters, and take advantage of new mission opportunities not included in the operating budget. These kind of unplanned board discretionary activities, emergencies, and new mission, are funded with unrestricted reserves.

Restricted Funding Reserves

During the PMPF Subcommittee's generative discussions, they concluded there is an immediate need to create a policy requiring a PMA Restricted Reserve Fund to support the ministries currently funded by Special Offerings, restricted endowments, and donor restricted donations. The Finance Committee understood that in the past these ministry and mission areas were encouraged to do this but have not done so consistently because of budget pressures. The PMPF Subcommittee recommends that restricted fund mission areas create a reserve beginning with the 2017–2018 budget and in the future as a matter of policy. PMA mission areas that benefit from restricted funding will be required to accumulate and manage reserve funds in collaboration with finance and accounting.

Blended Funding Strategic Programs

The Finance Committee understands that several ministry program areas that now rely primarily on unrestricted funds are attempting to raise additional money that will be restricted to their use. There will be no reserve requirement on these restricted funds until the initial round of funding has been substantially completed. This temporary exclusion will help these mission areas establish financial viability before a reserve requirement is imposed.

Capital Reserve Fund

The Capital Reserve Fund will continue to be managed by the PMA finance and accounting staff guided by the ten-year facilities capital plan and the Information Technology five-year capital plan. Both plans are submitted to the Finance Committee and the PMA Board for approval and sent to the General Assembly for approval as part of the budget processes and cycles. These plans are updated annually or as needed, to report significant changes to the Finance Committee.

Summary

On June 30, 2015, PMA had unrestricted assets of \$230 million available for mission and ministry. PMA has additional restricted assets of \$270 million that must be maintained in perpetuity but which generate income each year for restricted mission purposes. PMA has annual revenues of \$69 million.

By any measurement the agency has significant financial resources.

By allowing PMPF reserves to be depleted to cover projected budget shortfalls, we have inadvertently created an atmosphere of scarcity rather than abundance.

The recommended policy changes will improve our ability to manage the agency's resources wisely.

Procedures and Guidelines Governing the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy

I. Operating Guidelines

A. Presbyterian Mission Program Fund

Definition: The funds composed of current or prior year unrestricted gifts, legacies, and bequests that equal or exceed \$500,000 (five hundred thousand), and will be expended over several operating periods or years. The use of these funds will be determined as part of the normal operating budget preparation cycle and processes.

~~A-B. Unrestricted Reserve Fund Presbyterian Mission Program Fund~~

30.597

Definition: The A funds composed of all unrestricted and uncommitted receipts and prior year net assets intended for the support of the Presbyterian Mission Agency General Assembly Mission Program.

1. Sources to maintain this fund shall include all *unrestricted unified* revenue available for the *Presbyterian Mission Agency General Assembly Mission Program*, including but not limited to
 - b.a. ~~unified~~ income including receipts from congregations, presbyteries, or individuals;
 - e.-b. unrestricted gifts, legacies, bequests;
 - d.c. unrestricted investment income;
 - e.d. gift annuity excess reserves;
 - f.e. such nonrecurring income as the ~~General Assembly Council~~ *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board* shall direct by general or specific policy statement; and
 - g.f. under expenditure of the ~~unified~~ portion of the *Presbyterian Mission Agency annual General Assembly Mission operating Bbudget*.
2. ~~The Uncommitted~~ *Unrestricted Reserve Funds*
 - a. *The unrestricted reserve fund will not be used to manage projected operating budget shortfalls;*
 - b. *The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall maintain an unrestricted reserve fund that may be accessed with the approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board;*
 - c. *Use of the unrestricted reserve fund shall be limited to revenue shortfalls and expense overruns in the current budget cycle, emergency purposes, and new mission opportunities;*
 - d. *The unrestricted reserve fund shall be held in a separate unrestricted net asset account;*
 - e. *Reserves will be increased upon by allocating unrestricted gifts and budget accumulations;*
 - f. *Mission areas that rely on unrestricted reserve funds will rely on an agency-wide emergency fund;*
 - g. *The unrestricted fund reserve balance will be approved by the Chief Financial Officer with concurrence of the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.*
3. ~~portion of the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund at year end must be equal to at least 30 percent of the unified portion of the General Assembly Mission Budget, which minimum provides for~~
 1. ~~cash flow needed for mission purposes; and~~
 2. ~~guarantee of the current unified budget.~~
 4. ~~Uncommitted funds above the minimum in the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund are available to provide for~~
 - a. ~~unexpected program needs during a budget cycle;~~
 - b. ~~unexpected needs for programmatic loans; and~~
 - e. ~~support of future General Assembly Mission Budget unified portion~~
- 5.3. Any use of the *unrestricted reserve Ffund* for the purposes outlined in the above *section* must be based on a ~~four-year~~ plan that takes into account income estimates and provisions for all the anticipated changes in the fund. Such plans will be ~~maintained~~ *approved* by the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Finance Committee* and *further* approved annually by the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board General Assembly Council*.
- 6.4. Ordinarily, ~~the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund~~ *the unrestricted reserve funds* will not be used for capital expenditures, *except in the event of an emergency and the capital replacement funds are fully expended or allocated for use within a three (3) year period. The Chief Financial Officer will report this emergency expenditure to the Finance Committee, and seek timely approval from the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or its Chair. .*
- 7.5. *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board General Assembly Council*, upon recommendation of its Finance Committee, shall authorize all appropriations, expenditures, or transfers from ~~this- these~~ fund balances through established policies.
6. *Use of Restricted Funds: Availability of restricted funds shall be considered in conjunction with budgeting of unrestricted funds with restricted funds being depleted first. Information concerning restricted funds use and balances shall be provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation on a regular basis.*
8. ~~The Uncommitted Funds portion of the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund at year end shall not exceed 50 percent of the unified portion of the General Assembly Mission Budget. Any funds in excess of the 50 percent maximum must be incorporated into the four year plan referred to above.~~

B. Use of Excess Income Over Actual Expenditure

30.598

- 1) ~~Any excess unified income over actual unified expenditures realized at the end of a budget year shall be retained in the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund.~~
- 2) ~~Unified budgeted amounts unexpended at the end of a budget year may be encumbered by those participating in the Unified General Assembly Mission Budget in order to complete projects, upon approval of the General Assembly Council's Finance Committee.~~
 1. ~~Unexpended project funds at the end of the calendar year may be reserved only when completion of a project (or the completion of an essential part of a project)

 - 1) ~~is authorized as a part of a total approved program; and~~
 - 2) ~~is not otherwise provided for in the succeeding year's budget.~~~~
 2. ~~Unexpended project funds at year end may not be reserved when

 - a. ~~it serves to expand a general or ongoing budget, or part of a budget; and~~
 - b. ~~it serves to exempt the specific budget and program item from the usual review and the particular priority choices involved in building the succeeding year's budget.~~~~
 3. ~~Any unexpended funds reserved may be held available until completion of the project, but not for longer than one year following the year of original budgeting, unless renewed by the Finance Committee or as allowed in item d (below).~~
 - 2) ~~Multi year planning for major expenditures may be accomplished by

 - 1) ~~defining the entire scope, objectives, and benchmarks of the project;~~
 - 2) ~~determining how the funds will be accumulated by setting aside a portion of more than one year's budget on a scheduled basis; and~~
 - 3) ~~approving carryover of the set aside amounts each year until the required funds are accumulated for the project~~~~
 - 3) ~~Upon cancellation of each specific account, any unused portion of the reserved amount shall be considered a cancelled appropriation of the General Assembly Mission Budget. In the event the reserved account shall be over-expended, the resulting amount shall be charged to the current budget of the entity.~~
 - 4) ~~Other unexpended funds, which do not qualify as above, are general salvage and will be retained in the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund.~~
 - 5) ~~Under this policy a project (or essential part of a project) is defined as a specific task or activity which

 - 1) ~~has clearly defined scope, objectives and benchmarks;~~
 - 2) ~~is budgeted for completion in a single year;~~
 - 3) ~~is not expected to be repeated; and~~
 - 4) ~~is planned for completion in the year budgeted.~~~~

BC-C. Use of Restricted Reserves Funds

30.599

5. ~~Specific Endowment~~ "C" Funds

Definition: ~~The reserve funds that are composed of restricted receipts with are limited use and are for the use of the specific designation subject to donor restrictions. Donor restrictions limit the use of the income to specific purposes. These purposes may be narrow (i.e. scholarships for seminary students) or broad (i.e. for Christian education)~~

1. ~~Sources to maintain this fund shall include all restricted revenue available for the Presbyterian Mission Agency, including but not limited to:~~
 - a. ~~income including receipts from the Special Offerings;~~
 - b. ~~restricted gifts, legacies, bequests;~~
 - c. ~~restricted investment income; and~~
 - d. ~~such nonrecurring restricted income as the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board shall direct by general or specific policy statement.~~
2. ~~The Restricted Reserve Fund~~
 - a. ~~The restricted reserve fund will not be used to manage projected operating budget shortfalls;~~
 - b. ~~The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall maintain the restricted reserve fund that may be accessed with the approval of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board;~~

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

- c. *Use of the restricted reserve fund shall be limited to revenue shortfalls and expense overruns in the current budget cycle, emergency purposes, and new mission opportunities within the donor restrictions;*
- d. *The restricted reserve funds shall be held in a separate restricted net asset account;*
- e. *Reserves will be increased through the allocation of restricted gifts and budget accumulations;*
- f. *Mission areas that rely on restricted funds will rely on the restricted reserve fund for emergencies; and*
- g. *The restricted fund reserve balance will be approved by the Chief Financial Officer with concurrence of the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.*
3. *Any use of the restricted reserve fund for the purposes outlined in the above section are ~~must be~~ based on a plan that takes into account income and expenditure estimates and provisions for all the anticipated changes in the fund. Such provisions will be approved by the Finance Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and further approved annually by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.*
4. *Ordinarily, the restricted reserve fund will not be used for capital expenditures.*
5. *The Presbyterian Mission Agency, upon recommendation of its Finance Committee, shall authorize all appropriations, expenditures, or transfers from these fund balances through established policies.*
 - 1) ~~Ordinarily, new funds will be used in the succeeding budget year. This allows time for full documentation of gift and approval of assignment for scope of use; and~~
 - 2) ~~accumulation of at least one year's income to serve as a reserve~~
 - 2) ~~For budgeting purposes, one year's estimated income shall be used~~
 - 3) ~~Funds with accumulated income of \$20,000 or more will be handled in the following manner:~~
 - 1) ~~All budgeted use of accumulated income will be identified by fund and amount budgeted in budget submissions~~
 - 2) ~~Use in any one year of more than 25 percent of total accumulated income should ordinarily be part of scheduled use over a period of no less than four years. This is recommended in order to avoid putting extraordinary pressure on unified and other portions of the budget in future years.~~
 - 3) ~~Funds for a one time program event are subject to a use pattern dictated by the event~~
 - 4) ~~This does not apply to capital funding~~
 - 4) ~~Funds with accumulated income of \$20,000 or less will be handled in the following manner:~~
 - 1) ~~All budgeted use of accumulated income will be identified by fund and amount budgeted in budget submissions;~~
 - 2) ~~These funds may be used at the discretion of the budgeting entity~~
 - 5) ~~For funds where the scope of use includes more than a single budgeting entity, any expenditure of accumulated income by a single budgeting entity should be identified to other units that share in the funds since it affects future availability of income.~~
 - 6) ~~Budgeting entities are encouraged to include in their plan for spending of accumulated income the development and maintenance of a reserve equal to one year's income as protection against years when income is below normal and to provide cash flow at the beginning of each year.~~

~~2. Restricted Expendable "D" Funds~~

~~Definition: Both the principal and income may be spent for the specific purpose designated by the donor.~~

~~Note: Special sub-categories of "D" funds will be established by Central Treasury Corporation in order to make clear which guidelines apply~~

~~D1 Non-recurring restricted expendable~~

~~D2 Special Offerings~~

~~D3 Less than annual program funds~~

~~D4 Bicentennial Funds~~

~~CD-~~

~~a. Restricted Expendable, Except D2 and D4 Funds~~

- 1) ~~New funds will be used beginning in the succeeding budget year. This allows time for full documentation of gift and approval of assignment of scope of use.~~
- 2) ~~Since these funds represent non-recurring income, a planned use of the fund, in keeping with the donor's intent, should be developed and displayed for the GAC office responsible for budgeting and for the Central Treasury Corporation.~~

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

- 3) ~~Ordinarily all such funds, and regularly all such funds over \$20,000, shall be used in the following manner:~~
 - a. ~~All budgeted use will be identified by fund and amount budgeted in budget submissions.~~
 - b. ~~Use in any one year of more than 25 percent of the total fund, if that is more than \$5,000, should be part of scheduled use over a period of not less than four years. This is recommended in order to avoid putting extraordinary pressure on unified and other portions of the budget in future years.~~
 - e. ~~Funds for a one-time program event are subject to a use pattern dictated by the event.~~
- 4) ~~For funds where the scope of use includes more than one budgeting entity, any expenditure by a single budgeting entity should be identified to other units that share in the use of the fund since it affects future availability of funds.~~

379

- b. ~~Special Offerings "D2" Funds and Other Recurring Restricted Revenue~~
 - 1) ~~Funds should be budgeted on basis of projection of income developed by the General Assembly Council Finance Committee~~
 - 2) ~~Use of funds on hand in addition to one year's anticipated revenue shall be identified on budget requests~~
 - 3) ~~Funds received in excess of projected income may be retained in a reserve fund as protection against years when income is below normal and to provide cash flow at the beginning of each year~~
- c. ~~Bicentennial Funds "D4" Funds~~
 - 1) ~~Designated funds received for approved Bicentennial Projects, upon verification and after deduction of administrative costs, will be available for use.~~
 - 2) ~~When such funds are used to replace previously budgeted unified or selected funds, the amount to be used must be displayed for the GAC office responsible for budgeting and for the GAC.~~
 - 3) ~~Non-designated funds received for the Bicentennial Fund will be allocated through an approved process. Such process will also provide for payment of administrative costs and the repayment of operating loans, until such time as the loans are fully repaid.~~
 - 4) ~~No guarantee of continuing funding level should be anticipated when programs are funded by the Bicentennial Fund.~~
 - 5) ~~Bicentennial funds received and expended will be documented in a separate category in General Assembly Mission Program displays.~~

3. ~~Overall Impact~~

- a. ~~The GAC office responsible for budgeting will develop an overall impact statement about the use of restricted funds within the budget in each budget year.~~
- b. ~~The system established for the review of restricted funds by both the Central Treasury Corporation and the Presbyterian Foundation will be continued to insure that donor's wishes are understood and implemented.~~
- e. ~~A consequence of this budget policy is to provide expenditure projections that will enable the Foundation to plan its investment policy.~~

Use of Excess Income over Actual Expenditure

30.598

1. *Any excess unrestricted income over actual unrestricted expenditures realized at the end of a budget year shall be retained in the Unrestricted Reserve Fund.*
2. *Budgeted amounts unexpended at the end of a budget process may be encumbered by those participating in the Presbyterian Mission Agency bBudget process in order to complete projects, upon approval of the Chief Financial Officer and provided as an information item to the Finance Committee.*
 - a. *Unexpended project funds at the end of the budget calendar year may be encumbered only when completion of a project (or the completion of an essential part of a project)*
 - 1) *is authorized as a part of a total approved program; and*
 - 2) *is not otherwise provided for in the succeeding year's budget.*
 - b. *Unexpended project funds at year-end may not be encumbered when*

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

- 1) *it serves to expand a general or ongoing budget, or part of a budget; and*
- 2) *it serves to exempt the specific budget and program item from the usual review and the particular priority choices involved in building the succeeding year's budget.*

D. Reimbursement of Services

~~30.600~~

~~Entities participating in the General Assembly Mission Budget shall include sufficient funds within their budgets to reimburse GAC Support Services through the Central Treasury for the following categories of services.~~

~~1. Total Costs~~

- ~~a. In house reproduction services (including localized copiers); and~~
- ~~b. Total costs (including all labor and materials), according to cost schedules circulated to all users and potential users, billed upon job completion~~

~~2. Services Costs~~

~~For all services that follow, overhead is not charged back to clients.~~

- ~~a. Courier (messenger): Actual costs incurred on behalf of the client which requests service, monthly voucher of actual costs.~~
- ~~b. Telephone: Actual charges per Phone Company billing including cost of switch, station equipment, etc.—monthly voucher of actual costs.~~
- ~~e. Purchasing/Supplies (including those for word processing): Actual charges for items purchased—monthly voucher.~~
- ~~d. Equipment Maintenance: Actual charges—monthly or annual voucher (by contract).~~
- ~~e. Travel and Meeting Arrangements: Actual charges—monthly voucher.~~
- ~~f. Mail:~~
 - ~~1) Actual postage used—monthly voucher.~~
 - ~~2) Bulk mail—according to cost schedule circulated to all users and potential users, billed upon job completion.~~
- ~~g. Materials Distribution (by Central Distribution): Programmatic materials, postage and other external handling charges—monthly voucher.~~
- ~~h. Inventory Costs~~
 - ~~1) Clients' materials not requested by customers for a period of six months shall be subject to disposal, after consultation with the group which assigned the materials for distribution.~~
 - ~~2) Publication Services shall be charged for storage of all inventory placed in Central Distribution.~~
- ~~i. Information Services: Technical assistance for new projects specific to the client according to cost schedules circulated to all users and potential users, billed upon job completion~~
- ~~j. Legal: Fees of outside council—monthly voucher.~~

~~3. Other Costs~~

~~30.601~~

~~It is understood that other reimbursements will exist by mutual agreement such as: (1) from per capita funds to the Mission Budget for services performed by entities funded through the Mission Budget; (2) from restricted funds to unrestricted revenue; and (3) for specific services performed by one unit or participant for another within the Mission Budget, when such service is beyond that normally provided.~~

~~380~~

E. Contingencies

~~30.602~~

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

The Finance Committee shall recommend to the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board* ~~General Assembly Council~~ an annual Contingency expenditure line within the *Presbyterian Mission Agency* ~~General Assembly Mission B~~udget for possible allocation by the ~~General Assembly or the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~ ~~General Assembly Council~~ upon recommendation from the Finance Committee and Mission Priorities Committee.

F. ~~Capital Expenditures (Effective January 1, 1991)~~

~~30.603~~

- ~~1. Items of equipment or furnishings with a total purchase value per item of less than \$1,000 will be provided for within the Mission Budget allocation of each entity~~
- ~~2. Items of equipment and furnishings with a total purchase value per item of \$1,000 or more will be provided for through a capital expenditure budget approved by the General Assembly Council upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Each item so purchased will be classified as follows:~~
 - ~~a. Class A—5 years~~
Typewriters, computers, and other electrical and office equipment
 - ~~b. Class B—10 years~~
Furniture, carpet and other furnishings
- ~~3. Source of funding will come from the following sources~~
 - ~~a. Central Treasury Corporation will provide to each entity by June 30 of each year a list of equipment and furnishings with a purchase cost of over \$1,000 assigned to the entity. The list will provide the purchase cost for each item and the classification for the expected service life for each item.~~
 - ~~b. The mission budget will include for each budget cycle a line for the replacement reserve. The amount for this budget line will be:~~
 - ~~1) 20 percent of the cost of all Class A items assigned to the entities within the mission budget;~~
 - ~~2) 10 percent of the cost of all Class B items assigned to the entities within the mission budget;~~
 - ~~c. Budgeted amounts will be credited monthly into the replacement reserve within the Plant Fund by the Central Treasury Corporation, without specification as to the contributing entities~~
- ~~4. Each budgeted entity will submit requests for capital purchases as part of the budget process outlined elsewhere in these procedures. All such purchases will require authorization of the entity director and the Office of Support Services.~~
- ~~5. Inventory control for capital purchases will be maintained by the Central Treasury Corporation~~

II. Administrative Procedures

A. ~~Budget Development~~

~~30.604~~

- ~~3. Role and Responsibility of the Budget Work Group~~
 - ~~a. The goal of the Budget Work Group is to develop timely budget proposals to the General Assembly Council based on projected income, budgetary proposals by the entities, and reflecting the Churchwide Goals and Priorities.~~
 - ~~b. To complete this task, information is presented from several sources.~~
 - ~~1) From the Mission Priorities Committee comes the identified mission goals and priorities of the General Assembly Council.~~
 - ~~2) From the Finance Committee comes the projections of income from all sources that support the General Assembly Mission Budget and a proposed expenditure level.~~
 - ~~3) From the Church Vocations Ministry Unit comes proposed salary recommendations for domestic and international staff.~~
 - ~~4) From all budgeted entities come budget proposals that take into account the identified mission goals and priorities and the proposed annual expenditure level.~~
- ~~4. Composition of the Budget Work Group~~
 - ~~a. Elected Participants (with voice and vote)—~~
One elected person from each of the ~~nine~~ ministry units ~~—9~~

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

- ~~One elected person from the Central Treasury Corporation—1~~
- ~~Four elected persons from the Mission Priorities Committee—4~~
- ~~Three elected persons from the Finance Committee—3~~
- ~~Chairperson, elected by the General Assembly Council—1~~
- ~~b. Elected Participants (with voice but no vote)~~
 - ~~One elected person from each of the related bodies—5~~
- ~~c. Invited Participants (with voice but no vote)~~
 - ~~Synod Executives (elected by the—2~~
 - ~~Churchwide Administrative Coordinating Cabinet)~~
- ~~381 d. Staff Participants (with voice but no vote)—~~
 - ~~Ministry Unit Directors—9~~
 - ~~Treasurer—1~~
 - ~~Support Services Director—1~~
 - ~~Related Body Directors—5~~
 - ~~Office of the General Assembly Council:—~~
 - ~~Executive Director—1~~
 - ~~Associate Director—1~~
 - ~~Coordinator of Resources and Planning—1~~
 - ~~Coordinator of Finance and Budgets—1~~
 - ~~Central Treasury Corporation:—~~
 - ~~Controller—1~~
- ~~Total Voting Participants—19~~
- ~~Total Non-Voting Participants—28~~
- ~~Total Participants—47~~

~~5. New Program Initiatives~~

~~a. For General Assembly Initiatives Referred~~

~~The General Assembly Council through adopted procedures will refer all actions adopted by the General Assembly to the appropriate ministry unit, related body, council committee, or other entity. Each entity will report to the General Assembly Council its response to each of these referrals.~~

- ~~1) Responses within the purview of the body receiving the referral may range from a response with all necessary funding proposed in the entity's budget to a response indicating the proposal not be funded, with a full rationale for such recommendation.~~
- ~~2) Proposals that are additions to ongoing work or new work will be considered in light of the Mission Priorities and Goals adopted by the General Assembly~~
- ~~3) Actions calling for funding will be proposed by the entity through the mission budget allocations process~~
- ~~4) Entities which have more than one referral will establish the priority of each proposal for that particular entity in light of General Assembly actions.~~

~~b. For Entity Proposals for New Initiatives~~

~~Each entity will present its recommendations for new mission initiatives for implementing Churchwide Priorities and Goals to the Mission Priorities Committee indicating~~

- ~~1) the Churchwide Priority or Continuing Goal supported by the initiatives;~~
- ~~2) linkages for the initiatives with other entities or governing bodies;~~
- ~~3) the available level of support for the initiative from the entity's budget; and~~
- ~~4) the proposed funding sources if not in the entity's proposed budget~~

~~6. Central Treasury Corporation Responsibilities~~

~~a. Review the entities' detailed budgets prior to submission to Budget Work Group to determine~~

- ~~1) compliance with donor wishes;~~
- ~~2) compliance with General Assembly and General Assembly Council policies and procedures;~~
- ~~3) compliance with standard accounting and audit procedures;~~
- ~~4) consistency between entities in following policy and procedure;~~
- ~~5) accuracy of sources and availability of revenue at the detailed level; and~~
- ~~6) mathematical accuracy and technical assistance in reviewing the budget.~~

~~30.605~~

- ~~b. Comment to the budget entities on its findings from the above review and submit written communication to the Budget Work Group regarding unresolved differences~~

B.A. Budget Submissions

30.606

1. ~~The Presbyterian Mission Agency General Assembly Council's staff Finance Committee~~ will provide annually for the ~~acceptance approval by the Finance Committee and for review quarterly by the Audit and Finance Committee;~~
 - a. ~~common format for budget submissions which shall use the following definitions:~~
 - 1) ~~Unified guaranteed by Presbyterian Mission Program Fund;~~
 - 2) ~~Selected restricted revenue that is reasonably dependable. There is an interrelationship in each unit/related body budget between these funds and unified funds; however availability of Selected Funds is not guaranteed. Together they represent the agreed-upon budget for the cycle; and~~
 - 3) ~~Supplementary restricted revenue where the program definition makes receipt of the dollars unsure or where donor intent mandates that it be used in addition to the mission budget;~~
 - b.a. guidelines for preparing budget requests;
 - e.b. proposals for common expenses, including:
 - 1) building operations;
 - 2) audit costs; and
 - 3) ~~contingency-reserve~~ fund;
 - c. projections of income from all sources available in support of a *Presbyterian Mission Agency General Assembly Mission Budget and Program*; and
 - d. format for a ~~General Assembly Mission~~ *Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and Program budget* to be presented to the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board General Assembly Council* and to the General Assembly, ~~in consultation with the Central Treasury Corporation.~~

—382

2. The following shall be funded by ~~the Presbyterian Mission Agency General Assembly Mission Program~~
 - a. all ministry units;
 - b. all related bodies except the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation (U.S.A.) Inc. which may, however, receive specific program grants; *and*
 - c. ~~Support Common and Shared Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency General Assembly Council except Offices of News Service and Legal Services;~~ and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.
 - d. ~~Central Treasury~~
3. ~~Building Capital Projects Operations~~ submissions
 - a. ~~Space at 100 Witherspoon Street~~
 - 1) ~~Support Shared Services~~ will submit to the Finance Committee a total budget for all costs related to maintenance, repair, upgrading, updating, managing, and otherwise carrying out the functions related to the building which have been assigned to ~~Support Shared Services~~.
 - 2) The mission *operating* budget will contain a single line titled "Building Operations" that will fund a proportionate share of the total building operations *and contribute to the capital reserve fund. based upon percentage of square footage occupied.*
 - 3) ~~The Publications Enterprise Fund will fund out of its budget a proportionate share of the total building operations budget based upon square footage occupied, including the bookstore~~
 - 4) ~~Square footage allocations will be based on office and special use spaces contained in buildings A and B and will not include space in the lobby or balcony reception areas~~
 - b. Rent and Lease Charges at Locations Other than 100 Witherspoon Street
 - 1) Permission to rent or lease office or other space outside 100 Witherspoon Street shall require prior approval of the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board General Assembly Council* upon recommendation of the supervising entity *or ministry area* with the concurrence of the *Deputy Executive Director Shared Services Support Shared Services*;
 - 2) After *Presbyterian Mission Agency Board General Assembly Council* approval, all rental agreements and leases must be negotiated by the *entity mission area or shared services and reduced to writing by Property the General Council Counsel Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Central Treasury Corporation* at the request of ~~and subject to concurrence by~~ the supervising entity;

- 3) Supervising entity will be solely responsible for making budget provision for any rent or lease charges incurred;
- ~~e. Salary Adjustments submissions: Proposed salary increases for domestic and international staff (exempt and non-exempt) shall be submitted by the Church Vocation Ministry Unit to the Budget Work Group area.~~
- c. *The definition of capital projects shall also include the acquisition or development of any new system, including technology, telecommunications or other similar property and equipment on behalf of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, or major upgrades or modifications to same; and*
- ~~5.d. Use of Restricted Funds: Availability of restricted funds shall be considered in conjunction with budgeting of unrestricted funds with restricted funds being depleted first. Information concerning restricted funds use and balances shall be provided by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation Central Treasury Corporation on a regular basis.~~

~~C. Budget Timeline~~

~~30.607~~

~~Presbyterian Mission Program budgets shall be developed at the General Assembly level according to the Budget Process and Timeline approved by the General Assembly Council~~

B. Budget Adjustments

30.608

- 1. *Items of business the General Assembly approves, the Presbyterian Mission Agency budgets may be adjusted to include financial implications by:*
 - a. *Stopping program(s) or initiative(s); and/or*
 - b. *Identifying alternative revenue sources.*

~~1. General Assembly Council~~

~~Adjustments which affect the total allocation to any budgeted entity require action by the General Assembly Council upon recommendation of its Finance Committee~~

~~2. Budgeted Entities~~

~~Adjustments between offices within a budgeted entity's approved budget require approval by the ministry unit/related body/other committee upon recommendation of its director~~

~~3. General Assembly Council Staff~~

~~After appropriate consideration by Central Treasury Corporation~~

- ~~a. the Executive Director may approve use of Highly Restricted Funds upon application approved by entity director;~~
- ~~b. budgeted entity directors may approve line item changes within office budgets;~~
- ~~c. Coordinator of Finance and Budgets may approve requests for reprints within approved guidelines.~~

~~D. Accounting~~

~~30.609~~

- ~~1. Control of the Chart of Accounts shall be lodged with the Central Treasury Corporation.~~
- ~~2. All revenue shall be received by the Central Treasury Corporation.~~
- ~~3. Expenditures shall be handled as follows:~~
 - ~~a. They shall be paid by the Central Treasury Corporation, Procedures for verification and approval of expenditures shall be determined by the Central Treasury Corporation in light of accepted accounting requirements~~
 - ~~b. Units, related bodies, and committees shall establish annual estimated expenditure schedules for all unified, selected, and supplementary funds, wherever possible. Monthly schedules estimating use of such funds shall be filed with the Treasurer and followed to the extent possible.~~
 - ~~c. Certain restricted funds, unable to be calculated during the budget development process, may be expended~~

383

~~by entities during a budget year even if such expenditures exceed the authorized Selected or Supplementary General Assembly Mission Budget and Program. These expenditures include funds held for others; receipts from activities such as~~

~~conference centers; emergency funds given by the church in response to unforeseen needs; and response to the General Assembly action requesting new mission thrusts where such restricted funds are available. However, requests to increase the use of other restricted funds during a budget year must be approved by the General Assembly Council, upon recommendation of its Finance Committee.~~

~~4. Enterprise Fund shall be handled as follows.~~

- ~~a. The enterprise fund receives revenues, makes expenditures, and holds assets and liabilities of a designated entity.~~
- ~~b. Establishment of enterprise funds may be recommended by the Finance Committee and, where appropriate, after consultation with the Committee on Support Services.~~
- ~~c. Year end balances will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and, where appropriate, the Committee on Support Services. In addition, enterprise fund balances should be reported regularly to the Finance Committee through the Central Treasury. Approval and review of budgets from enterprise funds rests with the unit or related body supervising the entity and shall be submitted to the Finance Committee for information.~~

~~5. Working Capital [This item is currently under reconsideration~~

~~Costs for production of materials by mission budget participants shall be included in their unrestricted Mission Budget. The Central Treasury Corporation shall report to mission budget participants quarterly, the receipts from sales of materials, by item, showing number of items sold and the amount of revenue realized. Mission budget participants requiring additional funds for reprinting cost during a budget year shall apply to the Finance Committee for such funds~~

E.C. Budget Control and Reporting

30.610

- ~~2. The chief administrative officer of each entity participating in the General Assembly Mission Budget shall be responsible for control of allocation of funds in their respective operating units. Financial Resource Coordinators of the Central Treasury Corporation maintained within operating units will be available to aid the chief administrative officer in control procedures for the verification and approval of expenditures.~~
- ~~3. No expenditure in excess of the amount authorized within the approved General Assembly Mission Budget and Program shall be permitted without prior approval of the General Assembly Council's Finance Committee. Should such an over expenditure occur for any reason, ordinarily the corresponding budget line(s) of the entity involved will be reduced in a like amount for the current year.~~
- 1. Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, through the Finance Committee, shall act in a fiduciary role by maintaining oversight of the finances. The Finance Committee will review periodic financial reports to ensure Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation has the necessary resources to carry out its mission. (30.606)*
- ~~3-2. All financial reports for Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation shall be provided to participants the General Assembly through the Central Treasury Corporation annually through independent audited financial statements prepared in accordance to the manual of operations. according to the timeline agreed upon.~~
- ~~4. Balances available for mission through the General Assembly Mission Budget (income or principal where appropriate) shall be reviewed by the Finance Committee on a regular basis.~~

Item 10-06

[The assembly approved Item 10-06. See pp. 13, 43.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) amend the *Organization for Mission* in the following ways:

1. Delete the word “related” in the title to Section VIII., so that it would read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

“VIII. Other General Assembly ~~Related~~ Corporations”

2. Add a new Section IX. to read as follows, renumbering the remaining section:

“IX. Corporations Related to the General Assembly

“Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.

“Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW), is organized and operated to be an inclusive, caring community of women, forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the Church) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom by nurtur-

ing faith through prayer and Bible study, supporting the mission of the Church worldwide, and working for justice and peace. Members of Presbyterian Women are first and foremost members of the Church. The organization is structured at the congregation, presbytery, synod, and national levels in order to support the Church at each level.

“PW is an integrated auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). PW is not subordinate to the General Assembly. PW’s Certificate of Incorporation includes a Statement of Faith which provides that PW holds to the doctrines and principles of the Reformed tradition as expressed in the Church’s Constitution. PW is related to the Presbyterian Mission Agency through an agreement that is reviewed and approved by the General Assembly every four years.

“IX. X. Amendments” [Text in this section remains unchanged.]

Rationale

The *Organization for Mission* is the manual of operations for General Assembly agencies, expressing the General Assembly’s design for mission and interconnectedness between agencies.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has responsibilities for maintaining (and suggesting revisions to) sections I–III and V–IX, while the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly provides oversight for section IV (related to the work of the Office of the General Assembly). The General Assembly considers recommendations to revise these sections as submitted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The table of contents of the *Organization for Mission* provides an overview of what the document covers:

Introduction

- I. History of the Structure for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- II. Statement of Vision and Priority Goals for Mission
- III. Mission of the General Assembly
- IV. General Assembly Officers and Committees and the Office of the General Assembly
- V. The Presbyterian Mission Agency
- VI. Presbyterian Mission Agency Relationships
- VII. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
- VIII. Other General Assembly Related Corporations
- IX. Amendments

Appendices

The recommendation to revise the title of Section VIII is rooted in a clarification that the agencies listed in Section VIII (Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.) are not simply “related” to the General Assembly, they are General Assembly corporations. When Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (PW), requested to be listed in the *Organization for Mission* as a related corporation, this need for clarity surfaced. The recommendation seeks to distinguish between General Assembly corporations (in Section VIII) and corporations related to the General Assembly in Section IX.

In the overall organization for mission within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)), PW plays a unique role. The new section, which this recommendation seeks to add, acknowledges that important role within the PC(USA).

The *Organization for Mission* is incomplete without referencing this important point of mission coordination for Presbyterians.

Presbyterian Women (PW):

- Is the women’s organization of the PC(USA). There have been women’s organizations in the Presbyterian church for more than 200 years.
- Is actively involved in domestic, international, and ecumenical mission and cultivates partnerships with each General Assembly agency.
- Is a tax-exempt national women’s organization related to the PC(USA) as an integrated auxiliary.
- Has a Certificate of Incorporation that links the organization directly to the PC(USA) Constitution.
- Has a national moderator who is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with voice and vote. A member of PMAB is appointed to serve as a director with voice on vote on PW, Inc.’s national board.
- Entered into a covenant relationship in 2001 with the General Assembly Council, now known as the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This covenant, now an institutional relationship agreement, was renewed most recently in 2014.

- Continues to be in programmatic partnership with PMA ministry areas and committees, including the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns; World Mission; Compassion, Peace, and Justice; and Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries.
- Corresponds to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries.

This recommendation is being brought forward in the spirit of collaboration between Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., and the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 10-07

[The assembly approved Item 10-07. See pp. 13, 43.]

Proposed Changes and Updates to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the revised Churchwide Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Plan, now titled “Toward Inclusiveness in Employment: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Policy for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for General Assembly Agencies” as shown below: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**Proposed Revisions to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Churchwide ~~Policy~~ Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action**

[Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic.]

**TOWARD INCLUSIVENESS IN EMPLOYMENT: ~~A CHURCHWIDE PLAN~~
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) CHURCHWIDE POLICY FOR
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENCIES**

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

SECTION ONE: *POLICY* TOWARD INCLUSIVENESS IN EMPLOYMENT

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide equal employment opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons; to prohibit discrimination in employment based upon race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age (40 and over), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or veteran status or religious affiliation (except where religious affiliation is a bona fide occupational qualification), or any other characteristic protected by law (“Identified Categories”) ~~racial ethnic group, sex, age, or disability~~; and to correct any existent patterns of discrimination. The realization of inclusiveness in employment is promoted through positive, results-oriented, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action practices.

The General Assembly Council has developed this Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity on the basis of its constitutional responsibility “to institute and coordinate a churchwide plan for equal employment opportunity for members of racial ethnic groups, for women, for various age groups, and for persons with disabilities;” (G-13.0201b.) ~~Its administrative provisions and procedures are The Churchwide Plan Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Policy for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for General Assembly agencies is mandatory for the General Assembly and its agencies. Other councils governing bodies are urged to adopt similar provisions and procedures as a means for fulfilling their mandatory constitutional~~ *theological and legal* responsibilities in this important and sensitive area of the church’s life.

As a responsible Christian employers, the *entities of the associated agencies of the* Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), ~~A Corporation~~ will voluntarily comply with civil laws and regulations related to equal employment opportunity *and affirmative action* except where this legislation is in clear opposition to denominational policy. ~~The General Assembly Council has articulated this commitment in the Uniform Personnel Policies.~~

In addition to this ~~Churchwide Plan~~ *policy*, the *Presbyterian Mission Agency* ~~General Assembly Council~~ will make available a *web site manual* for churchwide guidance in the implementation of ~~this~~ *the EEO Plan* ~~policy~~. This *web site manual* will include as a minimum: biblical and theological studies on the theme of equal employment opportunity *and affirmative action*; forms for use in reporting on pastor search processes, hiring, and work analysis; guidelines for use by committees on ministry, committees on representation, and personnel committees established by sessions, presbyteries, or synods; EEO guidelines for persons with disabilities; EEO guidelines for persons of all ages; a listing of other resources; and a bibliography.

I. A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT: GOD’S CALL TO INCLUSIVENESS

The church’s involvement in equal employment opportunity is central to the gospel’s incarnation in the community of faith. While governmental units may approach their responsibilities in this area from legalistic interpretations of what the Constitution of the United States of America requires, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approaches the subject in gratitude for Jesus’ compelling vision of the inclu-

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

siveness of God's love. That love allows us to cross-existent sociological and psychological barriers so as to order our life together in the church in a way that contains no barriers of our own making. As a denomination we seek to live out God's call for unity by being "open to all persons and to the varieties of talents and gifts of God's people" (G-4.0402).

~~The foundation for this commitment is our acceptance of the Word of God as central to our life of faith and action, and our willingness to be guided by the Holy Spirit speaking through Scripture as we seek to be inclusive in our employment practices. Hiring procedures within the church must be established within the context of our faithfulness to God's will for all of humanity.~~

We begin with the biblical declaration that God created all that is and declared it to be good. Despite our rebellion and our unwillingness to live in conformity with God's original creation, God has not broken relationships with humanity. ~~Men and women~~ People of faith have repeatedly received and accepted the call to live lives characterized by justice and righteousness. In Jesus we see the incarnation of God's great plan of reconciliation—a plan that restores broken relationships with God and with God's people. The gospel story is permeated with illustrations of Jesus' reaching out to those who are excluded by the broader community. There is a constant restatement of the Old Testament theme of God's favor, particularly for the poor, the oppressed, and the strangers in the land. To reflect the radical nature of God's inclusiveness, ~~it is imperative that we live as one with those who are excluded~~ we must work together to ensure access and fairness are accessible to and enjoyed by all. Jesus' love for all is God's love. In Jesus' resurrection the rule of God over all people is announced and inaugurated.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action is an embodiment of its affirmation that God's creative work generates diversity, and God's redeeming work shapes the church into a foretaste of the kingdom of God, where that diversity is gathered in a unity that brings diverse people together, overcoming sin's isolation, division, contempt, and disregard. As a denomination we seek to live out God's call for unity by recognizing that: "The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership.... There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person.

The PC(USA)'s commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action embodies our affirmation that God's work of creation generates astonishing diversity. God gives creatures the gift of life, in which we are dependent on one another for knowing and experiencing the wholeness, the fullness of life for which God made us. In creating God provides an order which generates stunning diversity of creatures, diversity God observes is "good," indeed, "very good." (Gen. 1:1–2:4a). That same power of creation generates diversity within the human community: diversity of peoples "... in their lands, with their own language, by their families, in their nations." (Gen. 10:5, cf.:20, 31). The diversity of these groups within the human community is so important that the achievements of these varied, diverse groups are brought into the New Jerusalem, to be preserved in God's presence eternally: "People will bring into [the New Jerusalem] the glory and honor of the nations" (Rev. 21:21). The church even now lives in the hope of tasting, and being a foretaste of, future glory in which the varied gifts of peoples with differing experiences are valued as deeply as God values them. One way we live this hope is by working to assure diversity in hiring, bringing diverse persons and voices into this denomination's order and structure.

The PC(USA)'s commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action also embodies our affirmation that God's redeeming work overcomes the power of sin at work in us, both as we are part of social systems and groups, and as individuals. Sin sets us against one another, turning us against other people, feeding divisiveness, hostility, contempt, and disregard for others (1 Cor. 1:10–17; Confession of 1967, 9.12–14). Sin nurtures a drive to gain advantage by excluding others from our lives, refusing to acknowledge either their standing as God's beloved, or our dependence on one another for knowing and experiencing the fullness of life for which God made us. The forgiveness given to us in and through Jesus Christ by the active power of the Holy Spirit at work within us, strengthens us for life together that embodies the diversity generated by God's creative power, and empowers us to live in ways that embody the unity that brings the diverse together in wholeness and reconciliation (Eph. 3:14–21; the Confession of Belhar, 2). One way we do so is by steadfastly working to assure diversity in hiring, responsive to Jesus Christ's call to love one another, as Christ loves us.

~~It is our belief that our life together as Presbyterians, manifested through our employment policies and practices, bears witness to our commitment to do God's will. Accomplishing such a mission in today's world requires, as a first step, the elimination of discriminatory practices in the church. The time is upon us when we can and shall demonstrate that Christ's promises of reconciliation, justice, and love are true.~~

II. ~~GOVERNING BODY COUNCIL~~ RESPONSIBILITIES

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gives repeated instructions to the ~~governing bodies~~ councils of the church regarding the nature of its intended inclusiveness and the implementation and maintenance of an equal employment opportunity and affirmative action plan. For example:

"The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution." (F-1.0403)

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

~~“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, and different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision-making of the church (G-9.0104ff.)” (G-4.0403.)~~

The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403). In fulfilling this commitment, councils shall give due consideration to both the gifts and requirements for ministry (G- 2.0104) and the right of people in congregations and councils to elect their officers (F- 3.0106).

Each council shall develop procedures and mechanisms for promoting and reviewing that body’s implementation of the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and representation. (G-3.0103)

~~Section G-9.0104 reads: “Governing bodies of the church shall be responsible for implementing the church’s commitment to inclusiveness and participation as stated in G-4.0403. All governing bodies shall work to become more open and inclusive and to correct patterns of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, or disability.~~

~~“In implementing this commitment, consideration should be given to the gifts and requirements for ministry (G-6.0106) in persons elected or appointed to particular offices or tasks, and to the right of the people to elect their officers (G-6.0107).” In addition to these instructions to all governing bodies, the Constitution assigns specific responsibilities to certain groups. For example:~~

A. Committees on Representation

The Book of Order (G-3.0103) states: “Councils above the session shall establish by their own rule committees on representation to fulfill the following functions: to advise the council regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity, to advocate for diversity in leadership, and to consult with the council on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403. A committee on representation should not be merged with another committee or made a subcommittee of another committee.”

~~The Book of Order (G-9.0105) requires the establishment of committees on representation by each governing body above the session and states that: “The committee on representation shall advise the governing body on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of participation and representation (G-4.0403), and in conformity with a churchwide plan for equal employment opportunity (G-13.0201b).”~~

B. The General Assembly and Its Agencies

It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to endorse and review periodically, upon recommendation of the *Presbyterian Mission Agency* ~~General Assembly Council~~, this policy: “Toward Inclusiveness in Employment: ~~A Churchwide Plan~~ *The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Policy for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for General Assembly Agencies.*” It shall be the responsibility of the Office of the Stated Clerk to ~~distribute~~ *publish* the document to all ~~employing units~~ *agencies* of the General Assembly, ~~middle governing bodies~~ *mid councils*, and General Assembly related schools and theological institutions. ~~The~~ *Each agency of the General Assembly is responsible* ~~Council has the responsibility~~ for the overall administration and coordination of the ~~Churchwide Plan~~ *Policy within its respective agency. Representatives of the six agencies will meet biennially to discuss the need for changes to the Policy. The Presbyterian Mission Agency will also consult biennially with the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding the need for changes to the Policy. If changes are to be recommended, the Presbyterian Mission Agency—after consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the General Assembly Committee on Representation—will present the proposed changes to the General Assembly for review and approval.*

~~Section G-11.0504 states that “the presbytery’s committee on ministry may look to synod and General Assembly for information and assistance in the matter of ministers and pastoral relations.” In support of this provision “the General Assembly shall create the necessary agency to facilitate and support the work of the presbyteries and the synods in this matter.”~~

C. Mid Councils Synods and Presbyteries

G-3.0110 states: “Councils higher than the session may employ such staff as is required by the mission of the body in accordance with the principles of unity in diversity (F-1.0403). Councils may, in consultation with the next higher council, share staff as required by the mission of the body. A council shall make provision in its manual of administrative operations (G-3.0106) for the process of electing executive staff and the hiring of other staff, the description of the responsibilities of the positions, the method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment. (G-3.0104)”

~~Section G-9.0704 states that “administrative positions in all governing bodies above the sessions shall be filled in accordance with the principles of participation and representation found in G-9.0104.”~~

D. Ministry Committees

The Book of Order places responsibility for the implementation of equal employment opportunity practice in the call of ministers and the employment of candidates with the presbyteries. “The councils of the church shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church’s membership and shall provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (F-1.0403).”(G-3.0103). “To facilitate the presbytery’s oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception and oversight of teaching elder members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral services, oversight of congregations without pastors, dissolution of relationships, dismissal of members, and its close relationship with both member congregations and teaching elders, it may delegate its authority to designated entities within the presbytery. Such entities shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

in approximately equal numbers, bearing in mind the principles of unity in diversity in F-1.0403. All actions carried out as a result of delegated authority must be reported to the presbytery at its next regular meeting.”(G-3.0307). “According to the process of the presbytery and prior to making its report to the congregation, the pastor nominating committee shall receive and consider the presbytery’s counsel on the merits, suitability, and availability of those considered for the call.”(G-2.0803).

Section G-11.0504 states that the committee on ministry of the presbyteries “may look to synod and the General Assembly for information and assistance in the matter of ministers and pastoral relations.” In support of this provision “synods shall create the necessary agency to coordinate the work of presbytery committees.”

D. Committees on Ministry

The Book of Order (G-11.05021) places responsibility for the implementation of equal employment opportunity practice in the call of ministers and the employment of candidates with the committee on ministry as follows: “It shall provide for the implementation of equal employment opportunity for ministers and candidates without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, age or marital status. In the case of each call, it shall report to the presbytery the steps in this implementation taken by the calling group.”(G-11.0502f.)

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAM POLICY FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Each governing body council and church-related institution or service organization is encouraged to develop its own implementation plan for administering its commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action using this Policy and Plan as a model. The plans of the six agencies are offered as a model for parallel structures in councils, church-related institutions, and service organizations. This Implementation Plan for the General Assembly is offered as a model for parallel structures in other governing bodies, church-related institutions, and service organizations. All such plans optimally include, but are not limited to the following elements: Councils which implement such plans should consider including the following elements:

1. Equal employment opportunity and affirmative action goals and objectives, which are continuously updated and reviewed.
2. Personnel policies, practices, and procedures, which as a minimum will include:
 - Involvement of persons from the ~~identified groups~~ *Identified Categories* in search and recruitment procedures;
 - Search and recruitment procedures to locate and consider for employment persons regardless of *their inclusion in the Identified Categories* ~~race, sex, age, or disability~~;
 - Selection, promotion, and upgrading procedures and *career development activities* to preclude and to correct patterns of discrimination on the basis of *inclusions in the Identified Categories that disproportionately screen out individuals* ~~race, sex, age, or disability~~;
 - ~~Career development activities without regard to race, sex, age, or disability~~;
 - ~~Development of realistic position descriptions based upon job related qualifications and standards to insure that the description does not contain qualifications or selection criteria based on race, sex, age, or disability that disproportionately screen out individuals~~;
 - ~~Public advertisement of openings in selected media and contact of specific agencies, organizations, and associations~~;
3. Annual workforce review and analysis to determine:
 - a. if (a) patterns of discrimination exist and (b) if the hiring practices are bringing the church to a greater level of inclusiveness; and
 - b. Identification of the point of accountability and responsibility for the implementation and continuous review of the equal employment opportunity and affirmative action program.
4. ~~Commitment as a purchaser to contract or purchase goods and services whenever possible from businesses that have committed themselves to the goal of equal employment opportunity and which are willing to cooperate with Project Equality, Incorporated. Such cooperation includes utilizing the Project Equality process so that whenever a reasonable choice exists validated meeting facilities are used and suppliers listed in the Buyers Guide and Supplements are selected.~~
- 3-4. Commitment as an investor, to invest whenever possible in businesses that are committed to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.

In addition to the elements listed above, the following are listed for guidance:

A. Synods and Presbyteries Mid Councils

~~In~~ While not obligated under this policy in implementing their responsibilities in relationship to the filling of administrative staff positions (G-9.0104) (G-3.0103), synods and presbyteries mid councils are urged to develop, and establish, implement, and model equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies and implementation plans based upon the following:

1. Recruiting, hiring, calling, training, and promoting persons within all job classifications without regard to *inclusion in an Identified Category* ~~racial ethnic group, sex, age, or disability~~;
2. Ensuring that all other personnel policies and practices such as compensation, benefits, transfers, leaves of absence, performance evaluations, reduction in force and return to service, educational opportunities, tuition assistance, and termination are administered in accord with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies;

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

3. Annually collecting and reviewing employment data and conducting analyses, reporting their findings to the next higher ~~governing body~~ *council*, and taking such corrective actions as are necessary under their own equal employment opportunity and affirmative action commitments.

The ~~governing body~~ *mid council*'s manual of administrative operations should include its equal employment opportunity and affirmative action implementation ~~plan~~ *policy* and the procedures by which employment data will be gathered for review by the next higher ~~governing body~~ *council*.

In consulting with presbyteries regarding the election of an ~~executive presbyter~~ *a presbytery leader* (G-9.0701) (G-3.0110) and in developing guidelines for personnel reviews, synods are encouraged to review routinely the inclusiveness of election processes and the incumbents' fulfillment of their overall responsibilities to initiate and carry out the provisions of the churchwide ~~plan~~ *policy* for equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Synods shall be similarly reviewed by the General Assembly. Neglect by ~~executive presbyters~~ *mid council leaders* in carrying out such responsibilities should be grounds for dismissal.

B. Congregations

The witness of congregations is the basis for all other expressions of the church's life. Each congregation is urged to implement its procedures of calling, recruiting, hiring, and promoting for all job classifications without regard to a candidate's being a member of one or more Identified Categories ~~racial-ethnic group, sex, age, or disability~~. Each congregation is urged in all phases of employment, for all job classifications, to follow the equal employment opportunity and affirmative action program of its presbytery. These commitments to equality should include but not be limited to compensation, benefits, leaves of absence, performance evaluations, reduction in force and return to service, continuing education opportunities, and termination.

C. Church-Related Institutions

Church-related institutions including schools, theological institutions, and service organizations are urged to develop and establish equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies and implementation plans based upon the following:

1. Recruiting, hiring, calling, training, and promoting persons within all job classifications without regard to *inclusion in an Identified Category* ~~racial-ethnic group, sex, age, or disability~~.
2. Ensuring that all other personnel policies and practices such as compensation, benefits, transfers, leaves of absence, performance evaluations, reduction in force and return to service, educational opportunities, tuition assistance, termination, and any others are administered in accordance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies.
3. Annually collecting and reviewing employment data and conducting analyses of all personnel policies and practices, ~~reporting to the appropriate General Assembly agency~~, and making such corrective actions as are necessary under their equal employment opportunity and affirmative action commitments.

IV. CONCLUSION

Motivated by the gospel and not by law, we seek to improve our record of hiring not only on the General Assembly level, but also in congregations, ~~presbyteries, and synods~~ and *mid councils*. In Luke 13 Jesus says ~~men and women~~ *people* will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the realm of God. The ~~time has come for the~~ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *is called* to model this joyful feast and to reflect inclusiveness in all areas of its life. No longer shall we be a pale reflection of secular society, but a beacon of light showing by our unity and our diversity that all are one in Christ.

SECTION TWO: PLAN TOWARD INCLUSIVENESS IN EMPLOYMENT: ~~A CHURCHWIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENCIES~~ PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

In implementing the policies established by "Toward Inclusiveness in Employment: ~~A Churchwide Plan~~ *Policy* for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for General Assembly Agencies," the following procedures and responsibilities are assigned to the indicated units of the General Assembly.

I. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION

The responsibilities of the General Assembly Committee on Representation are outlined in the *Organization for Mission* (IV.C.5.b) and the *Book of Order*, and include participation in any review of the *Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action of the General Assembly Agencies*. (See Section One, (II.A.)). ~~The General Assembly's Committee on Representation, in consultation with the General Assembly Council, shall develop and establish guidelines for use by Committees on Representation in providing advice to the governing bodies in the area of employment. (G-9.0105.)~~

II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ~~COUNCIL~~ AGENCIES

In addition to ~~its~~ *their* responsibilities as ~~an employing unit~~ *employers*, the General Assembly ~~Council~~ *Agencies* ~~has~~ *have* a leadership role in coordinating the ~~churchwide~~ *Agencies* plans. These responsibilities include the components delineated below:

A. Designation of an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Officer

Each agency of the General Assembly shall designate an equal employment opportunity officer who shall be responsible for the implementation and management of the unit's agency's equal employment opportunity and affirmative action program.

A. B. Oversight of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Implementation.

Each General Assembly Council agency shall:

- (a) ~~develop and implement an overall plan for coordinating the equal employment and affirmative action activities of the General Assembly Level within their agency,~~
- (i) *in support of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and participation as stated in F-1.0403 of the Book of Order, and*
- (ii) *provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices as stated in G-3.0103; and*
- (iii) *ensure that all personnel guidelines, policies, procedures and practices are implemented in accordance with the church's policy on equal employment and affirmative action; and*
- (iv) *initiate special actions required to "provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices (G-3.0103).*

All agencies are encouraged to use their respective Cultural Proficiency Six-Year Plan as an implementation plan.

(b) *share a copy of that plan with the General Assembly Committee on Representation; and*

(b) (c) ~~recommend report periodically to the General Assembly: (1) equal employment opportunity goals; (2) annual summaries prepared by the General Assembly Council encompassing, but not limited to the their equal employment opportunity and affirmative action performance of the agencies of the General Assembly, related schools, theological institutions, and synods; and (3) (2) proposed corrective action when necessary;~~

(d) *participate in periodic consultation with the applicable advocacy committees and the General Assembly Committee on Representation who will recommend equal employment opportunity and affirmative action goals to the General Assembly.*

B. Support and Advocacy

~~The General Assembly Council shall encourage the development of support and advocacy groups for those who have been affected by past discrimination.~~

C. Operational Implementation

Each agency shall:

1. *Disseminate the General Assembly equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policy statement to all employees and include it in all appropriate General Assembly-level manuals of operations and employee handouts as well as post it on employee bulletin boards and include it in employee orientations;*
2. *Include each new hire and employees at the supervisory level and above in an annual training program; and*
3. *Advise prospective employees of the church's equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policy through advertisements, publications, and other public statements.*

C. D. Celebration of Progress

~~The Each General Assembly Council agency shall encourage implementation of General Assembly directives and the celebration of progress in equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.~~

D. Consultation with Employing Units

~~The General Assembly Council shall ensure consultation with all agencies, councils, boards, commissions, and committees of the General Assembly (hereafter referred to as employing units) regarding their designation of an equal employment officer; implementation of personnel procedures and policies, and equal employment opportunity plans; dissemination of policies to employees; and appropriate corrective action.~~

E. Consultation with Synods

~~Following consultation with synods regarding the election of an executive (G-9 .070 I) the General Assembly Council shall provide an evaluation of the inclusiveness of this process to the next General Assembly.~~

F. Participation in the Review of Chief Administrative Officers

~~General Assembly Council participation in the annual review of work of the chief administrative officer of each hiring unit of the General Assembly shall include provision to the hiring unit of an analysis of the unit's equal employment opportunity performance.~~

G.—Guidelines for the Employment of Persons in the Identified Groups

~~The General Assembly Council shall publish and disseminate guidelines for the employment of women, racial ethnic persons, persons with disabilities and persons of various ages. (G-9.0104.)~~

H E. Resolution of Discrimination Grievances

~~The Each General Assembly Council agency shall include in its uniform personnel policies provisions for handling equal employment opportunity and affirmative action grievances and for the review of allegations of employment discrimination.~~

I F. Operational Implementation**1. PURCHASING**

~~The Each General Assembly Council agency shall communicate a commitment to supplier diversity to all staff and instruct its purchasing agents of the denomination to notify all subcontractors, vendors, and suppliers of goods and services of the church's equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policy asking them to share a copy of their equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policy with the church agency. Copies of these policies shall be forwarded to the General Assembly Council by the purchasing agents for review and filing. Review and comment on these vendor plans will be included in the annual report of the General Assembly Council to the General Assembly.~~

2. DISSEMINATION

~~A brochure website shall be prepared developed and curated by the General Assembly Council Presbyterian Mission Agency, in cooperation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation on the subject of full participation and equal employment opportunity and affirmative action which will be used by all employing units and institutions of the General Assembly and governing bodies of the church.~~

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

The chief administrative officer of each employing unit agency of the General Assembly shall be responsible for the unit's agency's implementation and administration of the equal opportunity policies as adopted by the General Assembly and shall ensure that the unit's agency's administrative manuals include guidelines and procedures for the implementation of these policies at the unit level and with other governing bodies served by them. Neglect of this responsibility shall be grounds for dismissal.

~~The Executive Director of the General Assembly Council shall be the principal equal employment opportunity officer for the General Assembly.~~

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYING UNITS**A.—Designation of an Equal Employment Opportunity Officer**

~~Each employing unit of the General Assembly shall designate an equal employment opportunity officer who shall be responsible for the implementation and management of the unit's agency's equal employment opportunity program.~~

B.—Development of Policies and Implementation Plans

~~In consultation with the General Assembly Council each employing unit shall:~~

- ~~1.—Ensure that all personnel guidelines, policies, procedures and practices are implemented in accordance with the church's policy on equal employment opportunity;~~
- ~~2.—Initiate special actions required to correct patterns of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age or disability²⁷ (G-9.0104); and~~
- ~~3.—Develop an equal employment opportunity implementation plan in support of the church's commitment to inclusiveness and participation, as stated in G-4.0403 of the Book of Order, and provide for full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices correct any existing patterns of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, or disability also stated in G-9.0104. Each unit's implementation plan shall be approved and maintained in the official files of both the Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Council.~~

C.—Operational Implementation

~~Each employing unit shall:~~

- ~~1.—Disseminate the General Assembly equal employment opportunity policy statement to all employees and include it in all appropriate General Assembly-level manuals of operations and employee handouts as well as post it on employee bulletin boards and include it in employee orientations;~~
- ~~2.—Include each new employee at the supervisory level and above in an orientation and training program designed in conjunction with the General Assembly Council's appropriate staff person; and~~
- ~~3.—Advise prospective employees of the church's equal employment opportunity policies through advertisements, publications, and other public statements.~~

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPECIFIC AGENCIES

~~The responsible General Assembly agency or agencies shall:~~

- ~~1. Develop equal employment opportunity performance guidelines for the annual performance review and evaluation of synod executives and executive presbyters as prescribed by the Uniform Personnel Policies (16.00). (Examination of the executive's initiative in carrying out the provisions of the churchwide plan for equal employment opportunity should be included in the annual performance review process); and~~
- ~~2. Report to the General Assembly Council on the equal employment opportunity performance of synods, presbyteries, and related schools and theological institutions.~~

VI. HIRING PROCEDURES

The search for and recruitment of persons from ~~racial ethnic groups, persons of all ages, persons with disabilities, and women~~ *the Identified Categories* is critical to the implementation of an effective equal employment opportunity *and affirmative action* plan. An effective program of search and recruitment shall include at least the following:

1. Recognizing that involvement of persons from the ~~identified groups~~ *Identified Categories* in the search and recruitment process is necessary;
2. Identifying resources ~~related to the identified~~ *to reach individuals from various Identified Categories* that will yield ~~positive results~~ *more applicants for job openings*, e.g., *electronic media, newspapers, networks, caucuses, educational institutions*, and employment agencies; and
3. Utilizing the internal employment resources of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Position descriptions should be kept current through review and alteration whenever significant change(s) in responsibilities are evident. Ample opportunity shall be given for the employee to participate fully in the process of suggesting changes in the position description. Modifications made to position descriptions must be submitted for refactoring. Position descriptions for all vacant positions authorized for filling will be prepared as outlined in the "Personnel Policies for Agencies and Guidelines for Governing Bodies," paragraph 09.04 and 09.05. The position description shall be examined carefully to determine what functional and personal qualifications as to educational attainment, skills, physical ability (e.g. able to lift ten pounds), experience, knowledge, characteristics, etc., are actually required by the position so that qualification factors that discriminate against racial ethnic persons in the Identified Categories, various age groups, women, or persons with disabilities are eliminated.

VII. EVALUATION, REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

~~Evaluation, review, and analysis are essential components of any effective equal employment opportunity implementation plan. The General Assembly Council shall include detailed churchwide data and analyses in its report to the General Assembly. Such data will be secured from each employing unit of the General Assembly, each governing body above the session (presbytery reports are forwarded by the appropriate synod), and General Assembly related schools and theological institutions. Each General Assembly agency such entity is expected to conduct an annual evaluation of its workforce to determine the status of its performance in actualizing the denomination's commitment to inclusiveness as outlined in G-9.0104 G-3.0103, according to timelines and procedures developed in consultation with the General Assembly Council or by the General Assembly appropriate governing body and with the corresponding General Assembly Committee on Representation.~~

The annual evaluation will indicate whether numerical goals and timetables to correct patterns of discrimination are necessary, and if they are, what these goals and timetables should be. It is expected that each ~~agency employing unit~~ of the General Assembly will define its equal employment opportunity/*affirmative action* problems or needs by first examining the numbers and levels at which it employs members of the identified groups. Members include racial ethnic groups, women, persons of all ages, and disability (see G-13.0201 b). Results of the annual work force review and analysis will be forwarded to the General Assembly Council.

This work force analysis encompasses four components: (1) employment analysis, (2) recruitment analysis, (3) utilization analysis, and (4) goals and objectives.

GLOSSARY

Affirmative Action—any measure, beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, that permits the consideration of race/ethnicity, national origin, sex, or disability, along with other criteria, and which is adopted to provide opportunities to a class of qualified individuals who have either historically or actually been denied those opportunities and/or to prevent the recurrence of discrimination in the future.

~~Chief Administrative Officer—the "chief executive" of each GA agency, synod, or presbytery. By virtue of office this person is responsible for administering EEO and is held accountable for implementation in each annual performance review.~~

Consult or Consultation—the receiving of information or opinion in order to assure that views and interests of others are known.

Disability—a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities.

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

~~*Discriminate Discrimination*—to deny equal opportunity treatment in any phase of employment because a person is a member of one of the Identified Categories on the basis of race, sex, age, or disability. Marital status is an additional protected group in the calling of pastors, while disability is not so included.~~

~~Equal Employment Opportunity—the taking of steps necessary to ensure employer neutrality with regard to membership in a Identified Category racial ethnic group, sex, age, or disability.~~

~~*Employment*—the total relationship of employer and employee including pre-employment, employment, and post-employment.~~

~~*Exempt Staff*—the Fair Labor Standards Act provides for nonexempt and exempt positions with respect to overtime. Those persons employed in exempt positions are not paid overtime wages for hours worked either in excess of the normal work schedule or 40 hours a week. Such employees are expected to manage their schedules to provide them with a minimum of one day off each week.~~

~~*Genetic Information*—the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines genetic information as: Genetic information includes information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder in an individual's family members (i.e. family medical history). Family medical history is included in the definition of genetic information because it is often used to determine whether someone has an increased risk of getting a disease, disorder, or condition in the future.~~

~~*Good Faith Efforts*—the “faithful and sincere” efforts to achieve accepted goals through the implementation of specific steps.~~

~~*Handicapped*—a person is handicapped if he or she (1) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.~~

~~*Identified Groups Categories*—for purposes of this Policy, the Identified Categories include: race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age (40 and over), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expressions, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service or veteran status or religious affiliation (except where religious affiliation is a bona fide occupational qualification), or any other characteristic protected by law persons with disabilities, women, persons of all ages, and Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans.~~

~~Job Classification—a grouping of positions according to responsibility or function within a total structure.~~

~~*Nonexempt Staff*—the Fair Labor Standards Act provides for nonexempt and exempt positions with respect to overtime. Persons employed in nonexempt positions shall be paid overtime wages for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.~~

~~*National Origin*—the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines national origin discrimination as: National origin discrimination involves treating people (applicants or employees) unfavorably because they are from a particular country or part of the world, because of ethnicity or accent, or because they appear to be of a certain ethnic background (even if they are not).~~

~~Position Description—description of job: its responsibilities (functions to be performed); accountabilities; fit into total organization; personal requirements; experience deemed necessary to perform in position, such as education or previous work.~~

~~*Race/ Racial Ethnic Group Ethnicity*—persons who are members of four specific racial ethnic groups The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recognizes six race and ethnic designations. This term includes additional categories not required by law, but that are recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Asian (not Hispanic or Latino), Black or African American (Not Hispanic or Latino), Hispanic or Latino, and Native American or Alaska Native (Not Hispanic or Latino), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Not Hispanic or Latino), Middle Eastern North African, and White (Not Hispanic or Latino).~~

~~Recruitment—the process of seeking applicants for positions. It can be “passive” or “aggressive” in seeking those who might not apply without special efforts.~~

~~*Underutilization*—having fewer persons in the identified groups in a particular job classification than would reasonably be expected by their availability in the work force.~~

Rationale

These recommendations are a final response to the following referral: *2014 Referral: Item 08-03. Proposed Revisions to the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Refer Back to Presbyterian Mission Agency, with the Following Comment: Consult with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 14, 40, 476–86; p. 217 of the print copy).*

The Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action has not been updated or revised since 1994. Prior to the 221st General Assembly (2014), changes to the plan were reviewed and approved by the human resource directors of the six agencies, the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and were reviewed with the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

The action from the 221st General Assembly (2014) was to refer Item 08-03 back to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and directed PMA to consult with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (*Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 476*).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s human resources director; Legal Services Office; director for policy, administration and board support; and associate for advocacy committee support consulted with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns on October 27, 2015, and with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns on October 29, 2015.

The advocacy committees asked questions about the proposed revisions and provided input that was considered and resulted in some further modifications to the proposed revision of The Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. An updated version of the proposed revisions to the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action is shown above and a Chart of Proposed Changes to the Churchwide Plan is shown below.

Proposed Changes to the Churchwide Plan

This chart lists the proposed changes to the Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, which has not been updated or revised since 1994. The changes proposed prior to the 221st General Assembly (2014) were reviewed and approved by the human resources directors of the six agencies and were reviewed with the General Assembly Committee on Representation. After the 221st General Assembly (2014) other changes were made after consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns.

The proposed title of the document was revised from Churchwide Plan to Churchwide Policy. The document is divided into two parts: the policy; and the plan to implement it.

The primary changes in the document were: (1) to change the names of entities, such as General Assembly Council to Presbyterian Mission Agency; (2) to reflect changes in the *Book of Order* over a period of twenty years; (3) to reflect changes in the responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, which no longer supervises personnel matters for all agencies of the General Assembly; (4) to reflect changes in the *Organization for Mission*; and (5) to reflect changes in the law.

SECTION	CHANGE
Title of Document—Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action	The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Policy for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for General Assembly Agencies (change made after meeting with ACREC).
Throughout the document	Everywhere that the words “equal employment opportunity” were found, the words “and affirmative action” have been added (change made after meeting with ACREC).
Section One	Was retitled and rewritten as the policy section: Policy Toward Inclusiveness in Employment.
Section One, paragraph 1	The categories of protected persons was increased to include color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, citizenship status, genetic information, uniformed service, veteran status, religious affiliation, and other characteristics protected by law. This is now consistent with the language in the Mission Agency Employee Handbook. (addition of gender identity/expression made after meetings with ACREC and ACWC). Where the summary term “Identified Categories” (used to summarize the above-listed categories), is found in the document, an asterisk was added and in a footer all categories were listed out (change made after meeting with ACREC).
Section One, paragraph 2	Language from former G-13.0201b deleted. That section was deleted from the <i>Book of Order</i> and PMA no longer has a superintendent role. In 2006 the General Assembly approved a PMA recommendation to discontinue the superintendent role. PMA continues to have the role of approving and monitoring the Churchwide Plan as outlined in the <i>Organization for Mission</i> . Proposed that GA make the Plan mandatory for its Agencies, urged other councils to adopt a similar plan. Governing bodies deleted, now known as councils.
Section One, paragraph 3	Last sentence deleted since PMA is no longer the superintendent of personnel policies and does not issue Uniform Personnel Policies to the other Agencies.
Section One, paragraph 4	Throughout the document, the name of the Mission Agency is changed from General Assembly Council to Presbyterian Mission Agency. Rather than create a paper manual, the decision was made to create a web site with supplemental materials for guidance. This is a “greener” option.

Section One(I)	The Theological Statement was completely rewritten and enhanced by Theology, Formation and Evangelism (change made after meeting with ACREC)
Section One (II) Title	Changed governing body to council.
Section One (II)	Added language and deleted language due to changes in the <i>Book of Order</i> .
Section One (II)(A)	Added language and deleted language due to changes in the <i>Book of Order</i> .
Section One (II)(B)	Added language and deleted language due to changes in the <i>Book of Order</i> . Clarified that responsibility for administering and implementing the Plan at the national level rests with each Agency. Revised Plan so that going forward if changes to the Plan are recommended, the Mission Agency will consult with ACWC, ACREC, and GACOR before it presents the changes to the General Assembly.
Section One (II)(C)	Throughout the document changed synods and presbyteries to Mid Councils. Added language and deleted language due to changes in the <i>Book of Order</i> .
Section One (II)(D)	Added language and deleted language due to changes in the <i>Book of Order</i> .
Section One (III)	Added language and deleted language due to PMA no longer having superintendent role, so policies of six agencies are models for councils to use. Deleted paragraph (c), Project Equality no longer exists.
Glossary	Moved to the back of the document.
Section Two	Was retitled and rewritten as the plan to implement the policy section: Plan Toward Inclusiveness in Employment.
Section Two Title	Changed title to Implementation Plan for General Assembly Level.
Section Two(I)	Added language and deleted language based upon the current language in the Organization for Mission.
Section Two (II)	Changed title since Mission Agency no longer has superintendent role. Responsibility now rests with each Agency. Consolidated sections II and IV. Clarifies that each Agency will create its own Agency plan for equal employment, based upon the Churchwide Plan. It will share its plan with GACOR and it will periodically report to the General Assembly on the Agency's performance based upon its plan and it will consult with GACOR, which may recommend goals to the General Assembly for each Agency.
Section Two (II)(A)	Former Section (II)(A) is now Section (II)(B). Current Section (II)(A) was the former Section Two (IV)(A). Since each Agency is responsible to comply with the Churchwide Plan and its own plan, it is also responsible to designate an EEO officer.
Section Two (II)(B)	Former Section Two (II)(B) was deleted since support and advocacy groups exist. Current Section Two (II)(B) is a compilation former Section Two (II)(A) and (IV)(B). Describes for each Agency how it shall develop and implement its individual plans. Revised language based upon changes in the <i>Book of Order</i> . Added language to recognize that 6-year plans for cultural proficiency should be part of the implementation plan to achieve the goals of the policy (change made after meeting with ACREC).
Section Two (II)(C)	Former Section Two (II)(C) became Section Two (II)(D). Current Section Two (II)(C) was former Section Two (IV)(C).
Section Two (II)(D)	Former Section Two (II)(D) was deleted to reflect that Mission Agency no longer has superintendent role. Current Section Two (II)(D) was former Section Two (II)(C).

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Section Two (II)(E)	Former Section Two (II)(E) was deleted to reflect that Mission Agency no longer has superintendent role. Current Section Two (II)(E) was former Section Two (II)(H).
Section Two (II)(F)	Former Section Two (II)(F) was deleted to reflect that Mission Agency no longer has superintendent role. Current Section Two (II)(F) was former Section Two (II)(I).
Section Two (II)(G)	Former Section Two (II)(G) was deleted to reflect that Mission Agency no longer has superintendent role and deletion of reference Book of Order section.
Section Two (II)(H)	Became current Section Two (II)(E).
Section Two (II)(I)	Became current Section Two (II)(F).
Section Two (III)	Executive Director of Mission Agency no longer principal EEO officer for the General Assembly since the Mission Agency no longer has the superintendent role.
Section Two (IV)(A)	Was moved and is now Section Two (II)(A).
Section Two (IV)(B)	Was moved and is now incorporated into Section Two (II)(B).
Section Two (V)	Deleted since all relevant provisions are addressed in Section Two (II).
Section Two (VI)	Became current Section Two (IV). Language from old Personnel Policies deleted. New language added to reflect Agencies' current practices.
Section Two (VII)	Became current Section Two (V). Language deleted since Mission Agency no longer has superintendent role. Language revised to reflect individual agency responsibility to evaluate its workforce and comply with inclusiveness language in the <i>Book of Order</i> .
Glossary	After proposed changes to the Churchwide Plan were settled upon to be proposed to the PMA Board and the General Assembly, staff reviewed the terms in the glossary. Any terms that were not found in the existing or proposed new language were deleted (ex. Exempt Staff, Nonexempt Staff). New terms were defined (ex. Genetic Information). Race/Ethnicity was revised to include both the PC(USA)'s recognized categories as well as the EEOC's recognized categories (change made after meeting with ACREC).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-07.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-07

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-07—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-07.

This is a thorough update and response to the churchwide plan of action from the 221st General Assembly (2014) for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

The action from the 221st General Assembly (2014) was to refer Item 08-03 back to the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and to direct PMA to consult with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 476).

In supporting policies and practices that contain full integration and full inclusiveness for the staff, the PC(USA) moves forward in striving to alter systemic practices that perpetuate racism/discrimination whether the practices are intentional or whether the practices are accidental. And in working to fully develop a plan to eliminate discrimination and inequality in employment, the PC(USA) provides access to full privileges of employment for all staff at all levels; so that no employees will be excluded or marginalized in any way, nor would any employees be denied access to resources, benefits, and opportunities.

Item 10-08

[The assembly approved Item 10-08. See pp. 41, 44.]

Report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following:

1. Revise the \$20 million by 2020 goal for Special Offerings receipts to \$20 million by 2025 as the aspiration of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

2. Affirm the current interpretation and distribution of Special Offering as the pattern for 2018–2021:

a. *Christmas Joy Offering*

(1) Interpreted and received during the Advent season in gratitude for God's gift of Jesus Christ.

(2) Causes:

- Assistance programs to meet identified and emerging needs for professional church workers and spouses through the Board of Pensions, 50 percent.
- Racial ethnic education and leadership development through Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries, 50 percent.

b. *One Great Hour of Sharing*

(1) Interpreted and received during Lent and on Easter Sunday in response to Christ's call to ministries of compassion and justice on a continuum from disaster and poverty relief to development among the marginalized and oppressed.

(2) Causes administered through the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry. Causes:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, 32 percent.
- Presbyterian Hunger Program, 36 percent.
- Self-Development of People, 32 percent.

c. *Pentecost Offering*

(1) Interpreted and received in relation to Pentecost Season in response to the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church in support of ministries with youth and young adults and in response to the needs of children-at-risk.

(2) Causes:

- Theology, Formation and Evangelism, 25 percent (for ministries with youth).
- World Mission, 25 percent (for Young Adult Volunteer Program).
- Compassion, Peace, and Justice, 10 percent (for Educate a Child Transform the World Initiative, national).
- Retained by Congregations, 40 percent. Congregations are encouraged to use this 40 percent for local ministries for children, youth, young adults, and child advocacy.

d. *Peace & Global Witness Offering*

(1) Interpreted and received in relation to World Communion Sunday, recognizing the call to bring Christ's peace to all creation.

(2) Causes: Ministries that specifically include peacemaking as well as global witness

- Presbyterian Mission Agency, 50 percent (for peacemaking and reconciliation).
- Synods and presbyteries, 25 percent (12.5 percent presbytery/12.5 percent synod).
- Congregations, 25 percent.

Rationale for Recommendations 1–2

These recommendations are a final response to the following referrals:

2014 Referral: Item 08-13. Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Recommendation 1. Continue Its Commitment to the Churchwide Goal of \$20 Million by 2020, by Affirming a. through e. (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 528–31; pp. 230–31 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 08-13. Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Recommendation 3. Enact or Maintain the Structural Arrangements with Respect to Each of the Offerings (See Items a. through d.)—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 528–31; pp. 230–31 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 08-13. Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force. Recommendation 4. Recommend That the Next Special Offerings Review Task Force a. Review Progress Toward Attaining the \$20 Million by 2020 Goal; b. Align Offering Recipients with the Strategic Objectives of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; c. Examine the Timing and Programmatic Emphases within Each Offering Based on Theological Soundness, the Liturgical Calendar, and Fundraising Strategy; and d. Evaluate Progress on the Aforementioned Recommendations—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 528–31; pp. 230–31 of the print copy).

Report of the Special Offerings Review Task Force

I. Mandate

On a four-year cycle, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is required to provide a task force for the review and evaluation of the special offerings and the recipient ministries and the consideration of new special offerings purposes in light of established criteria, for recommendation to the General Assembly (*Organization for Mission, Appendix A*).

Additionally, the 221st General Assembly (2014) recommended the following additional tasks:

- a. review progress toward attaining the \$20 million by 2020 goal;
- b. align offering recipients with the strategic objectives of the Presbyterian Mission Agency;
- c. examine the timing and programmatic emphases within each offering based on theological soundness, the liturgical calendar, and fundraising strategy;
- d. evaluate progress on the aforementioned recommendations. (*Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 529*)

II. Membership of the Special Offerings Review Task Force

Elder Michael Kruse, chair, Kansas City, Missouri; the Reverend John Koppitch, Indianapolis, Indiana; the Reverend Sarah Butter, Boston, Massachusetts; the Reverend Sallie Watson, Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Reverend Joey Lee, San Jose, California; the Reverend John Hougen, Independence, Iowa; Elder Linda Badger-Becker, Cleveland, Ohio; Staff support was provided by Margaret Hall Boone (recorder, Special Offerings) and Bryce Wiebe (Special Offerings).

III. Process

In developing recommendations for the special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for years 2018–2021, the Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF) completed the following process:

- Approached the task with intentional time for prayer and Bible study, seeking to discern God’s will.
- Held a face-to-face meeting in September 2015, held conference calls in July 2015, August 2015, October 2015, November 2015, and December 2015, and conducted work through electronic means.
- Received correspondence and engaged in conversations with individuals with a wide variety of perspectives on the special offerings in general and on specific offerings, programs, and causes.
- Reviewed reports and met with the staff representing programs currently funded by special offerings in September 2015.
- Developed and presented the report and recommendations to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee in September 2015 and February 2016.

IV. Preface

Special Offerings continues to play a vital role in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Special Offerings generated \$12 million dollars for mission at the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) in 2015, 15

percent of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's total income. Additionally, thousands of congregations participate in special offerings. Nearly 8,000 congregations participate in the One Great Hour of Sharing, alone. No other activity in the PC(USA) involves so many Presbyterians in one unified effort. These offerings are a vital expression of our connectionalism. The Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF) affirms the work of special offerings and we are encouraged by the staff's efforts to innovate and grow these offerings.

Yet the SORTF sees significant challenges. Along with the culture, the PC(USA) is in a time of substantial transformation. Post-denominationalism accelerates and special offerings are feeling the impact. Special Offerings receipts have declined from \$18.2 million in 2000, to \$16.4 million in 2007. Declines accelerated with the 2008 recession. The 218th General Assembly (2008) appointed a Special Offerings Advisory Task Force (SOATF) and charged it to do a thorough review of special offerings, with the objective of reversing the decline and improving vitality.

In 2012, the SOATF made their report to the 220th General Assembly (2012). This report contained many recommendations, some of which were approved, but many were not. The General Assembly did approve the central SOATF proposal for a "20 by 20" campaign to increase special offering receipts to \$20 million by 2020. The General Assembly extended the work of the SOATF until the 221st General Assembly (2014), to be an advisor on the implementation of changes and to consider further revisions to the program. The SOATF gave their final report at the 221st General Assembly (2014).

Our Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF) continues to affirm the ambitious goal of raising \$20 million annually. This goal helps focus and energize the special offerings efforts. However, we observe that the original goal was set as part of a larger framework, several components of which were not approved. Having lived into this effort for four years we now believe that achieving \$20 million by 2020 is not likely. Extending the goal date would yield a more realistic time frame for achieving the goal

While challenges lie ahead, we also recognize that Special Offerings have characteristics that seem particularly well-suited to our post-modern, post-denominational era.

- Special Offerings constitute a form of designated giving that is an increasingly popular form of giving.
- Special Offerings are clearly focused on missional goals and programs rather than institutional maintenance issues and structures, and therefore have greater donor appeal.
- Special Offerings appeal to specific subsets of Presbyterians (for example, those interested in youth and young adults have a natural attraction to the Pentecost Offering; those concerned with aid and development are drawn to the One Great Hour of Sharing). Each offering has a capacity to serve as a rallying point for these respective interest groups within the church.
- Special Offerings provide the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) with an opportunity to share financial development tools with mid council bodies (e.g. both Peace & Global Witness and the Pentecost offerings leave a portion of the funds with congregations and/or mid councils).

With this preface in mind, we offer more specific observations about Special Offerings as a unit and then offer observations about the specific offerings. We conclude with a response to business directed to us by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

V. Special Offerings

Marketing Oversight

In preparation for the 2015 Special Offerings, controversy developed over the marketing campaign for the One Great Hour of Sharing. Feedback from multiple stakeholders said the marketing materials were offensive. In spite of the feedback, the organization moved forward with the campaign. The materials were pulled after strong objections from across the denomination were expressed.

As the task force reviewed the circumstances surrounding these developments, we conclude that the issues were less about a lack of input and more about failure to respond appropriately to the input from multiple angles. Appropriate measures were taken and marketing processes have been revised. While we make no additional structural recommendations in response to these matters, we wish to stress that episodes such as this fail to reflect our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and cause profound damage. Trust is critical to building support and we remind senior staff of the PMA and the church as a whole to continue learning the lessons taught by this controversy. To this end, we lift up the need for careful and responsive listening to the concerns of one another.

1. *Cost Recovery*

Staff from all the recipient programs as well as Special Offerings staff expressed concerns about cost allocations. In 2004, the General Assembly Mission Council allocated 5 percent of restricted and designated revenue as a contribution

to shared mission costs, not reflecting the true cost. Further decline in undesignated giving resulted in an action of the 218th General Assembly (2008) to “fairly and accurately allocate all costs associated with individual projects in the General Assembly mission budget . . .” (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 668) to all PMA programs including recipients of Special Offerings. In the past two years, these allocations have increased in size and the costs of promotion of Special Offerings has increased. Consequently, the portion of the offerings going to overhead and fundraising have crept above the typical 10–15 percent. We heard a need for clarity from all staff about how this allocation works and how to interpret it to the public.

The SORTF knows this imbalance is an expected temporary outcome of ramping up Special Offerings’ fundraising capacity. Initially, the costs to the program are expected to be high but eventually the growth in donations is expected to justify the cost. While it is too early to evaluate the impact of this capacity building, new resources such as the *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* have been well-received (see below). We are supportive of the expanded capacity but suggest that the next SORTF reporting to the 224th General Assembly (2020) pay close attention to how the ratio of overhead to program dollars is evolving and recommend targets be developed. We also suggest that it might be helpful for Financial Services to educate the staff in how cost recovery decisions are made and also how to better collaborate with and interpret them to constituents.

2. *Presbyterian Giving Catalog*

In 2013 and 2014 we saw wide engagement with the *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* and associated activities. Launched in 2013, the initiative was created to capitalize on research done in support of the 2012 report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force—the donor’s desire to make an impact in today’s world using a unique way that is both tangible and makes them feel like they’ve made a difference. The *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* includes projects/gifts that fit into categories of Livestock, Water, Agriculture, Kits and Tools, and People. By 2020, our projected annual revenue goal for this one project is \$1,040,000. Additional group activities and educational resources developed for use with the catalog should widen its appeal beyond seasonal or special gifts, and enhance its capacity to generate support and interpret mission.

The idea of the *Presbyterian Giving Catalog* is to remind donors of specific needs in the world, and provide appealing and unique ways to give in response to those needs. The strength of the idea, combined with a more comprehensive marketing approach, is yielding impressive results. Catalog activities have reached new donors to Special Offerings and increased the participation of churches and small groups (such as youth groups and Sunday school classes).

3. *Ambassador Program*

Kicked off in 2015, the Special Offerings Leader Support Network (SOLSN) is made up of volunteer ambassadors who reach out to churches and mid councils, by phone and/or in person, to increase giving to and connection with the four church-wide Special Offerings. Ambassadors contact churches, meet with pastors, present at presbytery meetings, present Minutes for Mission during worship services, and so much more.

As of the writing of this report, there are twenty-five active ambassadors (19 women and 6 men). They come from 20 different presbyteries and range in age from 21–69 years old. Through the first two offerings of 2015 (OGHS and Pentecost), they made 630 contacts with congregation and mid council leaders. Already, these efforts are resulting in an increased awareness and understanding of the four offerings, as well as increased participation. While these initial results are promising, these efforts should continue to be monitored by Special Offerings staff as well as the PMA.

4. *Special Offerings Director*

At present, Special Offerings is overseen by an interim manager. While the task force understands this to be a temporary situation, we encourage the PMA to establish a permanent director position to oversee this work of managing more than \$12 million in giving. Special Offerings is not simply a support service. As noted, participation in special offerings is a ministry in its own right, a ministry that deepens our denominational connectedness. Special offerings require interaction and coordination among a large and diverse group of ministries and constituencies throughout multiple agencies and levels of the PC(USA). It is essential to have a unit with an eye toward developing a unified story and strategy for this diverse work as their primary objective with a seat at the table among leadership as a partner in ministry.

VI. The Specific Offerings

1. *One Great Hour of Sharing*

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) continues to be the largest and most widely supported of the special offerings. The offering’s long interdenominational history and strong reputation has created a loyal contributor base. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), and Self-Development of People (SDOP), are among the most highly esteemed programs in the denomination. Yet, the task force is mindful that we must continually connect new Presbyterians with the significance and purpose of the offering.

More can be done to communicate the overall purpose of the offering beyond the particular activities of the recipient programs. The task force understands that these three programs are ministries of compassion and justice on a continuum from disaster and poverty relief to development. A unified and well-articulated vision for the offering as a whole invites collaboration among recipient programs and reduces confusion among donors. Since the OGHs name does not clearly identify what benefits the offering delivers, we want to encourage Special Offerings to be succinctly clear about the benefit achieved through donations to the offering as a package, rather than the multiple layers of interpretation required by a federated funding model.

The task force continues to affirm the recipient programs as the appropriate programs for the offering. There is some concern that the SDOP program has impact in only thirty-one presbyteries, even though this is a national offering. As SDOP celebrated its forty-fifth anniversary in 2015, we encourage program leaders to consider ways to revise and extend their work to more venues.

The task force was pleased to hear of collaborative efforts among the programs. We want to encourage more work in that direction.

2. *Pentecost Offering*

The SORTF affirms the configuration of program recipients for the Pentecost Offering. We affirm the focus on ministries targeting the first third of life. We believe the transformation of the offering into a seasonal offering was a positive development. We applaud the use of social media and personal networks to advance the programs like Young Adult Volunteers, while simultaneously generating new donor streams through these approaches.

There is much passion in the denomination around youth and young adults. We believe this offering ought to connect well with congregations. However, as with most of the special offerings, the name of the offering does not describe what the offering delivers. Here again, we lift the need for staff to be succinctly clear about the benefits of the offering.

3. *Peace & Global Witness*

The denomination is living into this new offering and the SORTF believes this offering has great potential. The former Peacemaking Offering has been expanded into a Peace & Global Witness Offering. Through 2016, the programs historically supported by the Peacemaking Offering will be supported at past levels while any funds received beyond that level will be assigned to Global Witness. After 2016, these restrictions expire.

The SORTF wishes to emphasize the need for clarity and coherence concerning the programmatic emphases of the new offering going forward. We understand that the thrust of the offering will be towards initiatives that have both a peacemaking and global witness component, though some programs may include only one or the other. What are examples of specific programs that might receive funding? While it is true that the changes will not be felt financially until the 2017 offering, the sooner there is clarity about the specifics of the offering, the easier it will be to promote the changes when they take effect.

The SORTF also wants to affirm the practice where 25 percent portion of the offering that goes to mid councils is split 12.5 percent to presbyteries and 12.5 percent to synods.

4. *Christmas Joy Offering*

The SORTF affirms the purposes of the Christmas Joy Offering, caring for leadership in need as well as raising up new leadership. Board of Pensions assistance programs continue to play a vital role in the welfare of our pastors and church workers in times of need. The need for more racial ethnic leadership in our denomination grows ever more pressing and the historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions continue to have a role in that objective. But as with other offerings above, the name of the offering does not describe its purpose. Again, we stress the importance for donors to quickly and easily grasp the intent of the offering.

3. Maintain funding to the remaining historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions (HPREIs) at current percentages of the Christmas Joy Offering (CJO). (As of the date of this report, the HPREIs that qualify for funding through CJO are The Menaul School, Presbyterian Pan American School, and Stillman College.)

4. Allocate funds that have become available from HPREIs that no longer qualify for funding through the CJO to support and advance the work of racial ethnic and women's ministry in their programs of racial ethnic leadership development.

Rationale for Recommendations 3-4

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board referred the following item from the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions Task Force (HPREITF) Report to us for our review and comment.

“That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve that funds from the Christmas Joy Offering continue to be disbursed to eligible historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions through 2024, after which time funds will be allocated for racial ethnic leadership development programs in the Presbyterian Mission Agency.”

We affirm the report of the HPREITF as written. There is a complex history of how this recommendation came to be. We believe some background information is essential to making an informed evaluation.

Background:

Offering Purpose

The Christmas Joy Offering began at reunion in 1983, combining offerings from two predecessor denominations. The Articles of Agreement defining the offering were as follows.

Racial ethnic educational institutions have been the primary source from which racial ethnic church leadership has developed. Consistent with the dire need for racial ethnic leadership, the General Assembly Council shall propose to the General Assembly ways whereby the General Assembly shall be able to fulfill its responsibility for education through colleges and secondary schools and for meeting the operational and developmental needs of those Presbyterian schools that historically have served Black Americans and those serving other racial ethnic groups.

The emphases of racial ethnic church leadership and support of HPREIs were wedded together, the latter being seen as the primary means of developing the former. In 1983, there were six colleges and two secondary schools. (Today there are two secondary schools and one college who are eligible and receive funds.)

Task Forces

Special Offerings Advisory Task Force (SOATF)

The 219th General Assembly (2008) formed a Special Offerings Advisory Task Force (SOATF) to do a thorough examination of Special Offerings and to make recommendations for revitalizing the offerings. As noted above, offering receipts had been declining. When the SOATF made their report to the 220th General Assembly (2012), one of their recommendations was to expand the use of CJO funds beyond HPREIs to programs specifically targeted to developing and connecting racial ethnic church leadership.

The General Assembly would appoint a task force of racial ethnic leaders, including leadership from the institutions, to explore how the CJO funds could be used to develop racial ethnic leadership. This component of the SOATF’s recommendations was not approved.

Advisory Committee on the Allocation of Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Funds from the Christmas Joy Offering

At the 221st General Assembly (2014), the SOATF again recommended that an Advisory Committee on the Allocation of Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Funds from the Christmas Joy Offering be established and report back the PMAB by the end of 2015. This committee was appointed and charged as follows:

Examine the implications of how the church can best be true to its commitment to the historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions with whom it has covenanted; and ensure adequate provisions for an effective program of racial ethnic leadership development for the future racial ethnic leadership needs of the church.

The advisory committee made two recommendations:

(a) Maintain funding to the remaining historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions (HPREIs) at current percentages of the Christmas Joy Offering (CJO). As of the date of this report the HPREIs that qualify for funding through CJO are The Menaul School, Presbyterian Pan American School, and Stillman College.

(b) Allocate funds that have become available from HPREIs that no longer qualify for funding through the CJO to support the work of the Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Office.

In short, the advisory committee recommendation (b) called for a consultation by 2017, including the leaders of HPREIs and other racial ethnic leaders, to determine how best to improve intercultural, interracial, and interreligious proficiencies, and other initiatives to enhance racial- ethnic leadership development. The PMAB approved the cap in funding to 2015 percentages for existing institutions in recommendation (a) and replaced recommendation (b).

Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions Task Force (HPREITF)

Also at the 220th General Assembly (2012), there was a request to include Bloomfield College as one of the HPREI’s. It was rejected but the General Assembly directed that the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) “develop a brief strategy document that describes the characteristics of racial ethnic schools and colleges that produce racial ethnic

leadership” (HPREI Item c.103 Background). ACREC concluded they did not have the expertise to do such work and recommended that General Assembly form a task force consisting of members of the Presidents Roundtable (i.e., presidents of HPREIs) to do this work.

Parallel to these actions, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, at its February 2014 meeting, had discussions about how non-HPREI educational institutions might be considered for support. The board recommended that the General Assembly create a task force to explore these issues and offer recommendations.

In response, the 221st General Assembly (2014) formed a Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions Task Force (HPREITF) that incorporated the aims of both recommendations into one task force. The task force members were mainly members of the Presidents Roundtable (presidents of institutions receiving CJO funds). The General Assembly charged them with two tasks:

1. determine how the PC(USA) can be true to its commitment to its Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions while considering how other Presbyterian-related racial ethnic educational institutions can be in relationship with the PC(USA) and be considered for support
2. define and interpret the standards for racial ethnic schools related to the PC(USA) to be considered for support and then determine the characteristics of these schools that produce racial ethnic leaders in today’s multicultural society.

They made three recommendations. The first recommendation defined the parameters of qualifying as an HPREI. The third encouraged the denomination to find innovative ways to continue the partnership with these institutions for racial ethnic education. It is their second recommendation that was of significance for the SORTF. The second recommendation reads:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve and recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve that funds from the Christmas Joy Offering continue to be disbursed to eligible Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions through 2024, after which time funds will be allocated for racial ethnic leadership development programs in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. (HPREI Task Force Report, Recommendation #2)

In offering this recommendation, the HPREI Task Force gives some background about HPREI’s and their relationship to the denomination. They review the changing dynamics and needs for racial ethnic leadership in the denomination. Ten years from now, they see HPREIs substituting other streams of revenue for the Christmas Joy Offering, as they fulfill their critical mission of giving racial ethnic men and women a quality education in a supportive environment. The portion of the Christmas Joy Offering they currently receive would then be entirely devoted to racial ethnic leadership programs that address the expanding diversity of Presbyterian ethnic groups.

“The task force believes that in ten years the historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions will have sufficient endowments and other provisions in place that should enable them to sustain their operations without receiving funding from the Christmas Joy Offering. Therefore, the task force recommends that the racial ethnic schools and colleges be eligible for disbursements through 2024, after which time funds will be allocated for racial ethnic leadership programs in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The task force also encourages the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be in partnership with the historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions to explore new and creative ways to support racial ethnic education, which it believes is helpful in developing racial ethnic leaders to serve the church and society” (HPREI Task Force Report, Background on Recommendation #2).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board referred recommendation #2 to the SORTF for advice and comment.

Special Offerings Review Task Force (SORTF) Response

The request for advice and comment suggested to us that there was concern about the HPREITF’s recommendation. The PMAB did not make their concerns explicit to the SORTF. In August of 2015, we received a letter from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, expressing opposition to the HPREITF’s recommendation for ending disbursements to HPREI’s. We presume the issues ACREC raised is what prompted the referral.

The SORTF spent considerable time reviewing the history of decisions that have brought to this point. The SORTF also met with the chair of the ACREC and consulted with the chairs of the various racial ethnic caucuses. We also contacted the HPREITF for their input on the ACREC letter.

The SORTF believes there is a difference of opinion related to two overlapping but different priorities. One priority is development of racial ethnic leadership for the church. The other is providing quality education and a supportive environment for racial ethnic students, with no particular emphasis on Presbyterian church leadership. The former could certainly be a subset of the latter. What we heard from ACREC and the various caucuses was a desire to fund the latter. The need for both types of educational environments is great. Nevertheless, the SORTF supports the HPREITF’s recommendation for directing funding toward initiatives targeting racial ethnic church leadership. Three critical observations:

- The Special Offering Advisory Task Force (2008–2014) did extensive discernment regarding this topic and concluded there was a need to expand our racial ethnic church leadership development efforts beyond that provided through HPREIs.

- The Advisory Committee on the Allocation of Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Funds from the Christmas Joy Offering recommended that the Christmas Joy Offering receipts going to HPREIs be frozen at current percentages, a continuation of the action taken by the 221st General Assembly (2014).
- The Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions Task Force, a task force consisting mostly of presidents of HPREIs, take these recommendations a step further, in recommending that the required funding of HPREIs through the Christmas Joy Offering end in 2024 and that the CJO funds be put toward racial ethnic church leadership.

All three entities have discerned a need to shift our Christmas Joy Offering strategy toward more targeted avenues of developing racial ethnic church leadership. With regard to the HPREITF proposal, we observe that the potential streams of funding for racial ethnic education from within the denomination and beyond are likely more plentiful than are the streams willing to support development of racial ethnic Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) leadership. Furthermore, in our review of the offering's history, we conclude that the primary objective of the offering was the development of racial ethnic church leadership. We must not only ask what we can do but what are we uniquely positioned to do.

The reality is that each of these three entities researched options and exercised discernment at levels beyond which the SORTF was charged with doing. We respect and endorse the work of these faithful servants and affirm Recommendation #2 in the HPREITF report.

Also referred to our task force from the PMAB was a request that the SORTF affirm the following: "That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends to the Special Offerings Review Task Force that the funds, which were previously designated to Cook Native American Ministries through the Christmas Joy Offering, be designated to Native American Education and Leadership from 2018–2021."

The PMAB approved this same allocation for the last quarter of 2015 through 2017

Our Special Offerings Review Task Force affirms the need for developing Native American education and leadership. We suggest that a cohesive and flexible strategy for developing racial ethnic church leadership will serve Native Americans, as well as leaders of other racial and ethnic groups. Our recommendation is intended to be inclusive of the PMAB concern. Again, we affirm the HPREIs Task Force report that CJO funds continue to be disbursed to eligible historically Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions through 2024, after which time funds will be allocated for racial ethnic leadership development programs in the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

With that said, the SORTF is concerned about the future relationship between the denomination and HPREIs. Each of these three entities has raised similar concerns in their own way. We wish to add our voice to those calling on the denomination to not lose this historic partnership in mission.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises disapproval of this report, citing many serious concerns, particularly surrounding the use of funds from the Christmas Joy Offering (CJO). In particular, ACREC advises disapproval of Recommendation 2a.(2), second bullet, and Recommendation 4.

Recognizing the limited scope of this Special Offerings Review Task Force, ACREC is concerned with the trajectory of the allocation of CJO funds and the processes used to make these determinations. The ACREC questions whether the roadmap laid out for these funds appropriately reflects and respects the original intent of the use of CJO funds. Further, while the projected designations for the CJO funds are rooted in the work of various General Assembly task forces and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board decisions, ACREC would draw attention to the lack of adequate inclusion and centering of the voices of Presbyterian constituencies of color directly affected by these decisions in the decision-making process.

The ACREC asserts that more substantive work is needed before the CJO can move forward. The ACREC believes this work should be driven and led by the wisdom of those from the constituencies directly benefitting from the CJO and possessing inherent knowledge of the students and the congregations and communities that they will ultimately serve.

Some of the major issues that arose for ACREC in reading and reflecting on this report are as follows:

- Have the various task forces and groups working through the CJO portion of the Special Offerings been adequately representative of the constituencies most directly impacted by the funds?
- Within the recommendations of this report (particularly Recommendations 2.a. and 4., not enough detail is included regarding past actions of General Assemblies and Presbyterian Mission Agency Boards directly affecting the CJO. For example, read alone and outside of the now years-long process, it would seem the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) has no

obligation to send funds to the qualifying racial ethnic schools and colleges. The full breadth of information surrounding this offering needs to be consolidated into one place in order to clarify this and other details surrounding the offering.

- Filtered through the PMA, ACREC understands that at least 20 percent of the offering received will benefit PMA administrative and legal costs, and hence is diverted away from the racial ethnic constituencies for which the funds are intended. If overhead cost is necessary, ACREC would request that this be done in a very transparent manner, informing donors of where precisely their gift is going—to the actual fund or to the administrative cost.

- The direction taken in creating qualifications for receiving funding from the CJO have meant that schools in dire need of assistance with processes such as regaining accreditation have been excluded from receiving help when most needed. The accreditation qualification implies a lack of value of education for institutions not qualified in this particular manner. These concerns beg questions such as: Was the accreditation requirement raised by voices from the racial ethnic constituencies served by the Presbyterian racial ethnic schools; and who determines what is adequate education for these constituencies?

- The recommendation to fund the qualifying racial ethnic institutions only until 2024 seems to have been made under the influence of a scarcity model presented to those making the decision. The ACREC is concerned this decision was recommended by the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions Task Force simply in order to buy time to secure other sources of funding with the assumption that there will be no funds—not because the institutions do not still need the funding from the CJO or that contributions to the CJO will cease altogether.

- Considering the history surrounding the CJO and the concerns regarding the allocation of its proceeds to the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREI), what now makes the PMA uniquely qualified to decide what constitutes appropriate racial ethnic leadership education? Again, wouldn't that be better left to the professional educators and institutions inherently familiar with and/or uniquely qualified to understand and equip the students for ministry within the racial ethnic communities and congregations in which they will serve?

Item 10-09

[The assembly approved Item 10-09. See pp. 13, 44.]

“Empowered & Hopeful”—Women of Color Consultation Report.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Women of Color Consultation planning team, recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following:

- 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, to continue to sponsor racial ethnic and women’s leadership institutes to develop women of color leaders in the church, so that they will have opportunities to serve fully in ministry and leadership.**

- 2. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, to continue to provide and support opportunities for women of color to attend trainings and professional development events.**

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:

2014 Referral: Item 08-10. Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Plan a Women of Color Consultation (WoCC) That Focuses on the Inclusion of Women of Color of All Ages in Leadership and Decision-Making in Presbyteries and Synods and/or Their Successor Bodies. The Next WoCC Shall Be Held No Later Than the Fall of 2015 and Be Reported to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) with Recommendation for Further Action and Study—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 42, 518–22; p. 224 of the print copy).

Background

The Presbyterian Mission Agency planned a Women of Color Consultation, which was held on November 12–14, 2015, in Greensboro, North Carolina. A planning team working with the Office of Women’s Leadership Development, Young Women’s Ministries, and the Office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries met several times in the fall of 2015 to plan the consultation.

The theme for the 2015 Women of Color Consultation was “Empowered & Hopeful.” The focal scripture for the consultation is from Jeremiah 29:11: “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” The goals of the consultation were:

1. To build community; promote healing and wholeness; and foster personal, spiritual, and personal networks among women of color.
2. To empower women of color to become transformational leaders as the church lives into the vision of God's inter-cultural community.
3. To engage in dialogue through women's listening groups, share hopes and dreams, and work toward enabling the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide opportunities for women of color to serve in all levels of ministry and leadership.

The consultation celebrated the gifts of women of color at all levels in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and acknowledged that women of color have unique challenges in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Women of Color planning team finds great value in the racial ethnic and women's leadership institutes and urges Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries in the Presbyterian Mission Agency to continue to sponsor leadership institutes for women of color, in an effort to not only acknowledge the unique challenges of women of color in ministry and leadership but to work toward enabling the church to provide opportunities for women of color to fully live out their calls in ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Women of Color Planning team also values Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries' providing of opportunities and support for women of color to attend trainings and professional development events. While training and support are only one part of a larger system in need of transformation, some women of color have been called into greater leadership and ministry roles as a result of networking and training provided by these leadership institutes, trainings, and events. The church also shows, more importantly, through these trainings and events that it values women of color in ministry and leadership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Systemic racism, sexism, and homophobia have impacted the calling of women pastoral leaders to serve in local congregations, as well as the process of ordination and preparation towards ordered ministry. This has influenced the ability or inability of women of color to fully live out their calls in ministry and leadership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

It comes as no surprise to some that there are those in the church who are resistant to women of color in ministry and leadership. And more insidious, are those who choose to disregard racism, sexism, and homophobia in the church and society. Choosing to disregard these unique challenges of women of color in their everyday lives and ministries, however, does not make discrimination go away. This simply allows persons to ignore discrimination and the disadvantages and lack of opportunities for women of color to fully flourish in the church and society.

The listening groups' responses at the Women of Color Consultation have been compiled into a report, which is available from the Office of Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries. More than fifty-five women of color participated in the Women of Color Consultation listening visits, representing a diversity of ages and ethnicities. Participants included African Americans, Africans, Native Americans, Hispanics/Latinas, Middle Easterners, Asians, and Koreans. Teaching and ruling elders were present, as well as seminarians, mid council leaders, national church staff, and leaders in Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA).

The format of the consultation focused on three key areas: worship, listening, and community building. Each session had a facilitator and a recorder. The listening groups were intended to listen to women of color and hear their joys and concerns. "The book of Jeremiah is about catastrophe and survival, destruction and rebuilding, grief and joy. Its themes echo and contradict one another to create a poignant symphony of tragedy and hope. Images of women abound in the book ... , yet if women approach the book critically, they may find that its sufferings mirror their own pain and its hope promises them a different future" (pg. 169, "Jeremiah," Kathleen M. O'Connor In *The Women's Bible Commentary*).

Conclusion

The 2015 Women of Color Consultation focused on those who were in the room, namely the women of color. Though there were discussions of how to illuminate and address racism, sexism, discrimination, and marginalization, this consultation focused on the women, themselves, and it was a joyous celebration of worship, dance, music, preaching, sharing, networking, and becoming "empowered and hopeful," as the church works toward becoming God's intercultural community. These women of color participating in the consultation value difference, both within and outside of their ethnic and cultural groups. These women of color leaders expressed appreciation for being provided the opportunity to participate in the consultation.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-09.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-09 and suggests incorporating and supporting the recommendations and the spirit of Item 11-22: "Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community," a report that addresses the necessary work of the greater church if it is to authentically and fully welcome and accept the leadership of women of color.

While Item 10-09: “Empowered and Hopeful” seeks to train and build up women of color, Item 11-22, “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community,” speaks to the need for the church to face its own racism and to take proactive steps towards dismantling racism. For instance, its first recommendation calls the church to respond with the following action item: “1. Direct the Stated Clerk to challenge the church through direct communication to do a personal self-examination of its participation in structures that support and maintain racism regardless of the good intentions of individual Presbyterians.”

In a predominantly white denomination and a traditionally male-dominated institution, women of color in the church need opportunities to gather together. Conferences, consultations, leadership institutes, and trainings are all necessary to sustain, nurture, and support women of color in the church. The ACWC fully supports the two recommendations of this report.

Recommendation 1 of Item 10-09 states that one of the reasons for these recommendations is “so that [women of color] will have opportunities to serve fully in ministry and leadership.” This is a worthy goal.

The reality, however, is that until the greater church is prepared to accept and celebrate women and racial ethnic leadership, these opportunities will not exist no matter how prepared, trained, and developed these women are. Many qualified and trained women of color are already prepared and ready to lead. Nonetheless, they are still not afforded opportunities for leadership, not through any fault or deficiency of their own but due to the church’s inability to fully accept this leadership.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) received and approved “The Women of Color Consultation Task Force Report—Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies.” This report called the church “to recognize the ways that the church perpetuates systems of privilege within its own structures and ethos, and to renew its commitment to dismantle racism in all its forms, recognizing the complexities of race, ethnicity, and class as factors of marginalization and privilege.” We believe that until the church fully engages in this work, women of color will continue to be on the margins of church leadership and ministry.

Adding an additional recommendation that seeks to address the systemic issues of racism and sexism to allow for a more hospitable and welcoming context in which women may lead calls the church back to its commitments made in 2008. Training the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its ministries on cultural proficiency, antiracism, and privilege as well as the mid councils and our congregations is one concrete step towards a more just church that embraces the leadership of women of color.

Item 10-10

Living Missionally Recommendation—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

[The assembly approved Item 10-10, Recommendation 1. See pp. 41, 44.]

1. Acknowledge the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s efforts, among others, to rally the church around “Living Missionally.”

[The assembly approved Item 10-10, Recommendation 2. with amendment. See pp. 41, 44.]

2. [Release the Presbyterian Mission Agency from the directives “to develop tangible metrics to determine success and impact,” and “identify strategies for deeper engagement.”] [Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to define “missional,” educate the church, identify strategies for deeper engagement, and develop tangible metrics to determine success and impact of living missionally within the context of the goals of the new Mission Work Plan.]

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

2014 Referral: Item 14-03. Living Missionally. Recommendation 3. Launch a Churchwide Initiative That Will Inspire, Equip, and Connect Presbyterians to Continue to Go Beyond the Walls of Their Congregations and Increase Their Engagement in Service to Their Communities and the World—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 45–46, 998–1000; pp. 315–16 of the print copy).

2014 Referral: Item 14-03. Living Missionally. Recommendation 4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop Tangible Metrics to Determine Success and Impact and Report Back to the 222nd General Assembly (2016), Sharing Progress Made and Identifying Strategies for Deeper Engagement in 2016–18— From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 16, 45–46, 998–1000; pp. 315–16 of the print copy).

The 221st General Assembly (2014) embraced an initiative proposed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to encourage the church to join intentionally God’s effort to transform the world by moving outside the walls of its sanctuaries and follow

222nd General Assembly (2016)

Christ's example of service. The Presbyterian Mission Agency was directed to launch a churchwide initiative and develop tangible metrics for determining the success of such efforts, with a report back to the General Assembly identifying strategies for deeper engagement in 2016–2018.

Much work has been done in this regard, but not the precise activity intended by Item 14-03, Recommendation 4. The Presbyterian Mission Agency, with its partner, the Office of the General Assembly, made "Living Missionally" the theme for the 2015 Big Tent event in Knoxville, Tennessee. Many of the workshops and presentations made at this church-wide conference, including several led by the staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, focused on strategies and recommendations for helping congregations to go "beyond the walls" of their congregations to broader engagement in their communities and globally.

The "Educate a Child" initiative is a particularly focused effort in which many congregations are "living missionally." From a communications standpoint, however, the term "Living Missionally" has proved confusing and slightly problematic, in the midst of the many other efforts embraced in the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Mission Work Plan. While the intentions for another initiative were good, we have not had the staffing resources or the grassroots support to embrace yet another emphasis.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has spent considerable effort in developing its Mission Work Plan for the period 2017–2018. That work includes the establishment of directional goals that guide the agency's work during that period. Once approved by the General Assembly, that work plan will be implemented by the Presbyterian Mission Agency and a series of metrics developed to demonstrate impact from the work. The Mission Work Plan as a whole is designed to inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterians to live missionally, but the broad theme of "Living Missionally" was not developed and implemented as imagined in 2014.

Item 10-11

[The assembly approved Item 10-11. See pp. 41, 44.]

[Financial Implication: Presbyterian Mission Agency—\$52,000 (2017), \$52,000 (2018)]

A Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

1. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to design, create, and bring to fruition four annual regional gatherings of clergywomen across the United States to address reoccurring themes within the Women's Listening Visits, including, but not limited to, leadership development; peer support for new clergywomen (including second-career clergywomen [not age-specific]); mentoring; pay equity; call process; and networking.**

2. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to extend the listening groups during the Women's Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God to proactively include the voices of racial ethnic women, increasing the geographical spectrum (especially including Midwest and Western U.S.). Groups shall consist of full- and part-time clergywomen, chaplains, associates, and Christian educators in both rural and urban settings.**

3. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to create a virtual work group comprised of one member of the Women's Ministry staff, one member of Research Services staff, at least two members of the Status of Women team, and two members of ACWC to review and respond with action steps addressing the needs of clergywomen across the PC(USA) as articulated within the gender and leadership in the PC(USA) survey conducted in 2015.**

4. **Strongly urge mid councils to create a Clergy Women's Network (CWN) that provides mentoring, coaching, community building, and support. This CWN would allow clergywomen serving the church to give and receive support through interpersonal relationships, professional guidance, and biannual (twice a year) gatherings.**

5. **Direct the six denominational agencies to collaboratively create and share the expense of new leadership development opportunities for all clergywomen with special emphasis on the following groups:**

- (a) newly ordained clergywomen—five years and under,
- (b) second-career clergywomen,
- (c) racial ethnic clergywomen, and
- (d) clergy women desiring to serve at administrative and executive levels.

6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to write theologically undergirded curriculum specifically addressing issues facing women in ministry, sexism, and gender equity for the purpose of training mid councils and local congregations.

Rationale

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) is grateful to Women's Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) for the work done and information collected in the Women's Listening Visits. This work has made it evident that there is tremendous value in collecting not only statistical data, but also the stories and all-too-common experiences of women leaders out in the church. Further, the report made clear the power in gathering women to network and share experiences.

The most named issues the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) noted in the reports from the Women's Listening Visits were as follows:

- Loneliness
- Mentoring (importance/lack there of)
- Pay equity
- Relationships (desire for community)
- Leadership development
- Lack of receiving calls
- Second-career versus new clergywomen

The advocacy committee found two major gaps in reviewing the reports from the Women's Listening Visits. The sessions were conducted primarily in East- and West-Coast cities, excluding the voices and experiences of clergywomen in the Midwest and South United States. Further, women of color appeared underrepresented in the listening groups. As ACWC continues to seek to take an intersectional approach to gender justice, we want to lift up the importance of seeking out and hearing from women of color in the denomination. Particularly as we currently find ourselves as a denomination in the "Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God" (A Resolution to Recommit to Celebrating the Decade of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=3933&promoID=233>; Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acrec/pdf/woctaskforcereport.pdf), it is imperative that we prioritize women of color. It is the hope of ACWC that this work and all work of gender and racial justice is taken on by the entire PMA and all agencies of the denomination. Too often this work lands only in the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries area of the PMA. The work of seeking justice and equity for women is the work of the whole church.

The advocacy committee has been made aware of the good work done by Research Services in the Gender and Leadership in the PC(USA) Survey and would like to see this work reviewed conjointly by Women's Ministries, ACWC, and the Status of Women team, with the goal of coming up with with clear action steps that will address the needs as articulated by the survey. Otherwise, the work done has the potential to sit on a shelf without impact.

Through the information given in the listening groups, it became evident that many clergywomen need a voice in the denomination and advocacy regarding concerns related to clergywomen. Many clergywomen serve in isolation, without support, guidance, mentoring, or coaching. The sustainability of our denomination depends upon the strength and leadership development of clergywomen.

Mid councils are able to provide regionally based gatherings, trainings, and resources that can offer coaching, mentoring, and relational support specially designed for the various stages within the clergywoman's ministry. The advocacy committee offers the example of the Presbytery of Maumee Valley with regards to the creation of a clergywomen's network.

Educational resources must be created to promote gender equity and justice by training judicatories and local congregations to create healthy climates for clergywomen serving in the PC(USA). Again, ACWC hopes that this work can be prioritized within the PMA more broadly and assigned outside of Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries, though perhaps with input from staff with expertise there. Clearly this is work that aligns with advancing evangelism and discipleship, as well as fostering servant leadership, two foci of the PMA Mission Work Plan for all ministries of the PMA.

Item 10-12

[The assembly approved Item 10-12. See pp. 13, 44.]

A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed via Third Party Contractors—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyteri-

an Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to develop standards that take into account and protect the wages and fringe benefits of outsourced employees based on Presbyterian theology and policy on work and workers.

Rationale

Even though the PC(USA) has clear theological and biblical grounds for setting high standards for just treatment of all employees, there are currently no standards in place for those employed via a third-party contractor. (See “God’s Work in Our Hands” and “Neither Poverty Nor Riches” for background policy approved by the General Assembly.¹)

While agencies are looking for ways to cut costs, it should not be by exploiting workers or compromising on the theological and biblical understanding and standards the PC(USA) has set for itself when it comes to work and workers. When the PC(USA) agencies contract out business, they must take care to not exploit workers by patronizing businesses that do not provide decent wages and benefits.

In a time where corporations are becoming more aggressive in cutting wages and benefits of employees, the PC(USA) must take care to avoid adopting these negative corporate trends.

This issue was originally raised by ACWC when meeting in the Presbyterian Center, where cleaning services and security are outsourced to third-party employers. The committee wondered whether those employed via these contracts were being treated justly. After some investigation, ACWC discovered that none of the six General Assembly agencies have policies ensuring employees of third-party businesses with whom they contract justly compensate or provide benefits for their employees.

As outsourcing becomes more and more popular as a cost-cutting practice, it is essential that we as Presbyterians don’t lose sight of our commitments and convictions to being just employers, even when employment is done through a third party. Our theological commitments call us to care for these employees in much the same way we do those employed directly by the PC(USA).

Endnote

1. 207th General Assembly (1995), *God’s Work in Our Hands*: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/gods-work-in-our-hands-1995.pdf; 219th General Assembly (2010), *Neither Poverty Nor Riches*: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/compensation-policy.pdf

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-12.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 10-12

Comment on Item 10-12—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This resolution seeks to ensure just compensation practices for employees of third-party contractors of the PC(USA).

The General Assembly Committee on Representation reminds commissioners that the theology of the PC(USA) calls the church to a high standard of care for the employment of all persons. The 220th General Assembly (2012) approved for the church, *Privilege, Power and Policy: The Church as Employer* (Minutes, 2012, Part I, pp 28, 33, 250–52). This action created new practices and provided insights into how institutional employment and business practices are demonstrative of faith and action.

The GACOR is tasked by the Constitution to have an advisory role and review function in the employment of personnel in the church at the assembly level. The committee is tasked by the assembly to track supplier diversity and be an advisor to the church and its entities. The GACOR advises their presence at any review and analysis discussion with agency personnel, vendors, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) to develop methods for tracking low-wage employees and third party contractors. We draw commissioners’ attention to 03-Info and 10-Info where analyses of agency AAEO and salary information are presented before this assembly.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 10-12

Comment on Item 10-12—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has two hundred fewer staff than it did a decade ago. These staff reductions have been necessary due to reduced funding and a realignment of Presbyterian Mission Agency activities around work that can most effectively be done at the national level, and work that is most needed by congregations. Over those years, many functions are no longer staffed by regular positions within the Presbyterian Mission Agency, but rather through contract employees, and contracts with other organizations having special expertise. Examples of these functions include: new worshiping community coaches, travel agents, building security services, housekeeping, software application development, etc.

In each case of contract services, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has a process that it follows in engaging vendors to help it negotiate just working relationships with those vendors so that work by their employees is manageable, reasonably compensated, and based upon market rates. In 2013, the Presbyterian Mission Agency provided the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy with information concerning the companies with which it contracts for janitorial services and security services. That information is also summarized below:

1. A request for proposal is developed and submitted to a number of potential vendors.
2. Criteria for consideration include:
 - a. qualification under the Supplier Diversity policy;
 - b. sustainability (reputation, expectation that it can fulfill the contract and not fold);
 - c. price.
3. Vendors are asked to provide information regarding the compensation and benefits that they offer their employees (including employee workloads, sick time, holiday time, insurance benefits, and whether they notify their employees of the Affordable Care Act provisions.) Some vendors decline to provide that information.

Vendors are selected based on consideration of the totality of information provided in the proposal process. Health insurance benefits are one component of that evaluation, as are supplier diversity qualifications, working conditions, sick leave, holiday pay, etc. The current vendors used for janitorial services and security services provided the best match given the overall criteria and applicable Presbyterian theology and policy on work and workers.

Item 10-13

[The assembly approved Item 10-13 with amendment. See pp. 41, 44.]

On Achieving a 5:1 Ratio Between the Highest-Paid and Lowest-Paid Employees of PMA—From the Presbytery of Newton.

The Presbytery of Newton overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to establish the goal of achieving, in a reasonable period of time, a 5:1 [salary] ratio between the highest-paid and lowest-paid employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), beginning with new PMA positions, understanding this to be a partial return to earlier policy and a practical embodiment of missional solidarity.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) needs to resist the corporate trend that magnifies hierarchies and inequality in the church. The Office of the General Assembly (OGA) holds to a 5:1 salary ratio, but in the last ten years, top Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) salaries have been going upward to 7.5 times lowest salaries. At the same time, Presbyterian Foundation and Board of Pensions salaries are better than 10:1. The change proposed in this overture would not affect current salaries of our top executives but would change salaries over time.

Restoring the 5:1 ratio at the PMA would improve employee morale at the denominational headquarters and honor the spirit of serving God by most pastors and members who earn much less than the executives in Louisville and Philadelphia. Even if we want to pay our finance positions more than the 5:1 ratio, those receiving salaries from General Mission funds and per capita should not have an excessive hierarchy that mimics the CEOs of Wall Street. High salaries have not been shown to guarantee top performance and instead often sap morale.

We believe that this return to earlier policy will improve stewardship and giving to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by its members when they see a tangible example of a spirit of servant leadership among our leaders. The members of the PC(USA) would see the Presbyterian Mission Agency function more like a mission board.

Concurrence to Item 10-13 from the Presbytery of Newark.**ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-13**

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-13.

Moving to the five-to-one salary ratio for Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) staff, approximately a \$200,000 to \$40,000 range in Kentucky, could accomplish a number of purposes. It could affirm a unity of the staff based in commitment to mission, improve relations with the bulk of pastors in the denomination, provide an objective standard that clearly contrasts with the excesses of secular business, improve staff morale, and demonstrate a spirit of shared sacrifice at a time of repeated downsizings. The argument that extraordinary individuals require exceptions would not prevent the enactment of such a rule, though the basic argument is that this rule better reflects the teaching of Jesus, which is always to limit the lure of acquisition, the “building of bigger barns” (Lk. 12: 16–21).

Commissioners may know that all General Assembly and mid council salaries are published in the *Minutes of the General Assembly*, Part II, as a form of mutual accountability, as all pastor’s salaries are reviewed by presbytery committees on ministry. If the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s ratio has in fact narrowed from more than 8:1 in 2010 closer to 6:1 currently, then the further gradual movement recommended by this item should be quite achievable. It would bring the practice of the Presbyterian Mission Agency closer to the Office of the General Assembly, which retained a 5:1 ratio, although the pay scales of the other four agencies of the General Assembly could continue to widen.

Moving to an intentional salary ratio could, depending on its theological interpretation:

1. Affirm that all of the employees of the Presbyterian Mission Agency are committed above all to be in mission. As it stands, the overseas mission co-workers of World Mission all share a common scale for compensation, with differences for family need and region, whether they are surgeons or sanitation engineers. There are effectively two scales of professional compensation within the Presbyterian Mission Agency, one for financial, legal, and technical staff that is more dependent on “market” criteria and one more related to careers of service to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), often involving ministry and academic degrees. The former scale, including most of the higher paid positions, is found in the larger administration side, while the latter, including proportionately more Presbyterians, is found on the program side (four units each). The move away from a fixed ratio corresponded with the hiring of a professional manager from another assembly agency to be executive director. The use of a specific, time-honored (not “artificial”) ratio reflects the value of an objective standard that focuses on the needs of the whole.

2. Affirm a solidarity with the ministers and other paid staff of the denomination. Though any salary range is symbolic, the 2015 median effective salary for ministers was \$55,400 (considered “more representative” than the higher average salary, \$61,347 in 2014). Most PMA professional salaries are well above that, though most of the higher salaries (\$140,000 and above) are not earned by the ministers but by specialists as noted above. At the end of the day, however, it is the ministers who know the church best who determine what value the Presbyterian Mission Agency and other assembly bodies are given. In the congregation, generic management skills often do not translate without actual knowledge of the church and its values. It may be argued that management always needs an integral knowledge of the body being managed. Based on the PMA Review report, it may be that such a lack of knowledge of the PC(USA) and elevation of specialists contributed to the management difficulties identified. (For the salary numbers given, see: <http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/FeaturedArticles/Pages/Median-Salaries-for-2015.aspx> and http://www.pensions.org/AvailableResources/BookletsandPublications/Documents/salaries_parish_ministry_2014.pdf.)

3. Improve the sense of shared vision and values within the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff, described by the Review Committee as lacking due to an “overwhelming” sense of financial desperation and “a secular corporate model ... as the primary organizational form.” Compensation differentials between salaries in the program or ministry areas and those in the administrative areas appear to contribute to the perceptions of excessive hierarchy and distrust of management. Focusing on purported extraordinary gifts of individuals rather than the mutual commitment of a team reflects the culture, even if the church’s salary spectrum is far narrower than the morally debilitating salary differentials found in large businesses, where CEO’s make more than 300 times average worker salaries.

4. Signal a spirit of shared sacrifice, which might even translate to saving a few positions. It is understandable that persons who can make much more in the marketplace would feel that they are already making a sacrifice. But if the program staff sense they have different values and are valued differently by the organization or its management layer, then we have an organization perceived to tilt toward inequality rather than common ministry.

The 219th General Assembly (2014) approved all but one recommendation set forth in “Neither Poverty Nor Riches; Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church,” a report on the theology of compensation. That recommendation was

the 5:1 salary ratio for which this overture calls. This recommendation was also opposed by the other General Assembly agencies except for the Office of the General Assembly, which had separated its compensation plan from that of the then General Assembly Council (now PMA) over this concern and issues related to pay equity. For that study of the theology of compensation, see <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/neither-poverty-nor-riches/>.

The 218th General Assembly (2008)'s request for the 2010 compensation study came before the September 2008 credit meltdown, but that implosion in mortgage markets was ongoing during the work of that study team. Despite removing the one recommendation from the report, the 219th General Assembly (2010) commended "those agencies that are demonstrating a theological sense of connectedness and solidarity in mission by implementing [alternative] ... plans that exhibit signs of the church's covenant community, such as the pay structure for overseas personnel in World Mission, the 5:1 salary ratio found in the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and the practice of the Board of Pensions (BOP) in basing pensions of ministers who were not highly compensated during their active pastorates on the median effective salaries of ministers in the PC(USA)" (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 742).

The following two paragraphs concluded the Rationale section of "Neither Poverty Nor Riches." They help explain the effort in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to implement just compensation at all levels. This overture constitutes another step in the direction set in 2010.

The current theology of compensation is partly an aspirational compromise between merit based and egalitarian approaches. It encompasses a rationale for regionally varied minimum salaries, non-binding ratios for minimum to maximum salaries in national agencies, a pension system that redistributes retirement income upward for pastors of lower pre-retirement income, and a market-based system of pastoral compensation that reflects differences in ability, experience, background, and congregational resources. The Board of Pensions (BOP) and Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), both agencies of the General Assembly, are increasingly hierarchical and have pay scales that are significantly beyond the salaries of any other employee in the denomination. Although a few pastors are very well paid, many receive compensation at or only slightly above presbytery minimum. Yet even presbytery minimum salaries are increasingly unaffordable by many congregations. Those congregations frequently find it necessary to have a part-time pastor, a commissioned lay pastor, bi-vocational or tent-making minister, or non-Presbyterian pastor. Some have no on-going relationship with a pastor at all.

This resolution leads the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to say that we must live in covenant community with God and with one another. With the intention of being good stewards of the church's resources, we have moved toward the efficiencies and values of the marketplace. However, this has led to practices that threaten the solidarity of the church, as well as solidarity with our neighbors locally, nationally, and internationally. We believe that the church is called to ministry, not for itself alone, but for, with and in the world that God created and loves. We engage in this ministry as partners, recognizing that partnership requires consideration of just compensation. As we do, we demonstrate our understanding that all are called and all are valued as workers for God's kingdom in and through the Body of Christ. (*Ibid*, p. 744)

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-13

Advice and Counsel on Item 10-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 10-13.

The ACWC, relying on PC(USA) policy, supports pay equity and justice for all employees, and we believe such equity and justice should be modeled by our own denominational office for others to observe and follow. The ACWC believes the 5:1 salary ratio will serve as a model of fiduciary responsibility, as well as an example of servant leadership, which Jesus himself modeled (Mk. 10:42–45; Jn. 13:12–15; 1 Pet. 5:3). The 219th General Assembly (2010) approved the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) for the purpose of churchwide study and action on the theology of compensation, including commending the Office of the General Assembly for their 5:1 salary ratio *Neither Poverty Nor Riches*, approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010): https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/compensation-policy.pdf, p. 1.). The 207th General Assembly (1995) approved policy that stated that "The church must seek to become a model employer by providing workers with adequate compensation, meaningful opportunities for participation in decision making, leisure time in which to participate in family and community life, and by developing a '... reasonable relationship between the highest and lowest salaries paid to all church employees'" (*God's Work in Our Hands*, approved by the 207th General Assembly (1995): https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/gods-work-in-our-hands-1995.pdf. [Note: The quote included within this quote came from the *Minutes* of the 200th General Assembly (1988).]).

It is a known fact that a pay gap remains between women and men in the workforce today, a discrepancy felt even more intensely by women of color, whose compensation still lags behind that of their white counterparts. It is essential that all sectors of the church continue to examine their compensation practices, and PC(USA) policy calls for just that:

The goal of realizing equity in the church and the world for all of God's children is sealed in Scripture, rooted in the Reformed tradition, and consistently mandated in Presbyterian policy statements. From its founding, God's church has been called to provide a prophetic witness wherever and whenever equity remains unrealized. Whenever there are patterns of inequality that profoundly distort what is equitable—what people deserve and need to sustain themselves—not necessarily strict equality, then both the witness and the unity of the church are at stake.

In the church and in the world today there is a disturbing disparity in how people who work are compensated for their labor. Particularly distressing is the pay disparity that exists based on gender and race/ethnicity. As people who believe and proclaim that vocation is a gift from God, pay inequity stands as a sinful violation of God's covenant with all of humanity. (*God's Work in Women's Hands*, approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008): https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/resolutions/pay_equity_and_just_compensation.pdf)

Working to close the pay gap from top to bottom has the potential to expose pay gaps between women and men and people of color and white people, which can then also be corrected.

The Reverend Dr. Walter Brueggemann's, *Theology of Compensation*, which was presented at the reunion General Assembly in 1983, focuses on the distinction between church and culture through the lens of our Reformed tradition's understanding of just compensation as a justice-seeking agent of social as well as church reform: "A theology of compensation is rooted in our common call to glorify God, i.e. make God more visible and more central in the process of human community" (The Reverend Dr. Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of Compensation: A Study Paper* [Minutes, 195th General Assembly (1983), Part I; pp. 694–703]).

Understanding the mandate given to the ACWC to, through advocacy, maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues both within and beyond the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the ACWC calls for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to pay close attention to the need for just compensation and servant leadership as can be modeled through the approval of Item 10-13.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 10-13

Comment on Item 10-13—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board has consistently expressed its conviction that artificial ratios that fail to take into account the types of work being done by each position are unwise and unduly limiting. Adopting a strict ratio between the highest and lowest salaries would result either in paying the lower end of the spectrum outside the reasonable range for the local market, or decreasing pay for the top end of the range below what is reasonable for the scope of responsibilities that is sought.

In 1987, as the reunited church set out to create uniform personnel policies that would apply to every governing body and church-related institution, a maximum ratio of salary ranges was approved: "the highest level position should be no more than four times the range of pay for the lowest level position" (*Minutes*, 1987, Part I, paragraph 41.017).

In 1988 this standard was refined to also include no more than a three to one ratio within exempt pay ranges (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 795).

In 1998, the Task Force to Review the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Churchwide Compensation Policy Guidelines submitted its report in which it recommended abolishing the 4:1 salary ratio in Principle 9 of the 1988 Principles of Compensation. That assembly referred the matter back to the General Assembly Council (now the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board) and the task force with a recommendation to consider formula guidelines regarding salary ranges in the report of the task force.

A year later at the 211th General Assembly (1999), the task force submitted its report and recommendations and stated: "The task force concluded that formula guidelines would be too restrictive and therefore inappropriate." The assembly approved all recommendations of the task force, including revised Principles of Compensation, which are still in force today. Three of these principles are particularly relevant to this discussion of compensation in the church:

Principle Two—Mission

The fulfillment of the church's mission calls for effective, competent staff throughout the church and appropriate compensation to attract and retain them. ...

Principle Nine—Minimum Compensation

Presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly entities should establish minimum terms of call or employment for representative positions in agencies or institutions related to those bodies and review the adequacy of such minimum terms on an annual basis. Ordinarily, no employee should be compensated at a rate below applicable minimum terms. Exceptions should be reviewed on an annual basis. ...

Principle Eleven—Salary Relationships/Stewardship

The Church is one Body with varieties of gifts, and each person's contribution to its mission is important. The church recognizes the value of all varieties of service and seeks to temper the values and rewards of the marketplace. A reasonable relationship between the highest and the lowest salaries paid to all church employees honors the principle of shared community and call.

In maintaining a relationship between the highest and lowest salaries, lower levels of compensation should be comparable to or better than the average salaries paid in the marketplace, but not so far above the average that good stewardship of the church's funds is compromised. Salaries at the top levels should reflect a tempering of excessive compensation.

In establishing compensation plans and/or individual salaries, comparable salary data may include data from other national church organizations, including pension boards and foundations, academic institutions, the publishing field, pastors' salaries, and other sources as deemed appropriate by the elected bodies of the entities or the employing organization.

Salaries should not fall below a just salary that permit a church employee to maintain a decent standard of living.

Since that General Assembly, almost twenty years ago, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has followed these guidelines by offering levels of compensation that are comparable to average salaries paid in the marketplace with a generous benefits package. The 219th General Assembly (2010) received a report from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

(ACSWP), which recommended as a goal a 5:1 compensation ratio only at the Presbyterian Mission Agency, starting with new positions. That assembly approved most of the ACSWP report, but rejected the 5:1 recommendation. Item 10-13 consists of the proposal that was rejected by the 219th General Assembly (2010).

While the Presbyterian Mission Agency has not been mandated to limit its staff compensation within certain ratios, its compensation range has nonetheless narrowed from 7.5:1 (in 2010) to 6:1 (in 2015)—a level that is very comparable to, or less than, the actual ratios between the lowest paid and highest paid employee for each of the other General Assembly agencies, even though some of the lowest paid positions in the General Assembly offices are within the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

For these reasons, the Presbyterian Mission Agency continues to maintain that artificial ratios are not appropriate tools for building a just compensation system.

Item 10-14

[The assembly approved Item 10-14. See pp. 13, 44.]

2017–2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Work Plan.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the following theological foundation, vision, mission, directional goals, and core values for the Presbyterian Mission Agency as its 2017–2018 Mission Work Plan:

Theological Foundation:

The Great Ends of the Church (adapted from F-1.0304) are:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind

We share the ways God has saved us and shows God's love for all people through the good news of Jesus Christ (Mt. 10:7–8, Jn. 3:16–17, Rom. 1:16–17, Eph. 2:13–14, 1 Jn. 4:14–16).

- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God

We connect and grow as God's people, called to be a community of faith, hope, love, and witness (Jn. 15:12–15, Acts 2:41–47, Rom. 12:3–21, Eph. 4:1–5 and 15–16).

- the maintenance of divine worship

We praise God, from whom all blessings flow (2 Sam. 6:12–19, Ps. 22:22–27, Mt. 5:23–24, Jn. 4:23–26, 1 Cor. 11:23–34, Col. 3:12–17).

- the preservation of the truth

We speak truth that sets us free to love (Ps. 15, Jn. 8:31–32, Jn. 18:36–37, Eph. 4:11–15 and 6:14–15).

- the promotion of social righteousness

We follow Christ, who healed the sick, fed the hungry, freed the oppressed, and broke bread with outcasts and sinners (Mt. 9:9–14, Lk. 4:18–19 and 7:22, Jn. 1:22–2:8).

- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

And, just like Christ, we live as citizens of God's reign, offering a life-giving alternative to a broken world (Mt. 5:13–16, Rom. 12:2, 1 Pet. 2:9–10)

We recognize these to be the goals for the church, because we have been redeemed and called into ministry by Jesus Christ, because we live in gratitude for the grace given to us by God, and because we understand ourselves to be joined and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the body of Christ.

As the Presbyterian Mission Agency in 2017–2018, we know that we are not solely responsible for the achievement of all these Great Ends. We understand that our role is to be faithful stewards of God's blessings by focusing only on what the church needs from the national church today, using the unique resources of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Vision:

Presbyterians joyfully engaging in God's mission for the transformation of the world.

Mission:

Inspire, equip, and connect the PC(USA) in its many expressions to serve Christ in the world through new and existing communities of faith, hope, love, and witness.

Directional Goals:

We will inspire, equip, and connect existing and new worshiping communities to engage in God's mission through:

- **Evangelism & Discipleship**

Grow, proclaim, and live out our faith in Jesus Christ by working with our partners, here and around the world, to build communities that witness to the gospel of Christ's love for the rich diversity reflected in all humankind.

- **Servant Leader Formation**

Seek, develop, and energize diverse leaders who are answering God's call to equip the church to be a welcoming place of worship, mission, and spiritual nurture for all of God's children, especially those who have been marginalized.

- **Justice & Reconciliation**

Galvanize the church to act on issues of racism, violence and poverty as a prophetic witness to Christ's transforming justice by speaking and living out God's truth and compassion as we call ourselves and the world to account for injustice and oppression.

Core Values:

Faith, Compassion, Accountability, Teamwork, Dedication, Service, Justice.

Rationale

The General Assembly has directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the *Organization for Mission*, to “develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency” (V.c.). The Presbyterian Mission Agency fulfills this directive through presentation of the accompanying Mission Work Plan and Budget for approval.

In recent years, the Mission Work Plan covered a four-year period, while budgets were recommended to the General Assembly biennially. This Mission Work Plan is more limited in scope, and will serve as an interim work plan over the next two-to-three year period, in light of transitions in leadership for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and conversations regarding agency consolidation.

In the spring of 2015, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board established a Strategy Advisory Group of elected board members to work alongside the staff team in developing this Mission Work Plan. Work progressed steadily from June 2015 through January 2016.

In light of the decision to create an interim bridge plan, it was determined that development of a comprehensive, multi-year strategy would not be the best use of time. Whatever corporate structure for Presbyterian mission emerges after the interim period would likely develop its own comprehensive strategic plan. Therefore, effort has focused on refining the 2013–2016 Mission Work Plan, and addressing concerns that have arisen during its evaluation.

One of the most frequent observations has been the lack of theological grounding for the Mission Work Plan. Therefore, staff and the Strategy Advisory Group gave focused time to understanding and documenting a theological framework for the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, using the constitutional language of the “Great Ends of the Church.”

The Vision and Mission sections of the 2013–2016 Mission Work Plan were left unchanged in this interim plan for 2017–2018. They continue to encapsulate our hopes and calling as the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

At the heart of the Mission Work Plan are directional goals, which serve as strategic beacons for the work of the agency. In the 2013–2016 plan, effort was given to ensure that all areas of Presbyterian Mission Agency work were reflected somewhere in the strategic plan. Thus, General Assembly Engagement was a directional goal in the former plan, along with Organizational Integrity (incorporating the infrastructure provided by many of our support areas).

A major adjustment in the 2017–2018 plan, however, is a sharpening of focus. Rather than six directional goals, to which each program must find some element of alignment, there are three strategic directions for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

As a new mode of implementation, each area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's organization must develop ways that they will contribute to all of the directional goals.

The Strategy Advisory Group and staff developed a research plan that would seek input from mid council representatives, constituency groups, leaders within various ministries of the church, board members, and staff. The results of the research did not dictate the strategic directions, but they did provide crucial information regarding the context for ministry within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the more focused role that can only be played by the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The plan does not tell us which ministry areas will continue, nor is it intended to.

The directional goals build upon the work done within the 2013–2016 Mission Work Plan, and address some of the perceived shortcomings of that plan:

- The 2013–2016 Mission Work Plan seemed to have an exclusive focus on new worshiping communities, without directing attention to existing congregations. The proposed Mission Work Plan lifts up both new and existing worshiping communities as vital contexts for ministry. We expect to continue the emphasis on developing new worshiping communities, while also nurturing the vitality of existing congregations through each element of the Mission Work Plan.
- Some of the former directional goals were very general in nature. In the proposed goals, descriptors have been added that will help in narrowing the scope of the goals. The new requirement that programs have an impact in all three directional goals will also provide for more directed mission activity.

The Core Values section has been completely rewritten. The former list of core values had served the organization since 2006. As part of the new Interim Executive Director's orientation to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, staff were asked to select personal and organizational core values from an extensive list of possible values. The results of that exercise identified actual, rather than aspirational, core values for the organization. Similar responses were combined, and these seven values were the most common responses.

Conclusion

The General Assembly will consider several action items that will have impact on the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is impossible to know in advance where these proposals and the assembly's discernment will lead. Whatever the outcome, the Presbyterian Mission Agency will need strategic direction and a budget for the next two-year period. The 2017–2018 Mission Work Plan is intended to provide direction for that interim period, ensuring continuity with what has gone before, while being open to the movement of God's Spirit in the years ahead.

Item 10-15

Recommendations Pertaining to Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. *Relating to Budgets for Presbyterian Mission Agency*
 1. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Presbyterian Mission Agency Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2014 and 2015*
 2. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Revised Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget for 2016*
 3. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget for 2017 and 2018*
- B. *Relating to Reserved or Committed Funds*
Unrestricted and Committed Funds
- C. *Relating to Support for Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission*
 1. *John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds*
 2. *Special Offerings 2014 and 2015*

A. Relating to Budgets for Presbyterian Mission Agency

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation A.1. See pp. 13, 44.]

1. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Presbyterian Mission Agency Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2014 and 2015.*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) incorporate into the *Minutes* the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Receipts and Expenditures Actual Compared to Budget for 2014 and 2015.

[The display that is found in pma-budget charts as Budget Chart A1 and Budget Chart A2 is the report of actual revenue and expenditures for the years 2014 and 2015. See pp. 646–47 of the electronic version.]

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted Policy governing Mission Budgets at the General Assembly Level. That policy provides that:

- B. The General Assembly Council shall:
 - 1. Report to each General Assembly:
 - a. Actual total financial resources used to support the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program and the expenditures during the most recently completed year. (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 375)

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation A.2. See pp. 13, 44.]

2. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Revised Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget 2016.*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) receive the revised report of the 2016 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget in the total amount of \$74,828,043.

[The display that is found in pma-budget charts as Budget Chart B is the report of the Revised 2016 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget. See p. 648 of the electronic version.]

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted Policy governing Mission Budgets at the General Assembly level. That policy provides that:

- B. The General Assembly Council shall:
 - 1. Report to each General Assembly: ...
 - b. Adjustments, if any approved by the General Assembly Council for the current budget year.
 - 2. Adjust if necessary the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program as adopted by the General Assembly. (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 375)

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation A.3. See pp. 44, 73.]

3. *Presbyterian Mission Agency—Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget 2017 and 2018.*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the 2017 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget in the total amount of \$63,530,297 and the 2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget in the total amount of \$63,450,591.

[The display that is found in pma-budget charts, as Budget Chart C1, Budget Chart C2, and Budget Chart C3 is the report of the 2017 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget and Program and the 2018 Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget. See pp. 649–51 of the electronic version.]

Rationale

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted Policy Governing Mission Budgets at the General Assembly Level. That policy provides that:

- B. The General Assembly Council shall: ...
 - 3. Recommend to the General Assembly the General Assembly Mission Budget and Program for the next succeeding budget cycle. Displayed in the recommendation shall be:
 - a. All projected financial sources; and
 - b. Anticipated uses of financial resources in light of mission objectives. (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 375)

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is required by the Constitution to prepare and submit a comprehensive budget to the General Assembly. (G-3.0113).

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation B. See pp. 13, 45.]

B. *Relating to Reserved or Committed Funds*

Unrestricted and Committed Funds

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) receive the report of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation regarding unrestricted and committed funds as of December 31, 2015.

Rationale

The report of the unrestricted funds is divided between uncommitted and committed funds. The display, found in pma-budget-charts as Budget Chart D1 through Budget Chart D5 (see pp. 652–56 of the electronic file), indicates those funds as well as the activity of those funds and the status of the total reserves as of closing December 31, 2015.

The 202nd General Assembly (1990) adopted the following policy:

A. *Presbyterian Mission Program Fund*

1. A fund composed of all unrestricted and uncommitted receipts and assets intended for the support of the General Assembly mission program.
2. Sources to maintain this fund shall include all unified revenue available for the General Assembly Mission Program, including but not limited to:
 - a. unified income including receipts from congregations, presbyteries, or individuals;
 - b. unrestricted gifts, legacies, bequests
 - c. unrestricted investment income;
 - d. gift annuity excess reserves;
 - e. such nonrecurring income as the General Assembly Council shall direct by general or specific policy statement; and
 - f. under expenditure of the unified portion of the General Assembly Mission Budget.
3. The Uncommitted Funds portion of the Presbyterian Mission Program Fund at year end must be equal to at least 30% of the Unified portion and direct mission support of the General Assembly Mission Budget, which minimum provides for:
 - a. Cash flow needed for mission purposes;
 - b. Guarantee of the current unified budget. (*Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 377)

C. *Relating to Support for Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission*

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation C.1. See pp. 13, 45.]

1. *John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) allocate the annual income realized in 2015 and projected for 2016 from the John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds in support of the budget for the general mission work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Rationale

Current practice is to recommend to each General Assembly the allocation of annual income from these two funds in light of wording in the donors' wills that requires this annual process.

Portion of the will of Edmund P. Dwight (May 23, 1903):

I will and bequeath to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, to be used for the establishment of the Christian Religion, that the light of the gospel may be made to join more perfectly...

Portion of the will of John C. Lord (January 2, 1873):

...to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., for religious and charitable uses, to be called the John C. Lord Fund, the annual interest of which is to be disposed of and distributed by the said General Assembly at each annual meeting for the furtherance of the Gospel of our Blessed Saviour, at home or abroad, as the Assembly may deem best. ...

The applicable provisions of the two wills facilitate the annual income realized from these funds to be used in the Presbyterian Mission Agency General Mission Budget.

Income from these funds in 2015 were \$12,747.14 and it is projected that the income from these funds in 2016 will be approximately \$13,122.05.

[The assembly approved Item 10-15, Recommendation C.2. See pp. 13, 45.]

2. *Special Offerings 2015*

The Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) incorporate into its Minutes the following summary of receipts from Special Offerings for the years 2014 and 2015.

[The charts that are found in pma-budget charts as Budget Chart E show the summary of receipts for Special Offerings for the years 2012 and 2013. See p. 657 of the electronic version.]

Rationale

Special Offerings enable an important part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In 2014, income from these offerings totaled approximately 16 percent of total income for the mission program of the church and 37 percent of the mission gifts from congregations. In 2015 income from these offerings totaled approximately 16 percent of total income for the mission program of the church and 40 percent of the mission gifts from congregations.

Item 10-16

[The assembly disapproved Item 10-1. See pp. 41, 45.]

Commissioners' Resolution. To Withdraw the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options (PARO), a mission network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), to withdraw immediately from membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC).

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [hereafter PC(USA)] was among the founding members of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR) in 1973. In 1993, RCAR broadened its scope and changed its name to reflect this to The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC). Other mainline denominations, with positions on abortion similar to that of the PC(USA), have either chosen not to become members of RCRC (like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Disciples of Christ), or severed ties with RCRC (American Baptist Churches USA, the Northern Province of the Moravian Church, and, most recently, The United Methodist Church). The United Methodist Church 2016 General Conference directed the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Women to withdraw immediately from RCRC by a 425 to 268 vote. The United Methodist Church also was among the founding members of RCRC. In the past, three PC(USA) entities have been listed as RCRC member organizations: PARO, Women's Ministries, and the Washington Office (now known as the Office of Public Witness). Currently RCRC claims PMA and PARO as member organizations. The RCRC uses the name of our denomination in their publications and legal briefs.

The RCRC is known today as a one-sided political lobby pushing for abortion on demand throughout pregnancy. The organization opposes all restrictions on abortion and therefore supported the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which, if adopted, would have overturned all federal, state, and local laws even mildly restricting abortion. An RCRC document identifies the following as anti-choice rhetoric: abortion as birth control, abortion for convenience, abortion for gender selection, abortion on demand, adoption, baby or unborn child, fetal tissue/human embryo experimentation, fetal viability, informed consent, mother/motherhood, parental notification/consent, partial-birth abortion bans, and sacredness or sanctity of life.¹ The RCRC has consistently lobbied against any efforts to limit abortions using dilation and extraction (commonly known as partial-birth abortions). Their press release in response to the United Methodist decision shows that RCRC believes “reproductive freedom is a God-given human right.”²

By contrast, the PC(USA) policy and statements on abortion are more nuanced and display concern for both mother and child. Approved by the 204th General Assembly (1992), the PC(USA) policy on abortion, known as the “Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancy,” even says that “taken in their totality the Holy Scriptures are filled with messages that advocate respect for the woman and child before and after birth” (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 367). Among the areas of substantial agreement that form the policy are the following statements: “We are disturbed by abortions that seem to be elected only as a convenience or to ease embarrassment. We affirm that abortion should not be used as a method of birth control” (Ibid, p. 368) and “Abortion is not morally acceptable for gender selection only or solely to obtain fetal parts for transplantation” (Ibid). PC(USA) policy also expresses the following concern about the numbers of abortions performed: “The large number of abortions in this society is a grave concern to the church” (Ibid.). Moreover, the 217th General Assembly (2006) approved a statement on late-term abortion that says, “We affirm that the lives of viable unborn babies—those well-developed enough to survive outside the womb if delivered—ought to be preserved and cared for and not aborted”

(*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 905). According to RCRC thinking, current PC(USA) policies and statements engage in considerable anti-choice rhetoric and may shame women for using a God-given human right.

The RCRC has taken other positions that many Presbyterians would find extreme. The RCRC works against giving full medical information to women about abortion. They protest laws that would protect teens by ensuring parental notification before abortion procedures are performed on minors. Furthermore, RCRC does not have a Presbyterian understanding “that ‘God alone is Lord of the conscience’” (*Book of Order*, F-3.0101). Instead, they advocate for laws requiring physicians, hospitals, and pharmacists to participate in abortions and provide abortifacients even if they have moral objections based on their religious beliefs.

For the PC(USA) to withdraw from RCRC does not constitute a change in our current policy and statements on abortion as approved by previous General Assemblies. But because RCRC uses the name of the PC(USA) without making any attempt to communicate our policy and advocacy nuances, for the PMA and PARO to fail to pull out of RCRC damages our mission and witness.

Endnotes

1. “Words of Choice: Countering Anti-Choice Rhetoric,” https://web.archive.org/web/20110320103739/http://www.rcrc.org/pdf/Words_of_Choice.pdf, accessed 06/09/16.
2. “RCRC Statement on UMC Decision to Sever Ties,” http://service.meltwaternews.com/mnews/redirect.html?docId=7385479&userId=567140&cId=160590&pId=10&agentId=559575&type=3&etype=USER_CREATED&t=RCRC+Statement+on+UMC+severing+ties+w%2F+RCRC&cdt=1463773980000&sn=RCRC&cc=United+States&url=&an=Clicked+from+Archive%2C+Newsfeed%2C+or+Newsletter&ue=wgill@rcrc.org&url=, issued 05/20/16, accessed 06/09/16.

Justin L. Marple, Presbytery of Western New York
Karen Mizrahi, Presbytery of the Pacific

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-16

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-16—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) concurs with the Advice and Counsel of ACWC and advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 10-16.

The PC(USA) has, on multiple occasions, reaffirmed the moral capacity of women, who possess the most intimate knowledge of the impact of a birth, to weigh the competing goods at stake and exercise ethical judgment. This capacity is meaningless apart from medically safe places to procure a legal abortion. Waiting periods, attempts to play on women’s emotions, onerous and pointless regulation of abortion providers, etc., limit women’s God-given capacity to freely exercise their conscience.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-16

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-16—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 10-16.

Though the PC(USA) does not provide financial support to RCRC, ACREC advises that the Presbyterian Mission Agency dedicate financial and human resources to help educate church and society regarding the rights of women, including reproductive rights. The ACREC decries that racial/ethnic/new immigrant women are often disproportionately disadvantaged by the lack of funding and bias against women’s health issues including reproductive health issues.

This resolution distorts and misrepresents the mission of RCRC. The resolution falsely states: “An RCRC document identifies the following as anti-choice rhetoric: abortion as birth control, abortion for convenience, abortion for gender selection, abortion on demand, adoption, baby or unborn child, fetal tissue/human embryo experimentation, fetal viability, informed consent, mother/motherhood, parental notification/consent, partial-birth abortion bans, and sacredness or sanctity of life.”

The information on the RCRC website does not promote abortion for all the purposes cited by Item 10-16. Instead, the organization underscores the agency and rights of women to discern their options in consultation with family, physicians, and/or faith leaders. In essence, RCRC affirms women’s rights in conformity with General Assembly policies.

Below are quotes from the RCRC website:

ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE

At RCRC, we believe the decision to become a parent or become a parent again, when and under what circumstances are deeply personal decisions best left to a woman to discern for herself, in consultation with her family, her faith and others she might bring into the conversation. Becoming a parent—becoming a good parent—is an aspiration for many; likewise, abortion is irrevocably intertwined with one’s ability and desire to parent.

...

Unique Issues Facing Low-income Women & Women of Color

Since 1976 the US Congress has continued to reauthorize the Hyde amendment which prohibits federal funds from being used for abortion services with very limited exceptions. This means that women who receive their healthcare from government programs such as Medicaid are singled out and denied access to safe and legal medical care. For a woman already struggling to make ends meet, forcing her to pay out of pocket for medically unnecessary, manipulative ultrasounds—or make multiple trips to a clinic—prior to abortion care can amount to an insurmountable burden, coercively preventing her from obtaining the care she desires. Further, there are a barrage of state-level attempts to ban abortion for women who are thought to be pursuing one because of the potential race or sex of the fetus. While sexism and racism are real concerns, race and sex-selective abortion bans are a red herring. This particular policy turns women—particularly women of color—into suspects and turns doctors into unqualified investigators over a fabricated problem in America. Women facing the decision to have an abortion—whatever the reason—need compassion and support, not judgment, suspicion and denial. (<http://rcrc.org/homepage/policy/access-to-abortion-care/>).

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 10-16

Advice & Counsel on Item 10-16—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 10-16.

According to policy approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), “The church has a responsibility to provide public witness and to offer guidance, counsel, and support to those who make or interpret laws and public policies about abortion and problem pregnancies.”¹

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) provides a place where the PC(USA) can fulfill this commitment in an ecumenical and interfaith context. RCRC summarizes their identity this way: “We are a national community of religious organizations and faithful individuals dedicated to achieving reproductive justice. Through education, organizing and advocacy, we seek to elevate religious voices wherever faith, policy and our reproductive lives intersect.”²

Through RCRC, the PC(USA) can participate in ensuring that women have the ability and access to make their own intensely personal decisions about their reproductive health.

According to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy at the 218th General Assembly (2008), the PC(USA) is a member only of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and provides no financial support to it. This membership is appropriate because the RCRC literature is consistent with the PC(USA)’s 1992 policy of respect for women’s capacity “to make good moral choices in regard to problem pregnancies”³ and for public policies that protect women’s access to legal abortion. The RCRC literature quotes PC(USA) policy, as well as the policies of other denominations, and includes the following disclaimer: Coalition membership does not require or imply conformity to all the actions and initiatives of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

While not all Presbyterians agree on the particulars of the issue of abortion, PC(USA) policy supports the understanding of women as fully capable of making moral and ethical choices regarding their reproductive health. This is what it means to be “pro-choice.”⁴ As a denomination rooted in Reformed theology, the PC(USA) understands that God alone is ruler of human conscience:

That belief undergirds long-standing church policy in support of a woman’s ability and responsibility, as guided by the Holy Spirit, to make good moral choices about contraception and abortion within the limits of federal and state law. In society this is usually called a “pro-choice” policy, which allows for a woman to consider a range of options with regard to reproduction.⁵

The source for the reference above comes from a response to a referral from the 218th General Assembly (2008) from the Office of Gender and Racial Justice of the General Assembly Mission Council (now Presbyterian Mission Agency) brought to the 219th General Assembly (2010). One of four revised resource materials on reproductive options, this document was received by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and continues to serve as the most recent denominational resource on this topic, solidly based in and supported by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy. Included in these resources are multiple citations from the 1992 Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion⁶ and the 2006 policy statement of the General Assembly on Late Term Pregnancy.⁷ Also included in this resource is a note that not all Presbyterians agree on this policy and that it is not binding on the conscience of individuals but reflects the opinion of the General Assembly that approved it.⁸

As recently as the 220th General Assembly (2012), the PC(USA) affirmed the policy statement of the 204th General Assembly (1992) and in particular noted that “no law or administrative decision should limit access to abortions.”⁹

The policy approved in 1992 states: “By affirming the ability and responsibility of a woman to make good moral choices regarding problem pregnancies, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does not advocate abortion but instead acknowledges circumstances in a sinful world that may make abortion the least objectionable of difficult options.”¹⁰

The context in which we are living today in the U.S. is one where the reality is that while abortion is still legal on a federal level, state by state obstacles are being put in place to make access to obtaining an abortion incredibly difficult, including mandatory counseling, waiting periods, and targeted requirements for abortion providers.¹¹

Our Presbyterian policy, rooted in Reformed theology, compels us to work to make it possible for women to make the choices they need to make when it comes to their reproductive health, including the difficult choice to have an abortion. In an age where denominational resources are shrinking, RCRC provides a place for ecumenical and interfaith collaboration on something for which we as Presbyterians have committed to stand.

Endnotes

1. General Assembly Policy on Late-Term Pregnancy, Item 10-01, 2006: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/681>. See also *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 905.
2. <http://rcrc.org/>.
3. 1992 Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/_resolutions/problem-pregnancies.pdf. See also *Minutes*, 1992, Part I, pp. 69, 368.
4. Thorson-Smith, Sylvia. “What Does Pro-Choice Really Mean?” *Horizons*. https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/phewa/pdfs/what-does-prochoice-mean.pdf
5. *When You Need Wisdom*, Problem Pregnancy Resource approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010), 7. (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 1406).
6. 1992 Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/_resolutions/problem-pregnancies.pdf. See also *Minutes*, 1992, Part I, pp. 69, 357ff.
7. <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/681>. See also *Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 905ff.
8. *When You Need Wisdom*, Problem Pregnancy Resource approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010), 10. (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 1406).
9. “On Providing Just Access to Reproductive Health Care,” 220th General Assembly (2012) Item 21-03: <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/4141>. (See also *Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 1697.)
10. 1992 Report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/_resolutions/problem-pregnancies.pdf. See also *Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 369, Paragraph 27.102A.
11. <https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/overview-abortion-laws>.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 10-16

Comment on Item 10-16—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

A review of current materials available from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice indicates that they are consistent with General Assembly policy and accurately represent the assembly’s nuanced position on reproductive health and problem pregnancies.

Item 10-NB

[The assembly approved Item 10-NB. See pp. 13, 45.]

The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination recommends that the Office of the General Assembly review the guidelines for reviewing the minutes, as they had not been updated since the 1990s. The guidelines should reflect the computerized nature of the minutes being reviewed.

Item 10-A

[The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination approved Item 10-A. See pp. 41, 45.]

Presbyterian Mission Agency—Women of Faith Awards

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) recognize the following Women of Faith award recipients at the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

Commissioned Ruling Elder Lucy Apatiki,

Ruling Elder Sarah Noble-Moag,

Ruling Elder Clarissa Walker Whaley.

Rationale

The Women of Faith Awards were established in 1986 to honor women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whose lives exemplify their Christian commitment through witness, service, and leadership.

Each year a theme is chosen. Nominations are received from throughout the church and honorees are selected by a committee of representatives from various groups.

Awards are presented at the Women of Faith Breakfast during the General Assembly. This breakfast is a biennial celebration of God's activity in the lives of women and their response to God's presence.

The theme for this year's awards is "Women Building Bridges of Reconciliation" and it honors women who are engaged in ministries of reconciliation in the church and society.

The 2016 selection committee included Lea Lawrence-Moiso, moderator; Marcella "Marci" Glass, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board; Anna Grace Owens, Presbyterian College Women; Paulina Reyes, Racial Ethnic Young Women Ministries; Sharon Wakamoto, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team; and Susie Carter Wiggins, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns.

The selection committee members were instructed to consider the following criteria in reviewing nomination forms and in making their selection of the four women who receive this award:

- Selection of the Women of Faith awardees are based on the theme.
- How is she engaged in ministries of reconciliation?
- How has she demonstrated in her church or community her gifts of reconciliation?
- Three nominees will be selected.
- Strive for racial ethnic diversity.
- Strive for geographic diversity.
- Awardees will be women.
- Awardees will be Presbyterian.
- Current staff serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are ineligible for nomination.
- Previous award recipients are ineligible to be nominated again for the Women of Faith Award (one-time recipients; no duplications).

The election of the three honorees was approved by the Leadership Committee and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Biographical sketches of these three women are as follows:

1. *Commissioned Ruling Elder Lucy Apatiki—Gambell, Alaska, in the Presbytery of Yukon and the Synod of Alaska-Northwest.*

Apatiki was the driving force behind the reconciliation event between the people of Gambell and the Presbytery of Yukon. A fracture between the church and the community had existed since the late 1890s. It was her leadership that led to the healing of wounds caused by the early Presbyterian church's now-discredited mission policy that sought to stamp out native language and culture as part of the church's evangelization efforts in Alaska. The healing efforts resulted in the 2012 New Beginnings reconciliation event. As a sociologist and addiction counselor for the Norton Sound Health Corporation, she combines the practical aspects of service as counselor and sociologist with the theological calling of service. Her ongoing efforts in prayer and Bible study, intertwined with her compassion for people trapped by addiction, generational trauma, and other sociological ills, gives Apatiki a holistic understanding of the community's needs, and of the opportunities God provides for responding to those needs.

2. *Ruling Elder Sarah Noble-Moag—Pavillion, New York, in the Presbytery of Genesee Valley and the Synod of the North East.*

Noble-Moag is a ruling elder in the Covington Presbyterian Church and has served on the committee on ministry and Migration Working Group (a forum on immigration reform) for the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley. In her position at Noblehurst Farms, she focuses on human resource management, working with employees from the local community, Hispan-

ic/Latino-a immigrants, and Bhutanese refugees. She has built bridges of reconciliation in her community through the personal relationships she has developed with immigrants and refugees. She welcomes these new neighbors and helps others to do the same, by seeking to understand their home communities so as to best support and empower their transition to the United States. From organizing flu clinics and providing transportation for medical care to ensuring that employees have a safe, just, and equitable work environment and that immigrant children have equal access to the Universal Pre-K program, Noble-Moag has witnessed to her faith and understanding, strengthened her rural community, and taught others to build relationships across cultural dividing walls.

3. *Ruling Elder Clarissa Walker Whaley—Charleston, South Carolina, in the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic and the Synod of South Atlantic.*

Whaley serves as a ruling elder at the historic St. James Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Charleston. In 2011, she was appointed moderator for the Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery. In that role, she helped guide congregations in the presbytery through the discernment process as they weighed whether to leave the PC(USA) because of theological differences within the denomination. Ultimately only one congregation sought dismissal, while the others reconciled all issues and remained in the presbytery. As a victim services professional for the United States Department of Justice-Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of South Carolina, Whaley serves the needs of crime victims through referral services, advocacy education, and community outreach. Most recently, she spent intimate moments with victims from the mass murders at Mother Emmanuel AME Church. Whaley serves with compassion while providing hope and healing to those who face the harshness of society. She promotes healing among victims and participates in the restoration of confidence in humankind. Whaley walked with those who offered forgiveness for the horrific crime committed June 17, 2015, in the city of Charleston.

Item 10-B

[The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination approved Item 10-B. with comment. See pp. 41, 45–46.]

Minutes. PC(USA), A Corporation.

[Comment: From the electronic versions, it was not possible to determine whether three conditions were met: (1) was there a calendar year submission, (2) were they submitted to General Assembly on the first day, and (3) were the minutes deposited with the Department of History? Perhaps the minutes protocol should additionally include a certification block that verifies these three conditions were met.

[Additionally, Subcommittee member, Kenneth Whitehurst, requested his comments from his review of the Minutes of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board’s Executive Committee be added to these considerations:

[1. Called Meeting Full Record June 4, 2015—10:00 a.m. EDT—Teleconference: No differentiation among who are members, who is staff, who is visitor. An attorney was present but not classified. Page numbering required by General Guideline 10 was not present. Marginal topic headings (Style Guideline #3) indicating “Public Session” or “Closed Session” might be helpful.

[2. Called Meeting Full Record July 14, 2015—6:00 p.m. EDT—Teleconference: These minutes do not indicate an appointment of a clerk pro tem, nor who called the roll; minutes are unsigned by anyone. Page numbering is missing, and depending on the eventual placement of signatures on page 2, a slash may be required per General Guideline 11.

[The Subcommittee on Minutes would also like to recognize each reviewer’s efforts in contributing to a total of fifty-one reviews of minutes:

[Johnson, Tonya: 2014-06 PC(USA) Corp Exec Minutes; 2014-11 PC(USA) Corp Exec Minutes; 2015-06 PC(USA) Corp Exec Minutes; 2015-07-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-08-28 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-09-09 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-09-14 PMAB Exec Minutes.

[Schaeffer, R. Jill: 2014-09-29 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-11-10 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-11-20 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-12-11 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-01-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-02-20 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-03-04 PMAB Exec Minutes.

[Leavell, Theodore: 2014-02 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2014-04 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2014-09 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-04 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-06 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-09 PC(USA) Corp Minutes; 2015-09-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-11-19 PMAB Exec Minutes.

[Segers, Grace: 2015-03-25 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-04-08 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-04-10 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-04-15 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-05-06 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-05-22 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-05-31 PMAB Exec Minutes.

[Lee, Richard: 2014-02 PMAB Minutes; 2014-04 PMAB Minutes; 2014-09 PMAB Minutes; 2014-10 PMAB Minutes; 2015-04 PMAB Minutes; 2015-09 PMAB Minutes; 2015-11 PMAB Minutes; 2015-12 PMAB Minutes.

[Whitehurst, Kenneth: 2015-06-04 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-12 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-16 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-18 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-06-25 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-07-08 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2015-07-14 PMAB Exec Minutes.

[Pospichal, Amy: 2014-01-16 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-02-05 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-04-02 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-04-23 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-06-13 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-08-28 PMAB Exec Minutes; 2014-09-16 PMAB Exec Minutes.]

Item 10-C

[The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination approved Item 10-C. See pp. 41, 46.]

Audit. [See p. 658 of the electronic version of the *Minutes*.]

Item 10-D

[The Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination approved Item 10-D with amendment. See pp. 41, 46.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reports the recipients of the Sam and Helen R. Walton Awards for 2015 and [2016 and] recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) recognize the recipients as outstanding new church developments:

[2015]

1. Camino de Vida, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Synod of the Southwest, Presbytery of Santa Fe
2. The Fellowship Place, Charlotte, North Carolina, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Presbytery of Charlotte
3. Northland Village Church, Los Angeles, California, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Presbytery of San Fernando

[2016]

[4. First Thai-Laotian Presbyterian Church, Synod of the Pacific, Presbytery of Nevada]

Rationale

In late December 1991, Sam and Helen Walton made a generous gift through the Presbyterian Foundation of \$6 million that included \$3 million to be used for new church developments that have placed an emphasis on site acquisitions. All nominees must meet the qualifications as set forth in the application. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, acting on behalf of the General Assembly between meetings, approved the above recipients.

Item 10-Info

A. Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress

2015 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis

Overview

By action of the 197th General Assembly (1985), the Presbyterian Mission Agency is required to report annually the equal opportunity information of all PC(USA) agencies, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods.

At the request of the Office of Human Resources, Research Services handled the collection of data for the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis for 2014. Based on the success of web-based data collection for previous years, we followed similar procedures for 2014.

The web-based data collection instrument was developed, tested, and deployed by Research Services. A point of contact in each organization or entity was invited by email to provide data for the organization. (The original invitation is included here as Attachment A.) An initial email invitation was sent January 14, 2016. Two reminder emails were sent to all non-responding organizations on January 17 and January 20, 2016. Responses were accepted until January 22, 2016.

Invited Organizations

The following agencies and organizations were requested to provide their workforce analysis data: Board of Pensions; Presbyterian Mission Agency; Hubbard Press; Jarvie Commonweal Service; Presbyterian Church Foundation; Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc.; Presbyterian Publishing Corporation; Office of the General Assembly; and all conference centers, theological institutions, presbyteries, and synods associated with the PC(USA).

Response Rate

Of 211 invited organizations, data were received from 111 organizations, for a response rate of 53 percent. Attachment B shows organizations that provided their data. Of responding organizations, all (100 percent) used the web form.

Results

Attachment C shows the results for responding organizations and presents the percentages of employees by gender and racial ethnic category.

Table 1 (below) summarizes this information and provides similar data for 2005 for comparison. It is interesting that in all but one category covered by the report, the number of employees has decreased since 2005—in many cases a substantial reduction. The exception is the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Inc., which did not increase or decrease between 2005 and 2015. In terms of the percentage of racial ethnic staff (non-white) and women, there has been little change overall among all PC(USA) staff, but substantial changes within some categories.

Table 1
Change in Staffing Patterns, 2005 to 2015

	<u>2005</u>			<u>2015</u>			<u>Change</u>		
	<i>Number of Staff</i>	<i>Racial-Ethnic</i>	<i>% Women</i>	<i>Number of Staff</i>	<i>Racial-Ethnic</i>	<i>% Women</i>	<i>Number of Staff</i>	<i>Racial-Ethnic</i>	<i>% Women</i>
<i>Board of Pensions</i>	191	35%	67%	180	34%	66%	-11	-1%	-1%
<i>Presbyterian Mission Agency</i>	464	26%	71%	262	27%	67%	-202	+1%	-4%
<i>Office of the General Assembly</i>	68	22%	71%	56	30%	68%	-12	+8%	-3%
<i>Presbyterian Foundation</i>	105	21%	62%	61	19%	64%	-44	-2%	+2%
<i>Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program</i>	13	8%	69%	13	31%	85%	0	+23%	+16%
<i>Presbyterian Publishing Corporation</i>	34	24%	53%	26	23%	69%	-8	-1%	+16%
<i>Hubbard Press</i>	16	0%	63%	10	30%	50%	-6	+30%	-13%
<i>Jarvie Commonweal Service</i>	15	33%	60%	12	33%	75%	-3	0%	+15%
<i>Conference Centers:</i>									
<i>All reporting (4/2)*</i>	186	28%	62%	94	61%	54%	-92	+33%	-8%
<i>Mean per reporting organization</i>	46			42			-4		
<i>Presbyteries:</i>									
<i>All reporting (133/91)*</i>	1,138	14%	63%	565	13%	58%	-573	-1%	-5%
<i>Mean per reporting organization</i>	9			6			-3		
<i>Synods:</i>									
<i>All reporting (12/6)*</i>	77	16%	61%	22	14%	59%	-55	-2%	-2%
<i>Mean per reporting organization</i>	6			8			+2		
<i>Theological Institutions:</i>									
<i>All reporting (5/4)*</i>	488	26%	54%	441	22%	51%	-47	-4%	-3%
<i>Mean per reporting organization</i>	98			78			-20		
Total	2,795	21%	63%	1,930	24%	61%	-865	+3%	-2%

*Numbers in parentheses show the number of organizations in the category that reported in 2005 and in 2015. Looking at change when the number of reporting entities has changed could lead to inaccurate conclusions and should be done cautiously.

Recommendations for the Future

With the short turnaround time that we had this year, we still had about the same level of participation. However, during General Assembly years we may need to begin the process in December or possibly late November, depending on holidays and vacations.



Prepared by:
 Research
 Services
 A Ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency
 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 January 28, 2016

Attachment A

Original Email Invitation and Sample Form

From: Research Services

Subject Line: Important 2015 EEO/AA Workforce Analysis Information Needed

The Presbyterian Mission Agency requests your workforce analysis data for the 2015 EEO/AA Workforce Analysis Report (the numbers of full-time and part-time, exempt and non-exempt employees by gender and race/ethnicity for last year). We are **required** to compile and report the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) workforce analysis data under the General Assembly’s directive and commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (197th General Assembly (1985), *Minutes*, 1985, Part 1, pg. 202, Oversight of Equal Employment Opportunity Implementation, 27.149).

We are compiling this information electronically again this year. Please click on the link below to begin.

You may have received multiple emails if you are responsible for reporting on several organizations. Each one will have a unique link, so please be aware of that when entering your information.

Begin

The deadline for your organization’s information is Wednesday, January 20, 2016.

If you need additional information or have questions, please contact me (800-728-7228, ext. 5710, or Lisa.Robbins@pcusa.org).

If you have trouble with the survey Web site, please contact Research Services (800-728-7228, ext. 2040 or research@pcusa.org).

We appreciate your assistance and cooperation.

Lisa Robbins
 Human Resources Director
 Presbyterian Mission Agency

EEO/AA End-of-Year Report

First, provide data about your organization’s exempt employees, those not eligible for overtime pay.

Q-1a. Please report your total number of exempt *male* employees in each category below—*regular full-time* and *regular part-time* exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Exempt Males:	Full-time	Part-time
American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Asian (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Hispanic and/or Latino males.....	_____	_____
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
White (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____

Q-1b. Please report your total number of exempt *female* employees in each category—*regular full-time* and *regular part-time* exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Exempt Females:	Full-time	Part-time
American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Asian (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Hispanic and/or Latina females.....	_____	_____

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latina) females _____
 Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latina) females _____
 White (not Hispanic/Latina) females _____

Second, provide data about your organization’s non-exempt employees, those eligible for overtime pay.

Q-2a. Please report your total number of non-exempt **male** employees in each category below—**regular full-time** and **regular part-time** non-exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Non-exempt Males:	Full-time	Part-time
American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Asian (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Hispanic and/or Latino males.....	_____	_____
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____
White (not Hispanic/Latino) males.....	_____	_____

Q-2b. Please report your total number of non-exempt **female** employees in each category below—**regular full-time** and **regular part-time** non-exempt employees. If you have no employees in a given category, enter “0” (zero).

Non-exempt Females:	Full-time	Part-time
American Indian and or Native Alaskan (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Asian (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Black and/or African American (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Hispanic and/or Latina females.....	_____	_____
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
Two or more races (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____
White (not Hispanic/Latina) females.....	_____	_____

Definitions for Use in Completing the Form

Racial Ethnic Categories: These are current categories defined by the federal government for EEO AA reporting. Note that each employee can be counted in only **one** category.

- **American Indian and/or Alaska Native (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black and/or African American (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic and/or Latino:** All persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **Two or More Races (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons who identify with more than one of the other racial categories.
- **White (not Hispanic and/or Latino):** All persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Other Definitions:

- **Exempt:** Employees who are **not** entitled to overtime pay (i.e., professional staff including clergy).
- **Non-exempt:** Employees who are entitled to overtime pay (e.g., secretarial, clerical, and custodial staff).
- **Full-time:** Employees who work at least 30 hours weekly.
- **Part-time:** Employees who work fewer than 30 hours weekly.

Questions? Call Lisa Robbins at 800-728-7228, ext. 5710

Trouble with the survey? Call Research Services at 800-728-7228, ext. 2040

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Completed forms may be returned by fax. Please provide your contact information:

Organization: _____

Your name: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax completed form to: (502) 569-8736.

Thank you for your help!

**Attachment B
2015 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Analysis**

Responding Presbyteries

Abingdon	Florida	Minnesota Valleys	Santa Barbara
Baltimore	Foothills	Mission Mississippi	Santa Fe Savannah
Blackhawk	Geneva	Muskingum Valley	Scioto Valley
Boise Carlisle	Giddings-Lovejoy	National Capital Nevada	Shenandoah
Cayuga-Syracuse	Grace	New Covenant	Shenango
The Cascades	Hanmi		Southeastern Illinois
Central Florida	Heartland	New Hope	Susquehanna Valley
Central Nebraska	Huntingdon	Newton	Tampa Bay
Central Washington	The James	Northumberland	Transylvania
Charlotte	John Calvin	Northern Kansas	Tres Rios
Cherokee	The John Knox	Northern New England	Upper Ohio Valley
Chicago	Kendall	Olympia	Utah
Cimarron	Kiskiminetas	Palisades	Utica
Cincinnati	Lake Erie	Palo Duro	Wabash Valley
Coastal Carolina	Lake Huron	Plains And Peaks	West Virginia
Donegal	Long Island	Prospect Hill	Western Colorado
East Tennessee	Los Ranchos	Providence	Western Kentucky
Eastern Korean	Mackinac	St Andrew	Whitewater Valley
Eastern Oklahoma	Mid-Kentucky	St Augustine	Winnebago
Eastern Oregon	Mid-South	Salem	Wyoming
Eastminster	Midwest Hanmi	San Fernando	Yukon
Flint River	Milwaukee	San Gabriel	

Non-Responding Presbyteries

Albany	Genesee Valley	Mississippi	Northern Waters
Alaska	Grand Canyon	Missouri River Valley	The Pacific
Arkansas	Great Rivers	Missouri Union	Presbiterio Del Noroeste
Atlantic Korean	Greater Atlanta	Monmouth	Ohio Valley
Beaver-Butler	Holston	New Brunswick	Peace River
Boston	Homestead	New Castle	The Peaks
Charleston-Atlantic	Hudson River	New Harmony	Philadelphia
Dakota	Indian Nations	New York City	Pines
de Cristo	The Inland Northwest	Newark	Pittsburgh
Denver	Lackawanna	North Alabama	Riverside
Des Moines	Lake Michigan	North Central Iowa	San Joaquin

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

Detroit	Lehigh	North Puget Sound	Presbiterio De San Juan
East Iowa	Maumee Valley	Northeast Georgia	Pueblo
Eastern Virginia	Miami	Northern New York	Redstone
Elizabeth	Middle Tennessee	Northern Plains	The Redwoods
Sacramento	Sierra Blanca	Presbiterio Del Suroeste Stockton	West Jersey
San Diego	South Alabama South Dakota	Trinity	Western New York
San Francisco	South Louisiana Southern Kansas	Tropical Florida Twin Cities	Western North Carolina
San Jose	Southern New England	Area Washington	The Western Reserve Yellowstone
Seattle			
Sheppards & Lapsley			

Responding Synods

Synod of Alaska-Northwest	Synod of South Atlantic
Synod of Living Waters	Synod of The Southwest
Synod of The Rocky Mountains	Synod of The Trinity

Non-Responding Synods

Sinodo Boriquen En Puerto Rico	Synod of Mid-Atlantic
Synod of The Covenant	Synod of The Northeast
Synod of Lakes And Prairies	Synod of The Pacific
Synod of Lincoln Trails	Synod of Southern California and Hawaii
Synod of Mid-America	Synod of The Sun

Responding Theological Institutions

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary	Princeton Theological Seminary
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary	Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Auburn Theological Seminary	

Non-Responding Theological Institutions

Columbia Theological Seminary	McCormick Theological Seminary
Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary	San Francisco Theological Seminary
Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico	Union Theological Seminary

Responding Conference Centers

Ghost Ranch—Abiquiu	Stony Point Center
---------------------	--------------------

Responding Agencies and Other Organizations

Board of Pensions	Jarvie Commonweal Service
Presbyterian Church Foundation	Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Mission Agency	Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program
Hubbard Press	Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

		Exempt										Non-Exempt										Grand					
		Male					Female					Total Ex-		Male					Female					Total Non-Exempt		Grand Total	Grand
		Full	Part	Total	To-	Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Total	Full	Part	Total	To-	Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Total	Total					
PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY	Native American	0	1	1	0.4	0	0	0	0.0	1	0.4	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0.4		
	Asian	4	0	4	1.5	8	0	8	3.1	1	4.6	0	0	0	0.0	3	0	3	1.1	3	1.1	15	5.7				
	African American	8	0	8	3.1	1	0	1	6.1	2	9.2	2	0	2	0.8	1	2	1	4.6	1	5.3	38	14.5				
	Hispanic	3	0	3	1.1	6	0	6	2.3	9	3.4	0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	0.8	2	0.8	11	4.2				
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Racial	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
		2	0	2	0.8	3	0	3	1.1	5	1.9	1	0	1	0.4	0	0	0	0.0	1	0.4	6	2.3				
Totals		5	0	5	21.4	9	0	9	36.3	15	57.6	6	3	9	3.4	2	4	3	11.8	4	15.3	19	72.9				
Total Racial Ethnic Women		7	1	7	28.2	12	0	12	48.9	20	77.1	9	3	1	4.6	4	6	4	18.3	6	22.9	26	100.0				
		1	1	1	6.9	3	0	3	12.6	5	19.5	3	0	3	1.1	1	2	1	6.5	2	7.6	71	27.1				
						12	0	12	48.9							4	6	4	18.3			17	67.2				
OGA Will report on Monday	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
	Asian	1	0	1	1.8	0	1	1	1.8	2	3.6	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.6				
	African American	0	0	0	0.0	6	0	6	10.7	6	10.7	2	0	2	3.6	5	0	5	8.9	7	12.5	13	23.2				
	Hispanic	1	0	1	1.8	0	0	0	0.0	1	1.8	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.8				
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Racial	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
		0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	1.8	1	1.8	1	1.8				
Totals		1	0	1	19.6	1	2	2	37.5	3	57.1	1	2	3	5.4	4	0	4	7.1	7	12.5	39	69.6				
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	0	1	23.2	2	3	2	50.0	4	73.2	3	2	5	8.9	1	0	1	17.9	1	26.8	56	100.0				
		2	0	2	3.6	6	1	7	12.5	9	16.1	3	2	2	3.6	6	0	6	10.7	8	14.3	17	30.4				
						2	3	2	50.0							1	0	1	17.9			38	67.9				
CONFERENCE CENTERS 2 reporting	Native American	1	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0.0	1	1.1	3	0	3	3.2	0	1	1	1.1	4	4.3	5	5.3				
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	1.1	1	1.1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1				
	African American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5	6	6.4	1	2	3	3.2	9	9.6	9	9.6				
	Hispanic	2	0	2	2.1	7	0	7	7.4	9	9.6	9	4	1	13.8	1	6	1	19.1	3	33.0	40	42.6				
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Racial	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
		0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	2.1	2	2.1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.1				
Totals		8	1	9	9.6	9	1	1	10.6	1	20.2	2	7	9	9.6	3	6	9	9.6	1	19.1	37	39.4				
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	1	1	12.8	1	1	2	21.3	3	34.0	1	1	3	33.0	1	1	3	33.0	6	66.0	94	100.0				
		3	0	3	3.2	1	0	1	10.6	1	13.8	1	9	2	23.4	1	9	2	23.4	4	46.8	57	60.6				
						1	1	2	21.3							1	1	3	33.0			51	54.3				
SYNODS 6 reporting	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	1	1	4.5	1	4.5	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5				
	Asian	1	0	1	4.5	0	0	0	0.0	1	4.5	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5				
	African American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
	Hispanic	1	0	1	4.5	0	0	0	0.0	1	4.5	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5				
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Racial	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
		0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				
Totals		5	2	7	31.8	6	3	9	40.9	1	72.7	0	0	0	0.0	2	1	3	13.6	3	13.6	19	86.4				
Total Racial Ethnic Women		7	2	9	40.9	6	4	1	45.5	1	86.4	0	0	0	0.0	2	1	3	13.6	3	13.6	22	100.0				
		2	0	2	9.1	0	1	1	4.5	3	13.6	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	13.6				
						6	4	1	45.5							2	1	3	13.6			13	59.1				

Attachment C: 2015 Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Workforce Staff Analysis Report

1/28/2016

		Exempt										Non-Exempt										Grand Total	Grand							
		Male					Female					Total Ex-					Male							Female					Total Non-Exempt	
		Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Total	Total	Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Full	Part	Total			To-	Total	Total	Total			
		tal %	Time	Time		Time	tal %	Time	Time		Time	%		tal %	Time	Time		Time	tal %	Time	Time				Time	%				
PRESBYTERIES 91 reporting	Native American	5	1	6	1.1	2	0	2	0.4	8	1.4	0	0	0	0.0	4	2	6	1.1	6	1.1	14	2.5							
	Asian	6	0	6	1.1	2	0	2	0.4	8	1.4	0	1	1	0.2	0	1	1	0.2	2	0.4	10	1.8							
	African American	3	2	5	0.9	1	1	1	1.9	1	2.8	0	6	6	1.1	7	5	1	2.1	1	3.2	34	6.0							
	Hispanic	4	2	6	1.1	2	1	3	0.5	9	1.6	0	1	1	0.2	3	1	4	0.7	5	0.9	14	2.5							
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Rac-	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	0.2	1	0.2	1	0.2							
		0	0	0	0.0	0	1	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2							
		9	7	17	30.1	8	8	17	30.8	34	60.9	7	2	3	6.2	3	7	11	19.8	14	26.0	49	86.9							
Totals		10	8	19	34.2	10	8	19	34.2	38	68.3	7	3	4	7.6	4	8	13	24.1	17	31.7	56	100.0							
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	5	2	4.1	1	3	1	3.4	4	7.4	0	8	8	1.4	1	9	2	4.2	3	5.7	74	13.1							
						10	8	19	34.2							4	8	13	24.1			32	58.2							
THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS 4 reporting	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	7	1	8	1.8	8	1.8	0	0	0	0.0	1	1	2	0.5	2	0.5	10	2.3							
	African American	1	0	1	2.5	1	1	1	3.4	2	5.9	1	1	1	3.9	7	0	7	1.6	2	5.4	50	11.3							
	Hispanic	6	0	6	1.4	3	0	3	0.7	9	2.0	1	0	1	2.7	7	1	8	1.8	2	4.5	29	6.6							
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Rac-	1	0	1	0.2	1	0	1	0.2	2	0.5	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.5							
		0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	0.5	2	0.5	1	0	1	0.2	1	0	1	0.2	2	0.5	4	0.9							
		10	1	12	27.7	9	1	11	25.2	23	52.8	4	3	4	10.2	6	4	6	15.4	11	25.6	34	78.5							
Totals		12	1	14	31.7	12	1	14	31.7	28	63.5	7	4	7	17.0	8	6	8	19.5	16	36.5	44	100.0							
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	0	1	4.1	2	2	2	6.6	4	10.7	2	1	3	6.8	1	2	1	4.1	4	10.9	95	21.5							
						12	1	14	31.7							8	6	8	19.5			22	51.2							
HUBBARD PRESS	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
	African American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	20.0	2	20.0	2	20.0							
	Hispanic	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	10.0	1	10.0	1	10.0							
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Rac-	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
		0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
		3	0	3	30.0	0	0	0	0.0	3	30.0	2	0	2	20.0	2	0	2	20.0	4	40.0	7	70.0							
Totals		3	0	3	30.0	0	0	0	0.0	3	30.0	2	0	2	20.0	5	0	5	50.0	7	70.0	10	100.0							
Total Racial Ethnic Women		0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	3	0	3	30.0	3	30.0	3	30.0							
						0	0	0	0.0							5	0	5	50.0			5	50.0							
PPC	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	7.7	2	7.7	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	7.7							
	African American	1	0	1	3.8	2	0	2	7.7	3	11.5	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	11.5							
	Hispanic	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	3.8	1	3.8	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.8							
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2 or More Rac-	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
		0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0							
		7	0	7	26.9	1	0	1	50.0	2	76.9	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	20	76.9							
Totals		8	0	8	30.8	1	0	1	69.2	2	100.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	26	100.0							
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	0	1	3.8	5	0	5	19.2	6	23.1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	23.1							
						1	0	1	69.2							0	0	0	0.0			18	69.2							

Note: Figures include data received as of 2/27/2015.

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

		Exempt										Non-Exempt										Grand Total	Grand
		Male				Female				Total		Male				Female				Total Non-Exempt			
		Full	Part	Total	To-	Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Total	Full	Part	Total	To-	Full	Part	Total	To-	Total	Total		
PILP	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	7.7	1	7.7	2	15.4
	African American	1	0	1	7.7	0	0	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	7.7
	Hispanic	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	7.7
		1	0	1	7.7	5	0	5	38.5	6	46.2	0	0	0	0.0	3	0	3	23.1	3	23.1	9	69.2
	Totals		2	0	2	15.4	7	0	7	53.8	9	69.2	0	0	0	0.0	4	0	4	30.8	4	30.8	13	100.0
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	0	1	7.7	2	0	2	15.4	3	23.1	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	7.7	1	7.7	4	30.8
						7	0	7	53.8							4	0	4	30.8			11	84.6
BOP	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	1.1	2	1.1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.1
	Asian	3	0	3	1.7	6	0	6	3.3	9	5.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	5.0
	African American	5	0	5	2.8	1	0	1	10.6	2	13.3	1	0	1	0.6	1	0	1	8.3	1	8.9	40	22.2
	Hispanic	1	0	1	0.6	2	0	2	1.1	3	1.7	0	0	0	0.0	2	0	2	1.1	2	1.1	5	2.8
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	or More Races	1	0	1	0.6	4	0	4	2.2	5	2.8	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	2.8
	Totals		4	0	4	26.1	5	1	5	32.8	10	58.9	3	0	3	1.7	1	0	1	5.6	1	7.2	11	66.1
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	0	1	5.6	3	0	3	18.3	4	23.9	1	0	1	0.6	1	0	1	9.4	1	10.0	6	33.9
						9	1	9	51.1							2	0	2	15.0			11	66.1
FOUNDATION	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	African American	2	0	2	3.3	4	0	4	6.6	6	9.8	1	0	1	1.6	5	0	5	8.2	6	9.8	12	19.7
	Hispanic	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	or More Races	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Totals		1	0	1	27.9	2	1	2	39.3	4	67.2	2	0	2	3.3	6	0	6	9.8	8	13.1	49	80.3
Total Racial Ethnic Women		1	0	1	31.1	2	1	2	45.9	4	77.0	3	0	3	4.9	1	0	1	18.0	1	23.0	6	100.0
						2	1	2	45.9							1	0	1	18.0			39	63.9
JARVIE COMMONWEALTH SERVICE	Native American	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Asian	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	African American	1	0	1	8.3	1	0	1	8.3	2	16.7	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	16.7
	Did not report	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	8.3	1	8.3	1	0	1	8.3	0	0	0	0.0	1	8.3	2	16.7
	Hispanic	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl. 2	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Totals		1	0	1	8.3	7	0	7	58.3	8	66.7	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	66.7
Total Racial Ethnic Women		2	0	2	16.7	9	0	9	75.0	1	91.7	1	0	1	8.3	0	0	0	0.0	1	8.3	12	100.0
		1	0	1	8.3	2	0	2	16.7	3	25.0	1	0	1	8.3	0	0	0	0.0	1	8.3	4	33.3
						9	0	9	75.0							0	0	0	0.0			9	75.0

		Exempt										Non-Exempt															
		Male					Female					Total		Male					Female					Total Non-Exempt		Grand Total	Grand
		Full	Part	Total	To-		Full	Part	Total	To-		Total	Total	Full	Part	Total	To-		Full	Part	Total	To-		Total	Total		
tal	%	Time			tal	%	Time			%		tal	%	Time			tal	%	Time			%					
CHURCHWIDE TOTALS	Native American	6	2	8	0.5	4	1	5	0.3	1	0.7	3	0	3	0.2	4	3	7	0.4	1	0.6	23	1.3				
	Asian	1	0	1	0.9	2	2	2	1.7	4	2.5	0	1	1	0.1	4	2	6	0.3	8	0.5	52	3.0				
	African American	3	2	3	2.0	7	2	7	4.2	10	6.2	2	1	3	2.0	5	9	6	3.6	9	5.5	20	11.7				
	Hispanic	1	2	2	1.1	2	1	2	1.3	4	2.5	2	5	2	1.5	2	8	3	2.0	6	3.6	10	6.0				
	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.	1	0	1	0.1	1	0	1	0.1	2	0.1	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	0.1	1	0.1	3	0.2				
	2 or More Races	3	0	3	0.2	1	1	1	0.7	1	0.9	2	0	2	0.1	2	0	2	0.1	4	0.2	20	1.1				
Totals		42	10	53	30.5	55	11	67	38.6	120	69.2	11	6	17	10.1	24	11	36	20.7	53	30.8	174	100.0				
Total Racial Ethnic Women		7	6	8	4.6	13	7	14	8.3	22	13.0	5	1	6	3.9	9	2	11	6.5	18	10.4	40	23.4				
						55	11	67	38.6							24	11	36	20.7			103	59.4				

B. Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees

As instructed by the 204th General Assembly (1992), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board presents to the General Assembly, the work of all task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency, its divisions, or other assembly entities (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, pp. 144, 147, 277–278).

All ministries and the Executive Director's Office were requested to disclose information on how many task forces, work groups, ad hoc committees, and similar bodies were currently at work in their area. Seventy-three such groups are currently operating. Fifty-seven of the groups were reported as having ongoing responsibilities. The other sixteen groups have set completion dates with a written report expected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board or the General Assembly. Whenever it is possible, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board assigns tasks to an existing part of its structure. All persons serving on a board, committee, task force, or work group with an expected life of more than two years are selected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process.

1. *Compassion, Peace & Justice*

Ongoing responsibilities: Mission Responsibility Through Investment, Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy—In all but g. (below), the liaison member of ACSWP serving on each team will continue to track the posting, publishing, and other implementation of reports after the General Assembly, but the teams themselves will be dismissed with thanks for their volunteer service.

a. Peace Discernment Steering Team—Provisional Report to 221st General Assembly (2014) (A confirming vote is projected to take place in 2016, but the steering team will not be active or receive funding during the 2014 and 2016 period.)

b. Tax Reform Study Team—Report to the 221st General Assembly (2014).

c. Advisors for Unbound: An interactive journal of Christian Social Justice, both from the church more broadly and from staff in the building. Face-to-face meetings of outside church advisors only at General Assembly and Big Tent, with staff advisors meeting periodically in the Presbyterian Center.

d. Two-state situation in Israel Palestine: This is a five-person study team, which reports to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

e. Cuba Study Ad Hoc Committee: This committee includes the most members of ACSWP, plus four representatives of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba, four representatives of the Cuba Partners Network, and staff from both World Mission and ACSWP. This group will report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

f. Drug Policy Reform Task Force: This seven-member task force will report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

g. Sustainable Development and Precautionary Principle: This six-person team will request an extension of their time to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

h. End of Life Concerns: This eight-member study team will report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

i. Human Trafficking: This eight-member study team will report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

2. *Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women*

Women of Color Consultation Planning Committee [ended in November 2015 after the consultation]; Consultation on Developing Regional Racial Ethnic Ministries Planning Team [ended in May 2015 after the consultation]; Churchwide Conference on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Planning Team [ends with the 222nd General Assembly (2016)]; Churchwide Antiracism Policy Revision Team [ends with the 222nd General Assembly (2016)].

Ongoing responsibilities: National Black Presbyterian Caucus, National Hispanic Latino Presbyterian Caucus, Native American Consulting Committee, National Council of Korean Presbyterian Churches, Coordinating Committee on Korean American Presbyteries, Korean English Ministries (EM) Network, National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus, National Asian Presbyterian Council, President's Roundtable of the Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Coordinating Team, National Cambodian Presbyterian Council, National Chinese Presbyterian Council, National Filipino Presbyterian Council, National Taiwanese Presbyterian Council, National Thai Presbyterian Council, National Vietnamese Presbyterian Council, National Burmese Presbyterian Council, National Indonesian Presbyterian Council, National Laotian Presbyterian Council, African Immigrants Network, Southeast Asian Network, Racial Ethnic Caucuses and

Councils, Presbyterian Intercultural Network, Presbyterian Intercultural Young Adult Network, National Black Presbyterian Women, National Hispanic Latina Presbyterian Women, National Asian Presbyterian Women, National Korean Presbyterian Women, African Presbyterian Women, Native American Presbyterian Women, Native American Presbyterian Men, National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Men, National Asian Youth Council, National Korean Youth Council, American Indian Youth Council, National Taiwanese Presbyterian Young Adult Council Taiwanese English Ministries Network, Mission Development Resource Committee, Domestic Mission Task Force DREAM Team.

3. *Theology, Formation, and Evangelism*

Ongoing responsibilities: Stony Point Center Governing Board and Committee on Theological Education. Reporting to the 222nd General Assembly (2016): Urban Roundtable Task Force.

4. *World Mission*

Ongoing responsibility: Human Trafficking Work Group, Mission Personnel and Partner Security Task Force, U.S. Advisory Committee/Jinshian Memorial Program, Women's Stop Sexual Violence Roundtable, Training Leaders for Community Transformation Advisory Team.

5. *Executive Director's Office*

Presbyterian Mission Agency Self-Study Steering Committee—ended in spring 2015. Mission Work Plan Strategy Work Group—ends in spring 2016.

Ongoing responsibility: The Mid Council Advisory Board is a representative group of mid council leaders who meet with Presbyterian Mission Agency staff leaders to discuss ways that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the mid councils can work together in partnership; Presbyterian Mission Agency and Presbyterian Foundation Working Group was formed to strengthen the working relationship between the two agencies.

6. *Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC)*

Ongoing responsibility: Women of Color Joint Working Group

7. *Funds Development Ministry*

Special Offerings Advisory Task Force—Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

8. *Shared Services*

Ongoing responsibilities: Ghost Ranch Governing Board.

C. *Report of Changes to the Appendices of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations*

The *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* states that, “The Presbyterian Mission Agency may change those appendices to the *Manual of Operations* that are within its purview. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee shall submit a written report of changes to the appendixes to the next General Assembly.”

In accordance with the above, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee reports the following changes to the appendixes of the *Manual of Operations*, as approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board between the 221st General Assembly (2014) and the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

1. Amended Appendix 1B, Section I.A. by adding a new section “9.” so that I.A. reads as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“I. Chair

“A. Duties:

- “1. Preside at meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.
- “2. Be a member of and chair the Executive Committee.
- “3. Guide the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities identified in the Organization for Mission.
- “4. Appoint a member of the Executive Committee and three Board members to serve with the Board vice-chair as members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee's Personnel Subcommittee. The Board vice-chair will serve as chair of the Personnel Subcommittee.

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

- “5. Appoint four voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (one of who shall also be appointed as chair) and one co-opted member with special expertise, representing a presbytery or congregation, to the Restricted Funds Oversight Subcommittee. Members will serve two-year terms and be eligible for a second term.
- “6. Appoint members of the Board Nominating and Governance Sub-Committee for two-year, non-renewable terms.
- “7. Appoint two Board voting members to the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee, for four-year non-renewable terms.
- “8. Appoint two current or previous Boards elected members to four-year, non-renewable terms on the Jinishian Memorial Program Governance Commission. The two members will also serve as liaisons to the Jinishian Memorial Program U.S. Advisory Committee (USAC) with voice, but not vote.
- “9. *Appoint one board voting member to the Presbyterian Mission Agency/Foundation Work Group.*
- “9. 10. Request and appoint a parliamentarian from the Office of the General Assembly to advise the chair and upon request of the chair to speak to the body.
- “10. 11. Make appointments as necessary, with ratification by the Executive Committee.
- “11. 12. Appoint committees of counsel as necessary. The committees shall have a maximum of three (3) members, but may have fewer as determined by the Board chair. The Legal Office shall serve as the primary staff support to Board committees of counsel. (*Book of Order D-6.0302*)
- “12. 13. In agreement with the vice-chair, review and approve requests to celebrate Holy Communion between regular meetings of the Executive Committee and report any approvals at the next meeting.”

2. Amended Appendix 1C as follows

a. Amended Section I.A.1.d.21: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“21. Review the minutes of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and ~~Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns~~ annually for consistency with established guidelines and report findings to the Advocacy Committees and the Board Executive Committee.”

b. Amended Section I.A.1.e.(1)(c)(4’): [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(4’) Nominate one Board voting member for election by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to a four-year, non-renewable term on the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. *In the interest of maintaining this relationship with a current member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, when the only current Board member with the gifts and abilities required to serve on ACWC has two years remaining in her/his term on the Board, she/he may be elected for a two-year term on ACWC.*”

c. Amended Section I.B.2.a.: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. Leadership Committee

“The Leadership Committee focuses on the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency that inspires, equips and connects individuals for leadership in Christ’s church and in the world. In this work, the Leadership Committee seeks to discern God’s direction as it guides ministries which identify, develop and resource diverse transformational leaders. Areas of ministry typically within the purview of the Leadership Committee include:”

“(1) Chaplains

“(2) *Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations*

“~~(2)~~ (3) Elder and leader development

“~~(3)~~ (4) Financial Aid for Studies

“~~(4)~~ (5) Leadership trends and response

“~~(5)~~ (6) Mission Personnel

“~~(6)~~ (7) Racial Ethnic and Women’s Leadership

10 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION

~~“(7) (8)~~ Theological Education

~~“(8) (9)~~ Theology”

d. Amended Section I.B.2.a.Relationships: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Relationships

“The work of the Leadership Committee connects in relationship with a variety of other groups, including Board-related committees, missional relationships, committees/boards where the Board has a representative, and ecumenical advisory members.

“(1) Board-related committees

“(a) None

“(2) Missional relationships:

“(a) Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel—PCCMP

“(b) Association of Presbyterian Church Educators—APCE

“(c) *Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities—APCU*

“(3) Committees/Entities where the Board has a representative:

“(a) Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc., Board of Directors

“(b) *General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations—GACEIR*”

“(4) Ecumenical Advisory Members:

“(a) None”

e. Amended Section I.B.2.c., Justice Committee, Relationships (3): [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“(3) Committees where the Board has a representative:

“(a) Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee

“(b) Jinishian Memorial Program Governance Commission

“(c) Mission Responsibility through Investment Committee

“(d) Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association Board of Directors

~~“(e) Creative Ministries Offering Committee of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.”~~

3. Amended Appendix 1F, the fourth bullet of Section I.C. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“• One Presbyterian Mission Agency Board nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Nominating and Governance Subcommittee and elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to serve a four-year non-renewable term. This voting member fulfills the responsibility of liaison between the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the Advocacy Committee. *In the interest of maintaining this relationship with a current member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, when the only current Board member with the gifts and abilities required to serve on ACWC has two years remaining in her/his term on the Board, she/he may be elected for a two-year term on ACWC.*”

4. Amended Appendix 11, Section II.D. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“D. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP); *and* the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), ~~or the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)~~, which are accountable to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, shall submit substantial* proposed changes to its manual of operations to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, through the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board Executive Committee, following customary procedures, for adoption or rejection.”

10 MISSION COORDINATION

Budget Chart A-1



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
Presbyterian Mission Agency
For the Period Ended December 31, 2014



	2014 Unrestricted					2014 Restricted					2014 Grand Total				
	2014 YTD Budget	2014 YTD Actual	+(-)% of YTD Budget	2013 YTD Actual	+(-)% of 2013	2014 YTD Budget	2014 YTD Actual	+(-)% of YTD Budget	2013 YTD Actual	+(-)% of 2013	2014 YTD Budget	2014 YTD Actual	+(-)% of YTD Budget	2013 YTD Actual	+(-)% of 2013
Support from Congregations and Presbyteries															
Congregations	\$ 6,600,000	\$ 6,563,090	(0.6%)	7,086,556	(7.4%)	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 3,706,023	5.9%	3,696,240	0.3%	\$ 10,100,000	\$ 10,269,113	1.7%	10,782,796	(4.8%)
Special offerings															
Christmas Joy	-	-	-	-	-	4,200,000	3,604,041	(14.2%)	3,921,296	(8.1%)	4,200,000	3,604,041	(14.2%)	3,921,296	(8.1%)
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	-	-	-	-	7,100,000	6,378,418	(10.2%)	6,519,016	(2.2%)	7,100,000	6,378,418	(10.2%)	6,519,016	(2.2%)
Peacemaking	-	-	-	-	-	900,000	429,198	(52.3%)	1,003,139	(57.2%)	900,000	429,198	(52.3%)	1,003,139	(57.2%)
New Peace and Global Witness	-	-	-	-	-	-	514,516	-	-	-	-	514,516	-	-	-
Pentecost	-	-	-	-	-	900,000	743,712	(17.4%)	824,323	(9.8%)	900,000	743,712	(17.4%)	824,323	(9.8%)
Witness	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,435	-	1,723	(16.7%)	-	1,435	-	1,723	(16.7%)
Specific appeals															
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	-	-	-	-	2,500,000	2,644,563	5.8%	5,812,763	(54.5%)	2,500,000	2,644,563	5.8%	5,812,763	(54.5%)
Extra Commitment	-	-	-	-	-	9,100,000	7,487,946	(17.7%)	6,536,422	14.6%	9,100,000	7,487,946	(17.7%)	6,536,422	14.6%
Mission Initiative	-	-	-	-	-	464,775	89,154	(80.8%)	384,253	(76.8%)	464,775	89,154	(80.8%)	384,253	(76.8%)
Special Missionary Support	-	-	-	-	-	379,101	181,123	(52.2%)	283,188	(36.0%)	379,101	181,123	(52.2%)	283,188	(36.0%)
Hunger	-	-	-	-	-	600,000	586,625	(2.2%)	366,895	59.9%	600,000	586,625	(2.2%)	366,895	59.9%
Theological Education Fund	-	-	-	-	-	1,300,000	1,050,749	(19.2%)	1,062,849	(1.1%)	1,300,000	1,050,749	(19.2%)	1,062,849	(1.1%)
Additional Forms of Giving															
Presbyterian Women	155,000	-	(100.0%)	-	-	405,915	400,810	(1.3%)	420,834	(4.8%)	560,915	400,810	(28.5%)	420,834	(4.8%)
Gifts and bequests	2,000,000	740,684	(63.0%)	674,883	9.7%	150,000	93,596	(37.6%)	2,947,272	(96.8%)	2,150,000	834,280	(61.2%)	3,622,155	(77.0%)
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	475,000	127,254	(73.2%)	756,124	(83.2%)	475,000	127,254	(73.2%)	756,124	(83.2%)
Total Contributions	8,755,000	7,303,774	(16.6%)	7,761,439	(5.9%)	31,974,791	28,039,163	(12.3%)	34,536,337	(18.8%)	40,729,791	35,342,937	(13.2%)	42,297,776	(16.4%)
Endowments, Interest and Dividends															
Income from endowment funds held by the Foundation	5,482,823	5,561,587	1.4%	5,918,280	(6.0%)	7,703,313	10,672,176	38.5%	9,724,803	9.7%	13,186,136	16,233,763	23.1%	15,643,083	3.8%
Income from investments	609,000	620,919	2.0%	617,633	0.5%	1,243,156	913,694	(26.5%)	261,296	249.7%	1,852,156	1,534,613	(17.1%)	878,929	74.6%
Income from funds held by others	1,400,000	814,482	(41.8%)	1,415,190	(42.4%)	120,000	80,000	(33.3%)	96,000	(16.7%)	1,520,000	894,482	(41.2%)	1,511,190	(40.8%)
Other															
Hubbard Press	75,000	75,000	-	15,000	-	154,565	154,565	0.0%	149,571	3.3%	229,565	229,565	0.0%	164,571	39.5%
Sales of resources and services	-	6,505	-	8,004	(19%)	19,115,374	19,911,844	4.2%	20,920,883	(4.8%)	19,115,374	19,918,349	4.2%	20,928,887	(4.8%)
Other	-	-	-	-	-	86,389	33,333	(61.4%)	-	-	86,389	33,333	(61.4%)	-	-
Total Endowments, Int. Div. & Other	7,566,823	7,078,493	(6.5%)	7,974,107	(11.2%)	28,422,797	31,765,612	11.8%	31,152,553	2.0%	35,989,620	38,844,105	7.9%	39,126,660	(0.7%)
Total Receipts	16,321,823	14,382,267	(11.9%)	15,735,546	(8.6%)	60,397,588	59,804,775	(1.0%)	65,688,890	(9.0%)	76,719,411	74,187,042	(3.3%)	81,424,436	(8.9%)
Expenses															
Policy Administration & Board Support	727,373	695,668	(4.4%)	434,455	60.1%	1,190,213	1,632,346	37.1%	1,135,319	43.8%	1,917,586	2,328,014	21.4%	1,569,774	48.3%
Mission Resources	222,641	214,015	(3.9%)	134,938	58.6%	1,844,744	1,648,295	(10.6%)	1,699,048	(3.0%)	2,067,385	1,862,310	(9.9%)	1,833,986	1.5%
Office of the Deputy Executive Director	741,908	706,786	(4.7%)	699,161	1.1%	621,790	470,910	(24.3%)	549,510	(14.3%)	1,363,698	1,177,696	(13.6%)	1,248,671	(5.7%)
Theology Worship and Education	2,771,882	2,588,311	(6.6%)	2,204,414	17.4%	6,204,631	5,072,740	(18.2%)	5,544,243	(8.5%)	8,976,513	7,661,051	(14.7%)	7,748,657	(1.1%)
Evangelism and Church Growth	2,008,344	1,729,724	(13.9%)	2,176,079	(20.5%)	7,483,824	5,462,735	(27.0%)	6,468,878	(15.6%)	9,492,168	7,192,459	(24.2%)	8,644,957	(16.8%)
Compassion, Peace and Justice	2,620,633	2,537,557	(3.2%)	1,753,210	44.7%	14,853,950	12,312,855	(17.1%)	16,296,497	(24.4%)	17,474,583	14,850,412	(15.0%)	18,049,707	(17.7%)
World Mission	7,994,258	6,330,455	(20.8%)	5,311,247	19.2%	20,174,999	19,384,083	(3.9%)	18,051,674	7.4%	28,169,257	25,714,538	(8.7%)	23,362,921	10.1%
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,677,575	2,462,967	(8.0%)	2,054,878	19.9%	3,554,530	2,807,119	(21.0%)	2,788,359	0.7%	6,232,105	5,270,086	(15.4%)	4,843,237	8.8%
Shared Services	-	50,657	-	-	-	2,208,245	2,291,213	3.8%	2,254,278	1.6%	2,208,245	2,341,870	6.1%	2,254,278	3.9%
Other	127,378	130,743	2.6%	2,119,511	(93.8%)	3,529,612	3,490,155	(1.1%)	4,829,312	(27.7%)	3,656,990	3,620,898	(1.0%)	6,948,823	(47.9%)
Total Expenses	19,891,992	17,446,883	(12.3%)	16,887,893	3.3%	61,666,538	54,572,451	(11.5%)	59,617,118	(8.5%)	81,558,530	72,019,334	(11.7%)	76,505,011	(5.9%)
Change in net assets	\$ (3,570,169)	\$ (3,064,616)	(14.2%)	(1,152,347)	165.9%	\$ (1,268,950)	\$ 5,232,324	(512.3%)	6,071,772	(13.8%)	\$ (4,839,119)	\$ 2,167,708	(144.8%)	4,919,425	(55.9%)
Ghost Ranch - Eminent Domain Proceeds	\$ -	\$ 2,074,457									\$ -	2,074,457			
Revised Change in net assets	\$ (3,570,169)	\$ (990,159)	(72.3%)	\$ (1,152,347)	(14.1%)	\$ (1,268,950)	\$ 5,232,324	(512.3%)	\$ 6,071,772	(13.8%)	\$ (4,839,119)	\$ 4,242,165	(187.7%)	(4,919,425)	(186.2%)



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
Presbyterian Mission Agency
For the Period Ended December 31, 2015



Budget Chart A2

	2015 Unrestricted					2015 Restricted					2015 Grand Total				
	2015 YTD Budget	2015 YTD Actual	+(-)% of YTD Budget	2014 YTD Actual	+(-)% of 2014	2015 YTD Budget	2015 YTD Actual	+(-)% of YTD Budget	2014 YTD Actual	+(-)% of 2014	2015 YTD Budget	2015 YTD Actual	+(-)% of YTD Budget	2014 YTD Actual	+(-)% of 2014
Support from Congregations and Presbyteries															
Congregations	\$ 5,532,000	\$ 5,746,855	3.9%	6,563,090	(12.4%)	\$ 3,706,022	\$ 4,171,398	12.6%	\$ 3,706,023	12.6%	\$ 9,238,022	\$ 9,918,253	7.4%	10,269,113	(3.4%)
Special offerings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Christmas Joy	-	-	-	-	-	3,673,205	3,270,701	(11.0%)	3,566,172	(8.3%)	3,673,205	3,270,701	(11.0%)	3,566,172	(8.3%)
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	-	-	-	-	6,398,486	5,998,873	(6.2%)	6,340,549	(5.4%)	6,398,486	5,998,873	(6.2%)	6,340,549	(5.4%)
Peace and Global Witness/Peacemaking	-	-	-	-	-	947,924	872,573	(7.9%)	905,844	(3.7%)	947,924	872,573	(7.9%)	905,844	(3.7%)
Special Offering Catalogs (SO projects)	-	-	-	-	-	450,952	615,714	36.5%	151,477	306.5%	450,952	615,714	36.5%	151,477	306.5%
Pentecost	-	-	-	-	-	829,433	656,886	(20.8%)	705,843	(6.9%)	829,433	656,886	(20.8%)	705,843	(6.9%)
Witness	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,726	1,435	20.3%	-	-	1,726	-	1,435	20.3%
Specific appeals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	-	-	-	-	3,500,000	4,289,614	22.6%	2,644,563	62.2%	3,500,000	4,289,614	22.6%	2,644,563	62.2%
Extra Commitment	-	-	-	-	-	8,389,857	9,070,391	8.1%	7,487,946	21.1%	8,389,857	9,070,391	8.1%	7,487,946	21.1%
Special Missionary Support	-	-	-	-	-	291,984	638,964	118.8%	181,123	252.8%	291,984	638,964	118.8%	181,123	252.8%
Hunger	-	-	-	-	-	488,000	429,159	(12.1%)	586,625	(26.8%)	488,000	429,159	(12.1%)	586,625	(26.8%)
Theological Education Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,050,749	(100.0%)	-	-	-	1,050,749	(100.0%)
Additional Forms of Giving															
Presbyterian Women	-	-	-	-	-	382,289	346,070	(9.4%)	400,810	(3.7%)	382,289	346,070	(9.5%)	400,810	(3.7%)
Gifts and bequests	500,000	202,865	(59.4%)	740,684	(72.6%)	175,000	179,291	2.5%	93,596	91.6%	675,000	382,156	(43.4%)	834,280	(54.2%)
Grants from Outside Foundations	-	-	-	-	-	175,000	125,478	(28.3%)	127,254	(1.4%)	175,000	125,478	(28.3%)	127,254	(1.4%)
Total Contributions	6,032,000	5,949,720	(1.4%)	7,303,774	(18.5%)	29,408,152	30,666,838	4.3%	27,950,009	9.7%	35,440,152	36,616,558	3.3%	35,253,783	3.9%
Endowments, Interest and Dividends															
Income from endowment funds held by the Foundation	5,206,763	5,255,490	0.9%	5,561,587	(5.5%)	8,466,055	9,363,251	10.6%	10,672,176	(12.3%)	13,672,818	14,618,741	6.9%	16,233,763	(9.9%)
Income from investments	1,009,000	380,192	(62.3%)	620,919	(38.8%)	625,000	289,256	(53.7%)	913,694	(68.3%)	1,634,000	669,448	(59.0%)	1,534,613	(56.4%)
Income from funds held by others	1,132,000	1,685,006	48.9%	814,482	106.9%	80,000	80,000	0.0%	80,000	0.0%	1,212,000	1,765,006	45.6%	894,482	97.3%
Other															
Hubbard Press	75,000	75,000	-	75,000	-	155,884	155,885	0.0%	154,565	0.9%	230,884	230,885	0.0%	229,565	0.6%
Sales of resources	-	4,228	-	6,505	(35%)	3,840,237	3,684,687	(4.1%)	4,812,809	(23.4%)	3,840,237	3,688,915	(3.9%)	4,819,314	(23.5%)
Program Services	-	-	-	-	0%	17,355,843	14,553,700	(16.1%)	15,099,035	(3.6%)	17,355,843	14,553,700	(16.1%)	15,099,035	(3.6%)
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,681	0.0%	122,487	(98.6%)	-	1,681	0.0%	122,487	(98.6%)
Total Endowments, Interest, Div. & Other	7,422,763	7,399,916	(0.3%)	7,078,493	4.5%	30,523,019	28,128,460	(7.8%)	31,854,766	(11.7%)	37,945,782	35,528,376	(6.4%)	38,933,259	(8.7%)
Total Receipts															
Total Receipts	13,454,763	13,349,636	(0.8%)	14,382,267	(7.2%)	59,931,171	58,795,298	(1.9%)	59,804,775	(1.7%)	73,385,934	72,144,934	(1.7%)	74,187,042	(2.8%)
Expenses															
Policy Administration & Board Support	1,205,517	578,893	(52.0%)	1,402,454	(58.7%)	1,860,740	1,675,686	(9.9%)	1,939,642	(13.6%)	3,066,257	2,254,579	(26.5%)	3,342,096	(32.5%)
Mission Resources	249,945	252,337	1.0%	214,015	17.9%	1,702,191	1,357,270	(20.3%)	1,648,295	(17.7%)	1,952,136	1,609,607	(17.5%)	1,862,310	(13.6%)
Theology, Formation & Evangelism	4,472,909	3,698,800	(17.3%)	4,310,058	(14.2%)	8,476,270	6,752,087	(20.3%)	7,940,910	(15.0%)	12,949,179	10,450,887	(19.3%)	12,250,968	(14.7%)
Compassion, Peace and Justice	1,938,731	1,736,551	(10.4%)	2,537,557	(31.6%)	14,091,438	13,119,914	(6.9%)	12,312,855	(6.6%)	16,030,169	14,856,465	(7.3%)	14,850,412	0.0%
World Mission	7,046,392	5,491,740	(22.1%)	6,330,455	(13.2%)	19,033,087	18,466,545	(3.0%)	19,384,083	(4.7%)	26,079,479	23,958,285	(8.1%)	25,714,538	(6.8%)
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,776,750	2,147,665	(22.7%)	2,470,944	(13.1%)	7,562,963	5,337,375	(29.4%)	5,565,298	(4.1%)	10,339,713	7,485,040	(27.6%)	8,036,242	(6.9%)
Shared Services	-	-	-	50,657	(100.0%)	2,142,572	1,957,875	(8.6%)	2,291,213	(14.5%)	2,142,572	1,957,875	(8.6%)	2,341,870	(16.4%)
Stony Point Uncollectible Allowance	-	2,004,569	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,004,569	-	-	
Other	726,105	966,262	33.1%	130,743	639.1%	3,328,468	3,236,207	(2.8%)	3,490,155	(7.3%)	4,054,573	4,202,469	3.6%	3,620,898	16.1%
Total Expenses	18,416,349	16,876,817	(8.4%)	17,446,883	(3.3%)	58,197,729	51,902,959	(10.8%)	54,572,451	(4.9%)	76,614,078	68,779,776	(10.2%)	72,019,334	(4.5%)
Change in net assets	\$ (4,961,586)	\$ (3,527,181)	(28.9%)	(3,064,616)	15.1%	\$ 1,733,442	\$ 6,892,339	297.6%	5,232,324	31.7%	\$ (3,228,144)	\$ 3,365,158	(204.2%)	2,167,708	55.2%
Ghost Ranch - Eminent Domain Proceeds	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 2,074,457	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 2,074,457	-
Revised Change in net assets	\$ (4,961,586)	\$ (3,527,181)	(28.9%)	\$ (990,159)	256.2%	\$ 1,733,442	\$ 6,892,339	297.6%	\$ 5,232,324	31.7%	\$ (3,228,144)	\$ 3,365,158	(204.2%)	\$ 4,242,165	(20.7%)

Budget Chart B

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains and other support			
Contributions			
Congregations	\$ 5,125,000	\$ 3,803,066	\$ 8,928,066
Presbyterian Women	-	365,518	365,518
Gifts and bequests	500,000	400,000	900,000
Grants	-	2,000	2,000
Special offerings			
Christmas Joy	-	3,763,456	3,763,456
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	6,555,698	6,555,698
Peace and Global Witness	-	971,214	971,214
Pentecost	-	849,813	849,813
Special Offerings Catalog	-	459,819	459,819
Specific appeals			
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	3,500,000	3,500,000
Extra Commitment	-	8,545,176	8,545,176
Special Missionary Support	-	268,360	268,360
Hunger	-	483,000	483,000
Total Contributions	<u>5,625,000</u>	<u>29,967,120</u>	<u>35,592,120</u>
Income from endowment funds held by the Foundation	5,359,842	8,649,801	14,009,643
Income from investments	509,000	338,400	847,400
Income from funds held by others	1,126,000	100,000	1,226,000
Hubbard Press	75,000	50,534	125,534
Sales of resources	-	2,860,167	2,860,167
Services	-	12,855,525	12,855,525
Other	-	-	-
	<u>7,069,842</u>	<u>24,854,427</u>	<u>31,924,269</u>
Total revenue, gains, and other support	<u>12,694,842</u>	<u>54,821,547</u>	<u>67,516,389</u>
Expenses			
Executive Director	817,244	2,085,608	2,902,852
Mission Resources	147,964	1,136,862	1,284,826
Theology, Formation and Evangelism	4,302,239	9,994,537	14,296,776
Compassion, Peace and Justice	1,972,625	12,182,920	14,155,545
World Mission	6,364,466	19,109,968	25,474,434
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	2,642,670	8,229,222	10,871,892
Shared Services	-	2,377,753	2,377,753
Other	1,049	3,462,916	3,463,965
Total Expenses	<u>16,248,257</u>	<u>58,579,786</u>	<u>74,828,043</u>
Change in net assets	<u>\$ (3,553,415)</u>	<u>\$ (3,758,239)</u>	<u>\$ (7,311,654)</u>

Budget Chart C1

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains and other support			
Contributions			
Congregations	\$ 4,758,971	\$ 3,195,943	\$ 7,954,914
Special offerings			
Christmas Joy	-	2,931,733	2,931,733
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	5,456,616	5,456,616
Peace and Global Witness	-	901,508	901,508
Pentecost	-	635,474	635,474
Special Offerings Catalog	-	620,000	620,000
Specific appeals			
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	1,700,000	1,700,000
Extra Commitment	-	8,500,094	8,500,094
Special Missionary Support	-	518,400	518,400
Hunger	-	430,000	430,000
Presbyterian Women	-	365,518	365,518
Gifts and bequests	250,000	285,000	535,000
Grants	-	-	-
Total Contributions	<u>5,008,971</u>	<u>25,540,286</u>	<u>30,549,257</u>
Income from endowment funds			
held by the Foundation	5,483,828	8,735,455	14,219,283
Income from investments	509,000	100,000	609,000
Income from funds held by others	1,126,000	80,000	1,206,000
Hubbard Press	75,000	50,928	125,928
Sales of resources	-	2,394,006	2,394,006
Program services	-	8,793,789	8,793,789
Other	-	-	-
	<u>7,193,828</u>	<u>20,154,178</u>	<u>27,348,006</u>
 Total revenue, gains, and other support	 <u>12,202,799</u>	 <u>45,694,464</u>	 <u>57,897,263</u>
 Expenses			
Executive Director	392,045	1,509,081	1,901,126
Communications	55,639	950,027	1,005,666
Mission Engagement and Support	-	15,000	15,000
Theology, Formation and Evangelism	3,120,981	7,243,273	10,364,254
Compassion, Peace and Justice	1,470,971	11,896,316	13,367,287
World Mission	4,617,046	18,451,460	23,068,506
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	1,918,310	6,149,973	8,068,283
Shared Services	-	2,211,205	2,211,205
Other	609,807	2,919,163	3,528,970
	<u>12,184,799</u>	<u>51,345,498</u>	<u>63,530,297</u>
 Change in net assets	 <u>\$ 18,000</u>	 <u>\$ (5,651,034)</u>	 <u>\$ (5,633,034)</u>

Budget Chart C2

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains and other support			
Contributions			
Congregations	\$ 4,330,663	\$ 3,195,943	\$ 7,526,606
Special offerings			
Christmas Joy	-	2,755,829	2,755,829
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	5,183,785	5,183,785
Peace and Global Witness	-	892,493	892,493
Pentecost	-	603,700	603,700
Special Offerings Catalog	-	800,000	800,000
Specific appeals			
Emergency and Disaster Relief	-	1,700,000	1,700,000
Extra Commitment	-	8,700,094	8,700,094
Special Missionary Support	-	508,400	508,400
Hunger	-	430,000	430,000
Presbyterian Women	-	365,518	365,518
Gifts and bequests	250,000	285,000	535,000
Grants	-	-	-
Total Contributions	<u>4,580,663</u>	<u>25,420,762</u>	<u>30,001,425</u>
Income from endowment funds			
held by the Foundation	5,432,842	8,674,397	14,107,239
Income from investments	509,000	100,000	609,000
Income from funds held by others	1,126,000	80,000	1,206,000
Hubbard Press	75,000	50,928	125,928
Sales of resources	-	2,683,750	2,683,750
Program services	-	8,920,400	8,920,400
Other	-	-	-
	<u>7,142,842</u>	<u>20,509,475</u>	<u>27,652,317</u>
 Total revenue, gains, and other support	 <u>11,723,505</u>	 <u>45,930,237</u>	 <u>57,653,742</u>
 Expenses			
Executive Director	399,782	1,572,409	1,972,191
Communications	59,360	951,377	1,010,737
Mission Engagement and Support	-	15,000	15,000
Theology, Formation and Evangelism	3,092,454	7,348,605	10,441,059
Compassion, Peace and Justice	1,529,398	10,919,000	12,448,398
World Mission	4,671,680	19,203,233	23,874,913
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	1,969,875	6,181,533	8,151,408
Shared Services	-	2,205,972	2,205,972
Other	956	3,329,957	3,330,913
 Total Expenses	 <u>11,723,505</u>	 <u>51,727,086</u>	 <u>63,450,591</u>
 Change in net assets	 <u>\$ 0</u>	 <u>\$ (5,796,849)</u>	 <u>\$ (5,796,849)</u>

Budget Chart C3

Capital Reserve Fund Budgets for 2017-2018

Balance as of January 1, 2016
Earnings/(loss)
Replacement reserve
New allocations
Use of allocations
Cancellation of allocation
Administration expenses
Increase (Decrease) YTD

Balance as of December 31, 2016

2016 Projected Income
2016 Projected Allocations ¹
2017 Projected Income
2017 Projected Allocations ²
2018 Projected Income
2018 Projected Allocations ³

Projected Balance as of December 31, 2018

BOARD DESIGNATED SUMMARY		
INVESTMENTS	COMMITMENTS	COMBINED TOTAL
2,603,590	(292,971)	2,310,620
(38,614)		(38,614)
225,000		225,000
	(70,000)	(70,000)
(62,202)	62,202	-
	-	
	(10,011)	(10,011)
124,184	(17,810)	106,375
\$ 2,727,775	\$ (310,781)	\$ 2,416,994

705,000		705,000
	(1,661,820)	(1,661,820)
680,000		680,000
	(780,500)	(780,500)
680,000		680,000
	(842,990)	(842,990)
\$ 4,792,775	\$ (3,596,091)	\$ 1,196,684

1 Camera System Upgrade-25,000; Furniture Replacement-330,400; Relamping-40,000; Desk Chair Replacement-221,000; Restroom Remodel-260,000; Copier Replacement-105,000; Streamfeeder-5,920; Cooling Tower Replacement-250,000; Elevator Modernization-135,000; Energy Management System Upgrade-200,000; Chapel Floor Repair.Refinish-15,000; Roof Flashing Repair and Coating-9,500; Electric Pallet Jack-5,000; Black and White Copier-60,000

2 Energy Management System Upgrade-50,000; Energy Efficient LED Upgrade-50,000; Cooling Tower Replacement-50,000; Relamping-20,000; Exterior Building Cleaning-80,000; HVAC Replacement-180,000; Copier Replacement-24,000; Inserter-12,500; Crown Fork Lift-25,000; Printer-10,000; Core Switch Replacement-100,000; Replace Closet Switches-150,000; Google Search Appliance-29,000;

3 Energy Management System Upgrade-250,000; Relamping-30,000; HVAC Replacement-180,000; Restroom Remodel-150,000; Copier Replacement-73,000; Folder-4,990; Color Copier-75,000; Shipping Software Upgrade-5,000; Printer-5,000; Liebert UPS Batteries-5,000; Training Room Upgrade-10,000; Domain Controller Servers-20,000; SQL Service License Upgrade-35,000

Budget Chart D1

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 Presbyterian Mission Program Fund
 as of December 31, 2015



	UNRESTRICTED			
	UNDESIGNATED FUNDS	DESIGNATED FUNDS	PROGRAMMATIC LOAN FUND	COMBINED TOTAL
Balance as of January 1, 2015	6,621,323	11,791,601	546,937	18,959,861
Market Value Adjustment in Investments	463,562			463,562
Net increase (decrease) in loans/receivables	489,267		(489,267)	-
2015 Allocation	(1,801,583)	1,801,583		-
Use of allocations		(1,218,916)		(1,218,916)
Unused allocations restored	1,554,716	(1,554,716)		-
Increase (Decrease) YTD	705,963	(972,049)	(489,267)	(755,354)
Subtotal	7,327,286	10,819,552	57,670	18,204,507
Excess unrestricted revenues/(expenditures) from PMA Budget		(3,527,181)		(3,527,181)
Balance as of December 31, 2015	\$ 7,327,286	\$ 7,292,371	\$ 57,670	\$ 14,677,326

	December 31, 2015	December 31, 2014
Reserve Requirement		
Unrestricted Receipts	13,349,636	14,382,267
Directed Mission Support Receipts	4,171,398	3,706,023
Total	17,521,034	18,088,290
30% Reserve Requirement	5,256,310	5,426,487
Amount Over/(Under) Required Reserve	2,070,976	1,194,836

Budget Chart D2

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Presbyterian Mission Program Fund
Funds Committed for Special Projects
as of December 31, 2015



Board Actions	Original Designation	Balance 1/1/15	Designated	Payments	Restored	Balance 12/31/15
1 Balance of allocations of \$1,093,000 (4/03), \$814,210 (2/04), \$150,000 (12/04), and reallocations (9/06), (2/08), (10/08), (5/10), & (2/12) to support the Independent Abuse Review Panel	116,574	68,023				68,023
2 Sales of Resources		133,206		(54,883)		78,323
3 Allocation (5/12) to balance the 2014 Mission Budget (9/12), (4/13), (4/14), (9/14)	4,014,845	505,552			(505,552)	-
4 2013-2014 New Initiatives Allocation (4/13)	1,000,000	176,395		(176,395)		-
5 DREAM Fund (4/14) (Replaces Mission Partnerships for Synods)	500,000	500,000		(141,665)		358,335
6 Allocation (4/14) to balance the 2015 Mission Budget, (9/14), (4/15)	3,971,994	3,971,994	989,592	(3,527,181)		1,434,405
7 Allocation (4/14) to balance the 2016 Mission Budget, (9/14), (4/15)	3,936,432	3,936,432	811,991		(549,164)	4,199,259
8 World Mission - Contingency Expenses (4/14), (4/15)	1,000,000	1,000,000			(500,000)	500,000
9 Ghost Ranch Capital Expenditures (9/14)	1,500,000	1,500,000		(845,974)		654,026
10 TOTAL		11,791,601	1,801,583	(4,746,097)	(1,554,716)	7,292,370

Budget Chart D3

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Sales of Resources
as of December 31, 2015



	Balance 1/1/15	Additions	(Payments)	Budgeted	Balance 12/31/15
Senior Director Funds Development					
Funds Development	3,968		(3,968)		-
Total	3,968	-	(3,968)	-	-
Senior Director Communications					
Mission Resources	24,161		(24,161)		
	24,161	-	(24,161)	-	-
Deputy Executive Director - Mission					
Mission	100,152		(24,313)		75,840
Social Witness Policy	4,925		(2,442)		2,483
Research Services	-		-		-
Total	105,077	-	(26,755)	-	78,323
TOTAL	133,206	-	(54,883)	-	78,323

Budget Chart D4

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Programmatic Loan Fund
as of December 31, 2015



RECEIVABLE	Balance 1/1/15	Increase (Decrease)	Balance 12/31/15
Receivable from Congregational Ministries Publishing	546,937	(489,267)	57,670
TOTAL PRESBYTERIAN MISSION PROGRAM FUND	546,937	(489,267)	57,670

OTHER RECEIVABLES

Ghost Ranch Conference Center (Abiquiu and Santa Fe)	2,881,146	(92,202)	2,788,944
Stony Point Center	1,995,736	8,833	2,004,569
TOTAL OTHER RECEIVABLES	4,876,882	(83,369)	4,793,513

Operating Income (Loss) - December 31, 2015			
Curriculum - English		-	
Curriculum - Language	(300,458)		
Stony Point	(245,417)		
Ghost Ranch	(609,236)		

Budget Chart D5

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Self Insurance Fund
as of December 31, 2015**



	YTD 2015	YTD 2014
Beginning Balance	<u>6,219,583</u>	<u>6,010,024</u>
Revenues:		
Income from investments	67,375	58,666
Unrealized gain (loss)	<u>(196,319)</u>	<u>328,959</u>
Total Revenues	(128,944)	387,625
Expenditures:		
Foundation investment fees	(255)	(222)
Shared Services management fees	(10,000)	(10,000)
Risk Management recoveries	(56,285)	(70,536)
Insurance claims paid	<u>(208,071)</u>	<u>(97,308)</u>
Total Expenditures	(274,611)	(178,066)
Funds Available	<u><u>5,816,027</u></u>	<u><u>6,219,583</u></u>

Budget Chart E

	2013	2014	%	2015	%
Christmas Joy Offering					
Board of Pensions	1,779,514	1,604,772	-9.82%	1,489,516	-7.18%
Racial Ethnic Leadership Development	1,639,192	1,471,074	-10.26%	1,366,689	-7.10%
Fundraising	502,590	490,325	-2.44%	414,496	-15.47%
Total	<u>3,921,296</u>	<u>3,566,171</u>	<u>-9.06%</u>	<u>3,270,701</u>	<u>-8.29%</u>
One Great Hour of Sharing					
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	1,860,213	1,790,325	-3.76%	1,759,699	-1.71%
Self Development of People	1,850,291	1,755,318	-5.13%	1,689,084	-3.77%
Presbyterian Hunger Program	2,068,371	1,957,573	-5.36%	1,912,492	-2.30%
Fundraising	725,871	827,298	13.97%	637,598	-22.93%
Total	<u>6,504,746</u>	<u>6,330,514</u>	<u>-2.68%</u>	<u>5,998,873</u>	<u>-5.24%</u>
Peacemaking/Peace and Global Witness Offering					
Peacemaking/Peace and Global Witness	573,169	470,503	-21.82%	491,183	4.40%
Fundraising	429,970	435,341	1.23%	381,390	-12.39%
Total	<u>1,003,139</u>	<u>905,844</u>	<u>-10.74%</u>	<u>872,573</u>	<u>-3.67%</u>
Pentecost Offering					
Pentecost Offering	460,695	362,735	-21.26%	322,702	-11.04%
Fundraising	363,628	380,977	4.77%	334,184	-12.28%
Total	<u>824,323</u>	<u>743,712</u>	<u>-9.78%</u>	<u>656,886</u>	<u>-11.67%</u>
Special Offerings Catalog					
Special Offerings	172,027	210,828	18.40%	261,948	19.52%
Fundraising	0	289,826	0.00%	353,766	0.00%
Total	<u>172,027</u>	<u>500,654</u>	<u>191.03%</u>	<u>615,714</u>	<u>22.98%</u>
Witness Offering					
Witness Offering	1,723	1,435	-16.72%	1,726	20.28%
Fundraising	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	<u>1,723</u>	<u>1,435</u>	<u>-16.72%</u>	<u>1,726</u>	<u>20.28%</u>
TOTALS	<u>12,427,254</u>	<u>12,048,330</u>	<u>-3.05%</u>	<u>11,416,473</u>	<u>-5.24%</u>
Designations					
Hunger	366,895	586,625	59.89%	429,159	-26.84%
Emergency Relief	5,807,839	2,641,649	-54.52%	4,289,614	62.38%

Item 10-C

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION**

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

CONTENTS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT	1
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION	3
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	4
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS	6
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	7
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION	
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	29
CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	30



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Board of Directors
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Louisville, Kentucky

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and its constituent corporations, which comprise the consolidated statements of financial position as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, and the related consolidated statements of activities and changes in net assets and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

(Continued)

Opinion

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation and its constituent corporations as of December 31, 2015 and 2014, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matters

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements as a whole. The consolidating statement of financial position, and consolidating statement of activities and changes in net assets are presented for purposes of additional analysis of the consolidated financial statements rather than to present the financial position, changes in net assets, and cash flows of the individual organizations, and are not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the consolidated financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the consolidated financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the consolidated financial statements or to the consolidated financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the consolidated financial statements as a whole.

Crowe Horwath LLP
Crowe Horwath LLP

Louisville, Kentucky
May 6, 2016

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2015 and 2014

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,614,694	\$ 5,131,614
Investments (Notes 4 and 13)		
Beneficial interests in pooled investments and accrued income held by the Foundation	58,683,973	57,999,714
Other investments and accrued income	50,210,859	56,058,851
Receivables		
Contributions from congregations	3,872,761	3,257,551
Mortgages and loans on churches and manses, including accrued interest, net of allowance for doubtful receivables \$965 and \$1,900, respectively (Note 7)	915,716	1,566,316
Receivables from related entities, mortgages and loans, net of allowance for doubtful receivables of \$1,968,590 and \$1,910,051, respectively (Note 9)	3,949,550	4,083,150
Due from the Foundation	2,372,704	1,844,846
Other accounts receivable	<u>148,086</u>	<u>83,880</u>
Total receivables	11,258,817	10,835,743
Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets	1,109,755	1,012,645
Property and equipment, net (Note 10)	17,540,679	16,275,976
Beneficial interest in pooled investments held by the Foundation – long-term (Notes 4 and 13)	309,811,267	336,457,258
Other investments held by the Foundation (Notes 4 and 13)	6,307,154	6,209,789
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts (Note 5)	<u>65,131,447</u>	<u>69,670,791</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 523,668,645</u>	<u>\$ 559,652,381</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 5,813,382	\$ 8,030,534
Amounts received from congregations and designated for others	873,878	487,446
Amounts held for missionaries and committed for projects	2,797,460	2,647,174
Amounts due to other agencies (Note 16)	3,864,545	5,935,628
Due to the Foundation	-	2,220,891
Deferred revenue	832,640	587,128
Other	<u>996,159</u>	<u>739,907</u>
Total liabilities	15,178,064	20,648,708
Net assets (Note 3)		
Unrestricted		
Undesignated – General Mission	1,408,219	2,823,603
Undesignated – OGA per capita	6,681,092	5,887,368
Designated	<u>41,664,487</u>	<u>46,135,095</u>
Total unrestricted	49,753,798	54,846,066
Temporarily restricted	185,910,231	209,967,686
Permanently restricted	<u>272,826,552</u>	<u>274,189,921</u>
Total net assets	<u>508,490,581</u>	<u>539,003,673</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 523,668,645</u>	<u>\$ 559,652,381</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
Year ended December 31, 2015
(With comparative 2014 totals)

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>2015 Total</u>	<u>2014 Total</u>
Revenue, gains, and other support					
Contributions					
Congregations	\$ 17,939,627	\$ 4,171,398	\$ -	\$ 22,111,025	\$ 23,010,497
Presbyterian Women	-	880	-	880	-
Gifts, bequests, and grants	1,808,965	3,510,762	2,831,324	8,151,051	11,604,257
Special giving and special offering	-	24,882,266	-	24,882,266	22,836,897
Total contributions	<u>19,748,592</u>	<u>32,565,306</u>	<u>2,831,324</u>	<u>55,145,222</u>	<u>57,451,651</u>
Investment income					
Income from endowment funds	1,726,039	2,598,896	34,141	4,359,076	4,688,902
Income on investments	543,520	197,147	36,199	776,866	990,519
Realized losses on investments, net	3,940,080	4,761,531	310,984	9,012,595	8,950,440
Unrealized gains on investments, net	(607,082)	(26,831,788)	(4,118,537)	(31,557,407)	(5,112,431)
Change in value of beneficial interest in life income funds	<u>1,685,006</u>	<u>(170,727)</u>	<u>(403,097)</u>	<u>1,111,182</u>	<u>303,425</u>
Total investment return	7,287,563	(19,444,941)	(4,140,310)	(16,297,688)	9,820,855
Interest income from loans	2,083	32,817	64,950	99,850	158,058
The Hubbard Press	1,413,353	-	-	1,413,353	1,432,051
Sales of resources and services	16,122,435	27,481	-	16,149,916	19,122,995
Other	<u>2,198,260</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>(119,333)</u>	<u>2,079,104</u>	<u>1,279,754</u>
	46,772,286	13,180,840	(1,363,369)	58,589,757	89,265,364
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>39,789,553</u>	<u>(39,789,553)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue, gains, and other support	<u>86,561,839</u>	<u>(26,608,713)</u>	<u>(1,363,369)</u>	<u>58,589,757</u>	<u>89,265,364</u>
Expenses					
Policy Administration and Board Support	2,212,979	-	-	2,212,979	3,230,346
Communications and Funds Development	1,609,607	-	-	1,609,607	1,556,310
Theology, Formation and Evangelism	10,450,887	-	-	10,450,887	11,804,968
Compassion, Peace and Justice	14,840,571	-	-	14,840,571	13,723,987
World Mission	23,905,711	-	-	23,905,711	25,106,538
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	7,485,040	-	-	7,485,040	7,894,242
Shared Services	1,957,875	-	-	1,957,875	2,071,543
Office of the General Assembly	6,502,212	-	-	6,502,212	9,829,474
Presbyterian Mission Agency	4,169,881	-	-	4,169,881	4,047,597
Presbyterian Historical Society, Inc.	889,937	-	-	889,937	891,425
Conference Center – Ghost Ranch	5,415,344	-	-	5,415,344	5,047,520
Conference Center – Stony Point	2,355,726	-	-	2,355,726	2,069,805
The Hubbard Press	1,052,111	-	-	1,052,111	1,024,829
Related Bodies and Other Programs	12,211	-	-	12,211	10,244
Shared	1,417,121	-	-	1,417,121	1,636,928
Depreciation	1,788,034	-	-	1,788,034	1,737,973
Other	<u>2,006,686</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,006,686</u>	<u>581,518</u>
Total expenses	<u>88,071,933</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>88,071,933</u>	<u>92,265,247</u>
Change in net assets prior to change in endowment funds with deficiencies and transfers	(1,510,094)	(26,608,713)	(1,363,369)	(29,482,176)	(2,999,883)
Change in endowment funds with deficiencies	(3,582,174)	3,582,174	-	-	-
Distribution to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Foundation	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,030,916)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,030,916)</u>	<u>-</u>
Change in net assets	(5,092,268)	(24,057,455)	(1,363,369)	(30,513,092)	(2,999,883)
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>54,846,066</u>	<u>209,967,686</u>	<u>274,189,921</u>	<u>539,003,673</u>	<u>542,003,556</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$ 49,753,798</u>	<u>\$ 185,910,231</u>	<u>\$ 272,826,552</u>	<u>\$ 508,490,581</u>	<u>\$ 539,003,673</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
Year ended December 31, 2014

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenue, gains, and other support				
Contributions				
Congregations	\$ 19,304,474	\$ 3,706,023	\$ -	\$ 23,010,497
Presbyterian Women	-	-	-	-
Gifts, bequests, and grants	2,062,327	7,845,262	1,696,668	11,604,257
Special giving and special offering	-	<u>22,836,897</u>	-	<u>22,836,897</u>
Total contributions	<u>21,366,801</u>	<u>34,388,182</u>	<u>1,696,668</u>	<u>57,451,651</u>
Investment income				
Income from endowment funds	1,877,978	2,779,512	31,412	4,688,902
Income on investments	735,120	214,761	40,638	990,519
Realized and unrealized gains on investments, net	4,553,272	(2,608,762)	1,893,499	3,838,009
Change in value of beneficial interest in life income funds	<u>814,482</u>	<u>124,198</u>	<u>(635,255)</u>	<u>303,425</u>
Total investment return	<u>7,980,852</u>	<u>509,709</u>	<u>1,330,294</u>	<u>9,820,855</u>
Interest income from loans	6,635	44,027	107,396	158,058
The Hubbard Press	1,432,051	-	-	1,432,051
Sales of resources and services	19,110,046	12,949	-	19,122,995
Other	<u>1,517,137</u>	<u>(7,072)</u>	<u>(230,311)</u>	<u>1,279,754</u>
	51,413,522	34,947,795	2,904,047	89,265,364
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>39,896,458</u>	<u>(39,896,458)</u>	-	-
Total revenue, gains, and other support	<u>91,309,980</u>	<u>(4,948,663)</u>	<u>2,904,047</u>	<u>89,265,364</u>
Expenses				
Policy Administration and Board Support	3,230,346	-	-	3,230,346
Communications and Funds				
Development	1,556,310	-	-	1,556,310
Theology, Formation and Evangelism	11,804,968	-	-	11,804,968
Compassion, Peace and Justice	13,723,987	-	-	13,723,987
World Mission	25,106,538	-	-	25,106,538
Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries	7,894,242	-	-	7,894,242
Shared Services	2,071,543	-	-	2,071,543
Office of the General Assembly	9,829,474	-	-	9,829,474
Presbyterian Mission Agency	4,047,597	-	-	4,047,597
Presbyterian Historical Society, Inc.	891,425	-	-	891,425
Conference Center – Ghost Ranch	5,047,520	-	-	5,047,520
Conference Center – Stony Point	2,069,805	-	-	2,069,805
The Hubbard Press	1,024,829	-	-	1,024,829
Related Bodies and Other Programs	10,244	-	-	10,244
Shared	1,636,928	-	-	1,636,928
Depreciation	1,737,973	-	-	1,737,973
Other	<u>581,518</u>	-	-	<u>581,518</u>
Total expenses	<u>92,265,247</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>92,265,247</u>
Change in net assets	(955,267)	(4,948,663)	2,904,047	(2,999,883)
Change in endowment funds with deficiencies	<u>(726,229)</u>	<u>726,229</u>	-	-
Change in net assets	(1,681,496)	(4,222,434)	2,904,047	(2,999,883)
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>56,527,562</u>	<u>214,190,120</u>	<u>271,285,874</u>	<u>542,003,556</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$ 54,846,066</u>	<u>\$ 209,967,686</u>	<u>\$ 274,189,921</u>	<u>\$ 539,003,673</u>

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	\$ (30,513,092)	\$ (2,999,883)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash from operating activities:		
Depreciation	1,788,034	1,737,973
Net recoveries for losses on church loans	(934)	(350)
Contributions and revolving loan fund investment earnings restricted for long-term investment	(2,847,281)	(1,645,803)
Realized and unrealized gains on investments, net	22,544,812	(3,838,009)
Change in beneficial interests in life income funds	(1,111,182)	(303,425)
Additions to beneficial interests in perpetual trusts	(266,677)	(826,661)
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	6,008	138,629
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Receivables from congregations	(615,210)	1,421,845
Due to/from the Foundation	(2,748,748)	1,476,909
Other accounts receivable	(64,206)	575,416
Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets	(97,110)	105,464
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(2,217,154)	241,246
Amounts received from congregations and other liabilities	792,971	540,291
Amounts due to other agencies	(2,071,083)	8,194
Deferred revenue	<u>245,512</u>	<u>(396,613)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(17,175,340)</u>	<u>(3,764,777)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchases of investments	(4,007,319)	(41,760,776)
Sales of investments	19,081,812	45,346,998
Payments received on church loans	651,534	581,020
Net repayments of receivables from related entities, mortgages and loans	133,600	217,872
Acquisition of property and equipment, net	(3,058,745)	(1,152,527)
Maturities of beneficial interests in perpetual trusts	<u>10,257</u>	<u>34,615</u>
Net cash from investing activities	<u>12,811,139</u>	<u>3,267,202</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Contributions and revolving loan fund investment earnings restricted for long-term investment	<u>2,847,281</u>	<u>1,645,803</u>
Net cash from financing activities	<u>2,847,281</u>	<u>1,645,803</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(1,516,920)	1,148,228
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>5,131,614</u>	<u>3,983,386</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	<u>\$ 3,614,694</u>	<u>\$ 5,131,614</u>
Supplemental disclosure of cash flow information		
Donated stock	\$ 153,331	\$ 148,686

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 1 – ORGANIZATION AND NATURE OF OPERATIONS

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (“PCUSA”) is an unincorporated body of Reformed Christians, who have agreed to conduct worship and other religious activities in conformity with the then current version of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Constitution, which contains among other things, in its Book of Order, a Form of Government setting forth a detailed formal structure of the Church. As an ecclesiastical organization, PCUSA does not exist under any federal law. Central to the structure of PCUSA is the concept of mid councils (formerly referred to as governing bodies). At the national level, the council is the General Assembly. The ecclesiastical work of the PCUSA at the General Assembly level is carried out by a number of ministry units and related agencies.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“PCUSA, A Corporation”) is a corporate entity of the General Assembly of PCUSA, and is the principal corporation of the General Assembly. All voting members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board are members of the Board of Directors of PCUSA, A Corporation. PCUSA, A Corporation receives and holds title and/or maintains and manages property and income at the General Assembly level related to mission activities; generally maintains and manages all real and tangible property not held for investment, including the insuring of such property; effects short-term investment of funds prior to either their disbursement or transfer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the “Foundation”) for longer-term investment; acts as the disbursing agent for all funds held for the General Assembly and for other governing bodies and entities upon their request; and provides accounting, reporting, and other financial and related services as the General Assembly or Presbyterian Mission Agency Board may direct or approve.

PCUSA, A Corporation is a tax-exempt religious corporation under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

NOTE 2 – BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying consolidated financial statements reflect the consolidated operations of PCUSA, A Corporation and its constituent corporations, which are presented on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The constituent corporations of PCUSA, A Corporation are the following: General Assembly Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Inc.; The Hubbard Press; Pedco, Inc.; The Presbyterian Historical Society; Presbyterian Life, Inc.; Presbyterian Publishing House of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc.; Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and The Woman’s Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). All intercompany transactions have been eliminated in consolidation.

In order to ensure the observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of available resources, PCUSA, A Corporation maintains its financial accounts in accordance with the principles and practices of fund accounting. This is the procedure by which resources for various purposes are classified for accounting purposes into funds established in accordance with their nature or purpose.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 2 – BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES
(Continued)

For external reporting purposes, however, PCUSA, A Corporation's financial statements have been prepared to focus on the organization as a whole and to present balances and transactions classified in accordance with the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets and related activity are classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted as follows:

- Unrestricted Undesignated - net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Unrestricted undesignated net assets consist of the accumulation of certain contributions, gifts, bequests, and related income thereon, which are available for general church purposes.

A minimum reserve requirement for unrestricted undesignated net assets is monitored by the Board. If the reserve falls below the minimum reserve requirement, further action could be taken by the Board to undesignate unrestricted designated net assets.

- Unrestricted Designated - net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Unrestricted designated net assets consist of the accumulation of certain contributions, gifts, bequests, and related income thereon that have been designated for specific purposes by the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the General Assembly.
- Temporarily Restricted - net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions that may or will be met either by actions of PCUSA, A Corporation or the passage of time. Temporarily restricted net assets primarily consist of contributions and related investment income.
- Permanently Restricted - net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions to be maintained permanently by PCUSA, A Corporation. Generally, the donors of these assets permit PCUSA, A Corporation to use all or part of the income earned on related investments for general or specific purposes. Permanently restricted net assets consist primarily of endowment funds and revolving loan funds.

Cash Equivalents: For purposes of reporting cash flows, PCUSA, A Corporation considers investments with an original maturity of three months or less when purchased to be cash equivalents.

Investments: Investments are recorded at fair value. Investment transactions are recorded on a trade-date basis. Realized gains and losses are recorded using the specific identification of securities sold on funds held by the Foundation and using the historical cost of securities sold on funds held by other investment managers.

The Trustees ("Trustees") of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation (the "Foundation") believe that the carrying amount of its alternative investments is a reasonable estimate of fair value as of December 31, 2015 and 2014. Since alternative investments are not readily marketable, the estimated value is subject to uncertainty and therefore may differ from the value that would have been used had a ready market for the investments existed, and such differences could be material.

Long-term investments held by the Foundation represent General Assembly endowment funds, which are generally not available for immediate use.

Contributions from Congregations: Contributions from congregations include amounts in-transit at year-end.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 2 – BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(Continued)

Allowance for Loan Losses: The allowance for loan losses is maintained at a level considered by management to be adequate to provide for loan losses inherent in the loan portfolio. Management determines the adequacy of the allowance based upon reviews of payment history, recent loss experience, current economic conditions, the risk characteristics of the various categories of loans, and such other factors, which in management's judgment deserve current recognition in estimating loan losses. The allowance for loan losses is increased by the provision for loan losses and reduced by net loan charge-offs.

Annuity and Life Income Funds: PCUSA, A Corporation is an income beneficiary of trust funds held by the Foundation. In accordance with current accounting standards, PCUSA, A Corporation has recorded, as an asset, the net present value of the future income to be received from the funds.

Inventories: Inventories represent books, periodicals, and curriculum produced by PCUSA, A Corporation for distribution. These items are stated at average cost.

Property and Equipment: Property and equipment consists principally of the PCUSA, A Corporation headquarters building and related land and equipment, domestic properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land, and property held for disposition.

The PCUSA, A Corporation headquarters building and related land and equipment are stated at cost or fair value at the date of donation, if donated. The domestic properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land, and other properties are recorded based on fair value at the date of donation, appraisal value, or replacement cost. Expenditures greater than \$5,000 which increase values or extend the useful lives of the respective assets are capitalized. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

PCUSA, A Corporation holds title to various other foreign properties. Such properties include properties used for mission work, cemeteries, undeveloped land, and property held for disposition. PCUSA, A Corporation has administrative responsibility for property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and improvements for these properties. Generally, it is PCUSA, A Corporation's policy to exclude the cost or donated value of foreign properties from its financial records.

PCUSA, A Corporation reviews for the impairment of long-lived assets subject to depreciation and amortization, including property and equipment, whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of these assets may not be recoverable. If this review were to result in the conclusion that the carrying value of long-lived assets would not be recoverable, then a write down of the assets would be recorded through a charge to net assets equal to the difference in the fair market value of the assets and their carrying value. No such impairment losses were recognized for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014.

Deferred Revenue: PCUSA, A Corporation holds special events each year. Monies received to support future special events are recorded as deferred revenue.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 2 – BASIS OF PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES
(Continued)

Collections: PCUSA, A Corporation's collections consist of works of art, ecclesiastical objects and papers, historical treasures, archeological specimens, and other assets. The collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions since PCUSA, A Corporation's inception, are not recognized as assets on the consolidated statements of financial position. Purchases of collection items are recorded as decreases in unrestricted net assets in the year in which the items are acquired or as temporarily or permanently restricted net assets if the assets used to purchase the items are restricted by donors. Contributed collection items are not reflected on the consolidated financial statements. Proceeds from deaccessions or insurance recoveries are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements. Estimates also affect the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period.

Income Taxes: The Internal Revenue Service has determined that PCUSA, A Corporation is exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. However, PCUSA, A Corporation is subject to federal income tax on any unrelated business taxable income.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America prescribe recognition thresholds and measurement attributes for the financial statement recognition and measurement of a tax position taken or expected to be taken in a tax return. Tax benefits or liabilities will be recognized only if the tax position would "more-likely-than-not" be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized will be the largest amount of tax benefit or liability that is greater than 50% likely of being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the "more-likely-than-not" test, no tax benefit or liability will be recorded. Management has concluded that it is unaware of any tax benefits or liabilities to be recognized at December 31, 2015, and does not expect this to change in the next 12 months.

PCUSA, A Corporation would recognize interest and penalties related to uncertain tax positions in interest and income tax expense, respectively. PCUSA, A Corporation has no amounts accrued for interest or penalties as of December 31, 2015 and 2014. PCUSA, A Corporation is no longer subject to examination by taxing authorities for the years before December 31, 2012.

Subsequent Events: Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to December 31, 2015 to determine the need for any adjustments to and/or disclosures within the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2015. Management has performed their analysis through May 6, 2016, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

Reclassification: Certain reclassifications have been made to the prior year consolidated financial statements to conform to the current year consolidated financial statement presentation. These reclassifications had no effect on the change in net assets.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 3 – NET ASSETS

Temporarily restricted net assets at December 31, 2015 and 2014 are available for the following purposes:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Church loans	\$ 2,754,892	\$ 2,865,756
Jinishian Memorial Program	19,648,671	22,198,735
Educational seminars and publications	19,617,770	22,187,659
Mission work	18,958,771	20,226,331
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	12,839,765	13,379,597
Evangelism and Church Growth	14,415,299	15,262,947
Health	14,989,257	15,776,507
Missionary support	38,015,960	41,325,153
Christian education	11,625,544	12,388,298
Peacemaking/Justice	1,631,981	1,648,507
Hunger	1,512,216	1,921,392
Beneficial interest in Perpetual Trusts	1,345,571	1,596,298
Racial Ethnic	229,855	213,671
Women	636,672	643,366
Historical Foundation/per capita	1,311,003	1,338,968
General endowments	25,124,180	35,598,072
Self-Development of People	355,271	427,985
Other	<u>897,553</u>	<u>968,444</u>
	<u>\$ 185,910,231</u>	<u>\$ 209,967,686</u>

Permanently restricted net assets at December 31, 2015 and 2014 are available for the following purposes:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Church loans	\$ 20,199,708	\$ 20,105,784
Jinishian Memorial Program	10,114,335	10,069,586
Educational seminars and publications	22,447,876	21,684,815
Mission work	4,984,902	4,815,452
Evangelism and Church Growth	7,048,926	6,809,315
Health	13,683,741	13,218,596
Missionary support	16,173,865	15,624,196
Christian education	15,405,108	14,899,554
Peacemaking/Justice	90,916	87,826
Hunger	437,233	422,370
Beneficial interest in Perpetual Trusts	63,785,877	68,074,494
Racial Ethnic	237,464	229,392
Women	109,282	105,567
Historical Foundation/per capita	784,629	784,629
General endowments	96,273,579	96,244,896
Other	<u>1,049,111</u>	<u>1,013,449</u>
	<u>\$ 272,826,552</u>	<u>\$ 274,189,921</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 3 – NET ASSETS (Continued)

Net assets released from restrictions during the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014 consisted of the following:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Jinishian Memorial Program	\$ 1,290,216	\$ 1,458,616
Educational seminars and publications	3,038,523	2,952,141
Mission work	7,032,219	6,832,300
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	5,679,233	4,777,905
Evangelism and Church Growth	6,776,791	6,584,134
Health	3,205,399	3,114,273
Missionary support	2,138,303	2,077,513
Christian education	5,094,856	4,950,014
Peacemaking/Justice	2,209,968	2,147,141
Hunger	2,084,503	2,904,820
Self-Development of People	<u>1,239,542</u>	<u>2,097,601</u>
	<u>\$ 39,789,553</u>	<u>\$ 39,896,458</u>

NOTE 4 – INVESTMENTS

Investments, including long-term investments, are primarily held in common funds managed by the Foundation on behalf of PCUSA, A Corporation. A summary of PCUSA, A Corporation's ownership of the investments held at December 31, 2015 and 2014 is as follows:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Pooled investments held by the Foundation		
Beneficial interest in pooled investments		
Short-term	\$ 58,683,973	\$ 57,999,714
Long-term	<u>309,811,267</u>	<u>336,457,258</u>
Total beneficial interest in pooled investments	368,495,240	394,456,972
Other investments held by the Foundation		
Equities	2,072,222	2,382,326
Shares in New Covenant Mutual Fund	<u>4,234,932</u>	<u>3,827,463</u>
Total other investments held by the Foundation	6,307,154	6,209,789
Other investments		
Cash equivalents	727,091	2,590,800
U.S. treasury securities	16,017,502	17,037,655
U.S. agency securities	1,328,909	1,847,073
Corporate debt securities	21,752,573	21,386,921
Mortgage-backed securities	1,702,664	2,297,468
Other fixed income securities	-	341,208
Equity securities	728,617	776,061
Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program		
denominational account receipts	<u>7,953,503</u>	<u>9,781,665</u>
Total other investments	<u>50,210,859</u>	<u>56,058,851</u>
Total investments	<u>\$ 425,013,253</u>	<u>\$ 456,725,612</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 4 – INVESTMENTS (Continued)

PCUSA, A Corporation invests a majority of its funds in the Foundation's common investment portfolio. Investment balances held by the Foundation are allocated monthly by the Foundation's management based on the portion of PCUSA, A Corporation's funding to the total funding of the portfolio. The Foundation's investment portfolio as of December 31 comprised the following types of investments:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Preferred and common stock	47%	44%
Fixed income	17	20
Hedge funds	25	24
Real estate	8	7
Private equity	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Income received by PCUSA, A Corporation from the Foundation is net of administrative fees of outside managers.

NOTE 5 – BENEFICIAL INTEREST IN PERPETUAL TRUSTS

Funds held in trust by others represent resources neither in the possession nor under the control of PCUSA, A Corporation, but held and administered by outside trustees, with PCUSA, A Corporation deriving only income from such funds. Such investments are recorded in the consolidated statement of financial position at the fair value of the principal amounts, which represents the estimated present value of the expected future cash flows, and the income, including fair value adjustments, is recorded in the consolidated statement of activities and changes in net assets.

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION

In accordance with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA), the Organization considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds:

- (1) The duration and preservation of the fund.
- (2) The purposes of the donor-restricted endowment fund.
- (3) General economic conditions.
- (4) The possible effect of inflation and deflation.
- (5) The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments.
- (6) Other resources of the Organization.
- (7) The investment policies of the Organization.

Appropriation of Endowment Assets: PCUSA, A Corporation has a spending formula agreement with the Foundation whereby PCUSA, A Corporation receives investment income from unrestricted and restricted endowments owned and held by the Foundation for the General Assembly's mission use.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (Continued)

The current policy calls for a 4.25% annual total return payout rate of the average market value based on the 20-quarter rolling average with an eighteen-month lag. Pursuant to this policy, the Foundation paid the beneficiaries of certain endowments 4.1% (based on the December 31, 2014 market value) and 4.6% (based on the December 31, 2013 market value) in 2015 and 2014, respectively. The spending formula will be monitored to determine the effects of changing return and inflation expectations on the preservation of purchasing power and the generation of appropriate levels of spendable income.

Investment Policies: The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation are charged with the responsibility of managing the endowment assets that benefit the Church. The overall goal in management of these funds is to generate a long-term total rate of return that provides sustainable distributions to support the mission within reasonable levels of risk.

The Trustees adhere to modern portfolio theory, which has as its basis risk reduction through diversification. Diversification is obtained through the use of multiple asset classes as well as multiple investments within these asset classes. Asset classes that may be used include (but are not limited to) domestic and international stocks and bonds, hedge funds, private equity (venture capital and corporate finance), and real property (real estate, minerals, and timber). The investment strategy is implemented through the selection of external advisors and managers with expertise and successful histories in the management of specific asset classes.

The Trustees' role is one of setting and reviewing policy; and retaining, monitoring, and evaluating advisors and investment managers. It is the Trustees' desire to find ways to invest these funds in accordance with the social witness principles of the PCUSA. The Trustees will review the investment policy statement at least annually.

The primary financial objectives of the permanent endowment funds (the "Fund") are to (1) provide a stream of relatively stable and constant earnings in support of annual budgetary needs and (2) to preserve and enhance the real (inflation-adjusted) purchasing power of the Fund.

The long-term investment objective of the Fund is to attain a real total annualized return of at least 5%. The calculation of real total return includes all realized and unrealized capital changes plus all interest, rent, dividend, and other income earned by the portfolio, adjusted for inflation, during a year, net of investment expenses, on average, over a five-to-seven year period. Secondary objectives are to (1) outperform the Fund's custom benchmark, a weighted average return based on the target asset allocation and index returns and (2) to outperform the median return of a pool of endowment funds with broadly similar investment objectives and policies. The Fund's objective is to attain estimated nominal compound return of 9% with a standard deviation of 11.3% of the current portfolio.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (Continued)

Endowment net asset composition as of December 31:

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>2015</u>				
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ (7,923,638)	\$ 147,446,022	\$ 272,826,552	\$ 412,348,936
Board-designated funds	<u>41,664,487</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>41,664,487</u>
Total endowment net assets	33,740,849	147,446,022	272,826,552	454,013,423
Net assets other than endowment	<u>16,012,949</u>	<u>38,464,209</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>54,477,158</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 49,753,798</u>	<u>\$ 185,910,231</u>	<u>\$ 272,826,552</u>	<u>\$ 508,490,581</u>
<u>2014</u>				
Donor-restricted endowment funds	\$ (4,341,464)	\$ 172,778,959	\$ 274,189,921	\$ 442,627,416
Board-designated funds	<u>46,135,095</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,135,095</u>
Total endowment net assets	41,793,631	172,778,959	274,189,921	488,762,511
Net assets other than endowment	<u>13,052,435</u>	<u>37,188,727</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>50,241,162</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 54,846,066</u>	<u>\$ 209,967,686</u>	<u>\$ 274,189,921</u>	<u>\$ 539,003,673</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 6 – ENDOWMENT COMPOSITION (Continued)

Changes in endowment net assets for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014:

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Permanently Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
Beginning balance, January 1, 2015	\$ 41,793,631	\$ 172,778,959	\$ 274,189,921	\$ 488,762,511
Investment return				
Investment income	383,423	2,603,640	135,290	3,122,353
Net appreciation	<u>(204,334)</u>	<u>(21,907,141)</u>	<u>(4,210,650)</u>	<u>(26,322,125)</u>
Total investment return	179,089	(19,303,501)	(4,075,360)	(23,199,772)
Contributions	1,606,102	3,070,017	2,831,324	7,507,443
Sales of resources and services	20,037,171	-	-	20,037,171
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure and other changes	<u>(29,875,144)</u>	<u>(9,099,453)</u>	<u>(119,333)</u>	<u>(39,093,930)</u>
Ending balance, December 31, 2015	<u>\$ 33,740,849</u>	<u>\$ 147,446,022</u>	<u>\$ 272,826,552</u>	<u>\$ 454,013,423</u>
Beginning balance, January 1, 2014	\$ 35,710,782	\$ 175,044,929	\$ 271,285,874	\$ 482,041,585
Investment return				
Investment income	332,409	2,791,444	179,446	3,303,299
Net appreciation	<u>289,208</u>	<u>(2,531,497)</u>	<u>1,258,244</u>	<u>(984,045)</u>
Total investment return	621,617	259,947	1,437,690	2,319,254
Contributions	1,321,644	7,623,606	1,696,668	10,641,918
Sales of resources and services	12,384,103	-	-	12,384,103
Appropriation of endowment assets for expenditure and other changes	<u>(8,244,515)</u>	<u>(10,149,523)</u>	<u>(230,311)</u>	<u>(18,624,349)</u>
Ending balance, December 31, 2014	<u>\$ 41,793,631</u>	<u>\$ 172,778,959</u>	<u>\$ 274,189,921</u>	<u>\$ 488,762,511</u>

Funds with Deficiencies: From time to time, the fair value of assets associated with individual donor restricted endowment funds may fall below the level of the donor's requirement to retain as a permanent endowment fund. Deficiencies of this nature that are reported in unrestricted and undesignated net assets were \$7,923,638 and \$4,341,464 as of December 31, 2015 and 2014.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 7 – MORTGAGES AND LOANS ON CHURCHES AND MANSES

A summary of the activity relating to mortgages and loans on churches and manses during the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014 is as follows:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Receivables at January 1	\$ 1,565,846	\$ 2,145,873
Repayments	<u>(652,063)</u>	<u>(580,027)</u>
Receivables at December 31	913,783	1,565,846
Add accrued interest receivable	<u>2,898</u>	<u>2,370</u>
	916,681	1,568,216
Less allowance for loan loss	<u>(965)</u>	<u>(1,900)</u>
Net receivables at December 31	<u>\$ 915,716</u>	<u>\$ 1,566,316</u>

The ability of each borrower congregation to pay PCUSA, A Corporation for the loan(s) made to the congregation may depend on the contributions the congregation receives from its members. Therefore, payments to PCUSA, A Corporation may depend on the level of membership of the borrower congregations, and on the maintenance of adequate contributions by individual members to their congregations, as well as on prudent management by those congregations of their finances. The following is a summary of the gross loan balances for each Synod at December 31, 2015 and 2014:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Covenant	\$ 187,362	\$ 211,199
Lincoln Trails	145,419	154,812
Mid-Atlantic	39,266	46,317
Northeast	-	78,649
South Atlantic	303,153	764,112
Southern California/Hawaii	238,583	259,879
Southwest	<u>-</u>	<u>50,878</u>
Gross mortgages and loans receivable	913,783	1,565,846
Accrued interest receivable	2,898	2,370
Less allowance for loan losses	<u>(965)</u>	<u>(1,900)</u>
Mortgages and loans receivable, net	<u>\$ 915,716</u>	<u>\$ 1,566,316</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 8 – RECEIVABLES FROM RELATED ENTITIES, MORTGAGES AND LOANS

A summary of the activity relating to receivables from related entities, which includes unsecured student loans of approximately \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million during the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively, is as follows:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Receivables at January 1	\$ 5,993,201	\$ 6,459,911
Assessments and other	11,751,199	14,063,676
Collections of assessments and other	(10,194,134)	(12,967,808)
New loans	159,458	252,453
Loan repayments	(581,712)	(581,121)
Charge-offs	<u>(1,209,872)</u>	<u>(1,233,910)</u>
Receivables at December 31	5,918,140	5,993,201
Less allowance for loan loss	<u>(1,968,590)</u>	<u>(1,910,051)</u>
Net receivables at December 31	<u>\$ 3,949,550</u>	<u>\$ 4,083,150</u>

NOTE 9 – ALLOWANCES FOR LOAN LOSSES AND IMPAIRMENT OF LOANS

The outstanding principal balances of loans to churches, students, and Presbyterian schools and colleges for which an impairment has been recognized at December 31, 2015 and 2014 were \$83,791 and \$86,758, respectively, and the related allocated allowances for loan losses at December 31, 2015 and 2014 were \$0, resulting in no additional provision for loans for December 31, 2015 or 2014. There was no interest received by PCUSA, A Corporation, on the impaired loans during 2015. The total average impaired loan balances were approximately \$2,472 and \$3,337 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

NOTE 10 – PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET

The components of property and equipment, net at December 31, 2015 and 2014 are as follows:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Land	\$ 3,745,576	\$ 3,745,576
Buildings and building improvements	46,079,058	44,488,320
Equipment	13,740,862	12,893,693
Furniture and fixtures	552,583	552,583
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(46,577,400)</u>	<u>(45,404,196)</u>
	<u>\$ 17,540,679</u>	<u>\$ 16,275,976</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 11 – BENEFITS DATA

As explained below in the following paragraphs, PCUSA, A Corporation through the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (USA) offers a defined benefit pension plan, long-term disability plan, death benefit plan, a major medical plan, and a 403(b) retirement savings plan to eligible employees.

Substantially all employees of PCUSA, A Corporation participate in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Benefits Plan”) which is administered by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Board of Pensions”). The Benefits Plan is a comprehensive benefits program, which provides a defined benefit pension plan, a long-term disability plan, a death benefit plan, and a major medical plan. The assets of the Benefits Plan are commingled for investment purposes; however, accounting for each plan is separately maintained.

The defined benefit pension plan’s total net assets available for benefits, as reported by the Board of Pensions, were \$7,395,416,000 and \$7,771,000,000 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively. The defined benefit pension plan’s total Accumulated Plan Benefit Obligations, as reported by the Board of Pensions, were \$5,967,523,000 and \$5,951,000,000 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively. Since the Benefits Plan is a Church Plan under the Internal Revenue Code, PCUSA, A Corporation has no financial interest in the Benefits Plan assets nor does it have any liability for benefits payable, contingent or otherwise, under the Benefits Plan or its components.

PCUSA, A Corporation pays the entire cost associated with the major medical plan. Employees have the option to purchase additional coverage such as dental, long-term care, and life insurance.

In addition, PCUSA, A Corporation sponsors a retirement savings plan. The employer contribution is designed to provide equalization of the impact of tax differences between clergy and lay personnel. All exempt lay employees are eligible to participate in the employer portion of the plan. PCUSA, A Corporation pays an amount based upon a calculation of tax differences. Contributions to the Plan were \$719,548 and \$682,453 for 2015 and 2014, respectively.

PCUSA, A Corporation’s expenses for the plans for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014 were as follows:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Administered by Board of Pensions		
Pension plan	\$ 3,469,019	\$ 3,524,904
Death and disability	318,990	324,880
Major medical plan	<u>8,096,711</u>	<u>7,979,457</u>
	11,884,720	11,829,241
Administered by others - retirement savings plan	<u>719,548</u>	<u>682,453</u>
	<u>\$ 12,604,268</u>	<u>\$ 12,511,694</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 12 – CONCENTRATION OF RISKS

Revenue Risk: PCUSA, A Corporation's primary source of revenue is contributions from Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and individuals. The majority of these contributions are transmitted via the Presbyteries that are grouped into 16 Synods comprised of a total of 171 Presbyteries. The following is a summary of the contributions by each of the Synods during the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Alaska-Northwest	\$ 791,572	\$ 720,731
Covenant	2,427,846	2,208,735
Lakes and Prairies	2,243,094	2,330,410
Lincoln Trails	1,795,602	2,131,695
Living Waters	1,270,713	1,359,336
Mid-America	1,058,053	1,015,276
Mid-Atlantic	3,947,576	3,509,544
Northeast	2,697,347	2,665,758
Pacific	1,954,934	1,956,297
Puerto Rico	28,549	19,097
South Atlantic	2,626,200	2,409,086
Southern California/Hawaii	1,100,021	1,076,507
Southwest	481,457	477,403
The Rocky Mountains	578,774	583,503
The Sun	1,830,318	2,088,306
Trinity	<u>3,149,190</u>	<u>3,212,456</u>
	27,981,246	27,764,140
Individuals and Other Church-Related	<u>10,587,957</u>	<u>9,519,979</u>
	<u>\$ 38,569,203</u>	<u>\$ 37,284,119</u>

Credit Risk: PCUSA, A Corporation maintains cash and cash equivalents with various financial institutions. At times, such cash and cash equivalents may be in excess of the FDIC insurance level. PCUSA, A Corporation has not experienced any losses in such accounts and management believes PCUSA, A Corporation is not exposed to any significant credit risks on cash and cash equivalents.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 13 – FAIR VALUE

United States generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) define and establish a framework for measuring fair value and expand disclosures about fair value measurements. GAAP emphasizes fair value is a market-based measurement and enables the reader of the financial statements to assess the inputs used to develop those measurements by establishing a fair value hierarchy for ranking the quality and reliability of the information used to determine fair values. The assets and liabilities carried at fair value are classified and disclosed in one of the following three categories:

Level 1: Valuations for assets and liabilities traded in active exchange markets, such as the New York Stock Exchange. Valuations are obtained as of the measurement date from readily available pricing sources for market transactions involving identical assets or liabilities (market approach).

Level 2: Valuations for assets and liabilities traded in less active dealer or broker markets. Valuations are obtained from quoted prices by third party pricing sources for similar assets or liabilities; quoted prices in markets that are not active; or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated. The valuation methodology for Level 2 investments consists of both income and market approaches, as appropriate for the specific investment.

Level 3: Valuations for assets and liabilities are unobservable and significant. Valuations reflect management's best estimate of what market participants would use in pricing an asset or liability at the measurement date.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. The lowest level of significant input determines the categorization of the entire fair value measurement in the hierarchy.

Treasury bonds, equities and mutual funds are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the bonds are traded (Level 1 inputs). Corporate bonds and agency bonds are valued at quoted prices for identical or similar assets in non-active markets since these bonds trade infrequently (Level 2 inputs - market). Mortgage backed securities are valued using matrix pricing, which is a mathematical technique widely used to value debt securities without relying exclusively on quoted prices for the specific securities, but rather by relying on the securities' relationship to other benchmark quoted securities (Level 2 inputs - market).

The fair value of the certificates of deposit, equity investment, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("PILP") denominational accounts were recalculated by applying the interest rate to the initial investments, and no discounts for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable (Level 2 inputs).

The investment in the unitized pool is managed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. The investment objectives of the fund are to (1) provide a stream of relatively stable and constant earnings in support of annual budgetary needs and (2) preserve and enhance the real (inflation-adjusted) purchasing power of the fund. The Foundation's investment policy is documented in the Statement of Investment Policies and Objectives for the Endowment Fund amended November 14, 2013.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 13 – FAIR VALUE (Continued)

The underlying investments in the unitized pool are held in accordance with specific guidelines set forth by the Foundation and various targets have been established with regard to allowable investments purchased by the unitized pool. At December 31, 2015, the underlying investments of the unitized pool consist of the following asset classes:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Stock	47%	44%
Fixed Income	17	20
Hedge Funds	25	24
Real Estate	8	7
Private Equity	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Withdrawals from the unitized pool are available within 90 days with prior written notice. Pursuant to U.S. GAAP, management has considered redemption restrictions to assess classification of the fair value inputs. As a result, unitized pool assets with redemption periods of 90 days or less are considered Level 2 fair value measurements.

The fair value of the beneficial interests in the perpetual trust assets (life income funds and funds held in trust by others) is based on a valuation model that calculates the present value of estimated distributed income. The valuation model incorporates the fair value of investment holdings, which are readily marketable securities valued at quoted prices and incorporates assumptions that market participants would use in estimating future distributed income. PCUSA, A Corporation is able to compare the valuation model inputs and results to widely available published industry data for reasonableness. PCUSA does not have the ability to redeem the investment within 90 days (Level 3 inputs - market).

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 13 – FAIR VALUE (Continued)Assets and Liabilities Measured on a Recurring Basis

Assets and liabilities measured at fair value on a recurring basis are summarized below for 2015 and 2014:

	<u>Total</u>	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
<u>2015</u>				
Assets:				
Pooled investments held by the Foundation				
Beneficial interest in pooled investments	\$ 368,495,240	\$ -	\$ 368,495,240	\$ -
Other investments held by the Foundation				
Equities	2,072,222	2,072,222	-	-
Shares in New Covenant Mutual fund	4,234,932	4,234,932	-	-
Other investments				
Cash equivalents	727,091	727,091	-	-
U.S. treasury securities	16,017,502	16,017,502	-	-
U.S. agency securities	1,328,909	-	1,328,909	-
Corporate debt securities	21,752,573	-	21,752,573	-
Mortgage-backed securities	1,702,664	-	1,702,664	-
Equity securities	<u>728,617</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>728,617</u>	<u>-</u>
Total investments	417,059,750	23,051,747	394,008,003	-
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	<u>65,131,447</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>65,131,447</u>
	<u>\$ 482,191,197</u>	<u>\$ 23,051,747</u>	<u>\$ 394,008,003</u>	<u>\$ 65,131,447</u>

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 13 – FAIR VALUE (Continued)

	<u>Total</u>	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Other Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)
<u>2014</u>				
Assets:				
Pooled investments held by the Foundation				
Beneficial interest in pooled investments	\$394,456,972	\$ -	\$394,456,972	\$ -
Other investments held by the Foundation				
Equities	2,382,326	2,382,326	-	-
Shares in New Covenant Mutual fund	3,827,463	3,827,463	-	-
Other investments				
Cash equivalents	2,590,800	2,590,800	-	-
U.S. treasury securities	17,037,655	17,037,655	-	-
U.S. agency securities	1,847,073	-	1,847,073	-
Corporate debt securities	21,386,921	-	21,386,921	-
Mortgage-backed securities	2,297,468	-	2,297,468	-
Other fixed income securities	341,208	-	341,208	-
Equity securities	<u>776,061</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>776,061</u>	<u>-</u>
Total investments	446,943,947	25,838,244	421,105,703	-
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	<u>69,670,791</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>69,670,791</u>
	<u>\$516,614,738</u>	<u>\$23,838,244</u>	<u>\$421,105,703</u>	<u>\$ 69,670,791</u>

The table below presents a reconciliation of gains and losses for all assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014:

	Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts
Balance January 1, 2014	\$ 68,575,320
Total realized and unrealized gains and losses Settlements	1,686,528 <u>(591,057)</u>
Balance, December 31, 2014	69,670,791
Total realized and unrealized gains and losses Settlements	(3,885,520) <u>(653,824)</u>
Balance, December 31, 2015	<u>\$ 65,131,447</u>

There were no transfers during 2014 or 2015.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 14 – FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

A summary of PCUSA, A Corporation's operating expenses by functional classification for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014 is as follows:

	<u>2015</u>		<u>2014</u>	
	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Program expenses	\$ 76,277,966	87%	\$ 78,848,769	85%
Management and general expenses	6,438,410	7	8,104,262	9
Fundraising expenses	<u>5,355,557</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5,312,216</u>	<u>6</u>
	<u>\$ 88,071,933</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$ 92,265,247</u>	<u>100%</u>

The amount of fundraising expenses as a percentage of funds raised was 14% and 15% for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

NOTE 15 – COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

PCUSA, A Corporation holds and participates in a self-insurance fund that exists to provide a source of funds for that portion of certain losses not covered by commercial insurance to cover deductibles on commercial insurance and for certain classes of uninsured losses. Various General Assembly-level agencies and corporations are included in the Fund. The largest possible loss to be assumed in any one event or occurrence is \$250,000, with \$1,000,000 as the largest potential aggregate of all claims in a single calendar year.

The minimum balance of the self-insurance fund shall not fall below \$5,000,000 as a result of claims paid. In the event this happens, an assessment will be made to the insured entities to return the fund to the \$5,000,000 minimum balance. The assessment will be based on each insured entity's 5-year loss ratio. A 1% minimum assessment will be made by the entities that have not experienced any losses in the 5-year period. The balance of the Fund reflected as designated net assets by PCUSA, A Corporation was \$5,816,027 and \$6,219,583 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

During the ordinary course of business, PCUSA, A Corporation is subject to pending and threatened legal actions. Management of PCUSA, A Corporation does not believe that any of these actions will have a material adverse effect on PCUSA, A Corporation's consolidated financial position or change in net assets.

NOTE 16 – RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONSFoundation

The Foundation provides certain investment, custodial, and deferred giving services to PCUSA, A Corporation. The Foundation recoups the cost of those services not covered from the income of its own endowment funds by quarterly charges against the investment pools in which the funds administered by the Foundation are invested. These charges were recovered from the principal and income of these pools. Such costs consist of salary and benefits; outside investment services; and other operating expenses.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 16 – RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (Continued)

The income received by PCUSA, A Corporation from the Foundation is net of administrative fees of outside managers as described previously. PCUSA, A Corporation's investments and unrestricted and restricted endowment funds held by the Foundation on behalf of the General Assembly at December 31, 2015 and 2014, totaled approximately \$375,000,000 and \$401,000,000, respectively.

The Foundation's custodial cost recovery and investment management fees are assessed daily based on the prior day's market value against the total fund.

On June 21, 2014, an action was taken at the 221st General Assembly to transfer the Theological Education Fund (the "Fund") from the Presbyterian Mission Agency ("PMA") to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation ("Foundation"). The Fund is to be managed, administered, and distributed by the Foundation for the benefit of seminaries related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pursuant to a fund advisory agreement between the Foundation and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, on behalf of the PMA and on behalf of the Committee on Theological Education ("COTE"). The fund agreement provides that future contributions to the Fund will be irrevocable contributions to the Foundation and distributed only as directed by COTE, effective January 1, 2015.

Board of National Missions

There are certain church loan funds whereby the fiduciary ownership belongs to the Board of National Missions, a constituent corporation of the Foundation. PCUSA, A Corporation is the disbursing agent for those funds under a limited power of attorney from the Foundation. PILP administers the Loan Program under an administrative services agreement with PCUSA, A Corporation. Accordingly, these funds are not reflected in the consolidated financial statements but are administered by PCUSA, A Corporation. These loan funds were approximately \$241,000,000 and \$245,000,000 at December 31, 2015 and 2014, respectively.

Board of Pensions

PCUSA, A Corporation served as a receiving agent for funds designated for the Board of Pensions. PCUSA, A Corporation received \$1,221,638 and \$1,462,123 from congregations for the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, of which \$377,959 and \$401,274 was yet to be remitted to the Board of Pensions.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.

PCUSA, A Corporation leases office space and provides administrative support to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("PILP") by contract. For the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, administrative support charged to PILP was \$149,309 and \$144,960, respectively. Office space charged to PILP was \$59,805 and \$58,180 for 2015 and 2014, respectively.

On June 29, 2000, PCUSA, A Corporation entered into an operating agreement with PILP under which PILP will provide administrative services (e.g., origination and loan servicing) for PCUSA, A Corporation's church loan program at cost in an effort to streamline the coordination process between PCUSA, A Corporation's church loan program and PILP's loan program. PCUSA, A Corporation reimbursed PILP \$750,563 and \$324,716 for the actual costs of such services during 2015 and 2014, respectively.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 16 – RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (Continued)

PCUSA, A Corporation and PILP have issued joint loans through participation agreements. For the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, total loans outstanding were \$41,086,688 and \$33,001,030, respectively, under these participation agreements.

PILP issued a secured loan to PCUSA, A Corporation for the benefit of the Presbyterian Historical Society during 2015. The balance as of December 31, 2015 was \$306,954. The terms of the agreement call for 120 payments, with an interest rate of 4.25% and a maturity date of February 1, 2027.

PCUSA, A Corporation has a current commitment, effective May 1, 2014, to PILP for five years to invest up to \$5,000,000 in short and intermediate term accounts called denominational account receipts (DAR). As of December 31, 2015 and 2014, investments with PILP were \$7,950,344 and \$9,769,049, respectively. At December 31, 2015 and 2014, fixed interest rates ranged from 0.45% to 1.74% and 0.45% to 1.74%, respectively, and the adjustable rate ranged from 0.40% to 1.19% and 0.40% to 1.14%, respectively. For the year ended December 31, 2015, the Foundation did not invest with PILP from PCUSA, A Corporation's unrestricted endowment funds.

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

PCUSA, A Corporation leases office space to Presbyterian Publishing Corporation ("PPC") under an operating lease. For the years ended December 31, 2015 and 2014, rental income was \$156,676 and \$156,770. PPC's lease expired at the end of 2014 and a new lease addendum was signed for 2015-2018.

Other related expenses charged to PPC for telephone, postage, and copy services were \$50,554 and \$86,234 in 2015 and 2014, respectively.

PPC pays PCUSA for supplemental warehousing and distribution services. Fees paid by PPC under this agreement in 2015 and 2014 were \$25,756 and \$45,832 for fulfillment fees and \$130,776 and \$148,228 for freight, respectively.

PPC publishes various pamphlets, magazines, and books for PCUSA, A Corporation during the year on a project-by-project basis. Expenses related to this type of work in 2015 and 2014 were \$167,786 and \$195,051, respectively. PPC also pays PCUSA, A Corporation for advertising space in various church publications. Advertising expense under such arrangements was \$4,500 and \$995 in 2015 and 2014, respectively.

(Continued)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.),
A CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
December 31, 2015 and 2014

NOTE 16 – RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (Continued)Insurance

PCUSA, A Corporation participates in commercial insurance programs, whereby premiums are negotiated and paid by PCUSA, A Corporation on behalf of all General Assembly entities. The Board of Pensions, Foundation, PILP, and PPC reimburse PCUSA, A Corporation for expenses paid on their behalf. Expenses incurred for commercial insurance paid by PCUSA, A Corporation and for which we have been reimbursed for December 31, 2015 and 2014:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Foundation	\$ 118,463	\$ 120,405
Board of Pensions	505,679	553,931
PILP	89,150	53,933
PPC	<u>87,466</u>	<u>86,869</u>
	<u>\$ 800,758</u>	<u>\$ 815,138</u>

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

10 MISSION COORDINATION

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
Consolidating Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2015

	General Mission	Curriculum	Presbyterian Center Louisville/ Property and Equipment	Hubbard Press	Youth Triennium	Jinishian	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	Self Development of People	Presbyterian Hunger Program	Ghost Ranch	Stony Point	Specific Property	Self Insurance	Student Loans	Church Loans	OGA Per Capita	OGA Historical Society	Reclass/ Elimination	Total
ASSETS																			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,846,473	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,978	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 279,860	\$ 166,457	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 225,242	\$ 94,684	\$ -	\$ 3,614,694
Beneficial interest in pooled investments held by the Foundation - short-term	31,337,128	-	1,085,900	-	-	104,206	-	-	-	420,068	-	776,096	6,267,497	1,777,384	8,245,424	5,145,026	3,525,244	-	58,683,973
Other investments and accrued income	27,238,353	-	-	1,427,427	-	187,762	12,709,445	746,380	872,569	-	-	-	-	-	4,005,688	2,988,871	34,364	-	50,210,859
Contributions receivable from congregations	4,042,515	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(169,754)	-	-	3,872,761
Mortgages and loans on churches and manses, including accrued interest, net	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,485	-	-	-	-	-	-	914,231	-	-	-	915,716
Receivables from related entities, net	(784,202)	100,173	-	121,592	-	-	3,000	1,536	-	(8,728)	204,873	7,084	-	1,367,855	-	1,348,512	165,000	1,422,855	3,949,550
Due from/(to) other funds	(1,056,303)	524,044	1,517,691	18,615	3,628	317,954	124,622	(83,694)	(102,596)	(2,788,945)	(2,004,569)	(23,945)	(451,469)	1,303,359	3,478,109	(587,385)	(189,116)	-	-
Due from the Foundation	1,408,464	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	964,240	2,372,704
Other accounts receivable	129,476	-	-	7,232	-	-	-	-	-	9,335	-	-	-	-	-	2,043	-	-	148,086
Inventories, prepaid expenses and other assets	383,312	54,827	-	247,482	-	-	2,695	-	64,516	271,101	69,387	-	-	-	-	16,435	-	-	1,109,755
Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	-	-	8,260,473	403,120	-	-	-	-	-	6,329,760	1,359,896	-	-	-	-	-	1,187,430	-	17,540,679
Beneficial interest in pooled investments held by the Foundation - long-term	276,996,821	-	-	-	-	29,230,395	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,111,692	-	338,675	133,684	-	309,811,267
Other investments held by Foundation	6,307,154	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,307,154
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	65,131,447	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65,131,447
Total assets	\$ 413,980,638	\$ 679,044	\$ 10,864,064	\$ 2,227,446	\$ 3,628	\$ 29,840,317	\$ 12,839,762	\$ 665,707	\$ 834,489	\$ 4,512,451	\$ (203,956)	\$ 759,235	\$ 5,816,028	\$ 7,560,290	\$ 16,643,452	\$ 9,307,665	\$ 4,951,290	\$ 2,387,095	\$ 523,668,645
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS																			
Liabilities:																			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 5,576,743	\$ 687,043	\$ -	\$ 7,186	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 124,242	\$ 316	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (434)	\$ -	\$ (581,714)	\$ 5,813,382
Amounts received from congregations and designated for others	873,878	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	873,878
Amounts held for missionaries and committed for projects	2,305,153	-	-	-	-	77,308	-	310,436	-	14,823	89,740	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,797,460
Amount due to other agencies	3,864,545	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,864,545
Due to the Foundation	(964,240)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	964,240	-
Deferred revenue	401,846	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	429,359	-	-	-	-	-	1,435	-	-	832,640
Other	986,272	-	-	241	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	9,632	-	-	996,159
Total liabilities	13,044,197	687,043	-	7,427	-	77,308	-	310,436	-	568,438	90,056	-	-	-	-	10,633	-	382,526	15,178,064
Net assets:																			
Unrestricted																			
Undesignated	(596,350)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,681,092	-	2,004,569	8,089,311
Designated	12,493,616	(7,999)	10,864,064	2,220,019	3,628	-	-	-	-	3,147,440	(352,284)	759,235	5,816,028	-	1,249,142	2,265,001	3,206,597	-	41,664,487
Total unrestricted	11,897,266	(7,999)	10,864,064	2,220,019	3,628	-	-	-	-	3,147,440	(352,284)	759,235	5,816,028	-	1,249,142	8,946,093	3,206,597	2,004,569	49,753,798
Temporarily restricted	147,843,945	-	-	-	-	19,648,674	12,839,762	355,271	834,489	263,923	58,272	-	-	2,754,892	-	261,370	1,049,633	-	185,910,231
Permanently restricted	241,195,230	-	-	-	-	10,114,335	-	-	-	532,650	-	-	-	4,805,398	15,394,310	89,569	695,060	-	272,826,552
Total net assets	400,936,441	(7,999)	10,864,064	2,220,019	3,628	29,763,009	12,839,762	355,271	834,489	3,944,013	(294,012)	759,235	5,816,028	7,560,290	16,643,452	9,297,032	4,951,290	2,004,569	508,490,581
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 413,980,638	\$ 679,044	\$ 10,864,064	\$ 2,227,446	\$ 3,628	\$ 29,840,317	\$ 12,839,762	\$ 665,707	\$ 834,489	\$ 4,512,451	\$ (203,956)	\$ 759,235	\$ 5,816,028	\$ 7,560,290	\$ 16,643,452	\$ 9,307,665	\$ 4,951,290	\$ 2,387,095	\$ 523,668,645

10 MISSION COORDINATION

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation
 Consolidating Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
 Year Ended December 31, 2015

	General Mission	Curriculum	Presbyterian Center Louisville/Property and Equipment	Hubbard Press	Youth Triennium	Jinishian	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	Self Development of People	Presbyterian Hunger Program	Ghost Ranch	Stony Point	Specific Property	Self Insurance	Student Loans	Church Loans	OGA Per Capita	OGA Historical Society	Reclass/ Elimination	Total
Revenues, Gains, and Other Support																			
Contributions																			
Congregations	\$ 9,918,252	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,192,773	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,111,025
Presbyterian Women	880	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	880
Gifts, bequests and grants	6,134,455	-	-	-	-	44,749	-	-	-	954,033	524,920	-	-	-	-	-	567,894	(75,000)	8,151,051
Special giving and special offering	16,243,566	-	-	-	-	-	5,669,795	1,205,419	1,793,904	-	(30,418)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24,882,266
Total contributions	32,297,153	-	-	-	-	44,749	5,669,795	1,205,419	1,793,904	954,033	494,502	-	-	-	-	12,192,773	567,894	(75,000)	55,145,222
Investment return and other support																			
Income from endowments held by Foundation	3,594,615	-	11,570	-	-	298,279	-	-	-	17,775	-	10,235	67,375	13,827	30,581	91,172	223,647	-	4,359,076
Income on investments	533,911	-	-	9,238	-	2,020	142,450	7,766	13,178	1	223	-	-	-	36,199	30,139	1,741	-	776,866
Realized net gain/loss	7,717,771	-	-	-	-	952,174	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59,819	269,649	-	13,183	-	9,012,596
Unrealized net gain/loss	(27,219,604)	-	(34,880)	-	-	(2,532,320)	(607,140)	(2,471)	(62,418)	(53,178)	-	(21,250)	(196,319)	(177,656)	(118,549)	(190,192)	(341,431)	-	(31,557,408)
Changes in value of beneficial interest	1,111,182	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,111,182
Total investment return	(14,262,125)	-	(23,310)	9,238	-	(1,279,847)	(464,690)	5,295	(49,240)	(35,402)	223	(11,015)	(128,944)	(104,010)	217,880	(68,881)	(102,860)	-	(16,297,688)
Interest income from loans																			
Hubbard Press	-	-	-	1,413,353	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	283	-	49,621	49,946	-	-	-	99,850
Sales of resources	1,098,705	1,242,479	-	-	-	-	2,162	-	17,969	507,900	52,034	-	-	-	-	390,623	38,439	-	3,350,311
Program services	7,910,064	-	9,500	-	-	-	-	-	7,350	3,811,726	1,645,808	-	-	-	-	283,816	53,515	(922,174)	12,799,605
Other	(780,052)	1,196,585	1,714,444	15,888	97,588	20,000	(67,869)	(43,886)	(39,083)	869,153	72,263	(10,423)	(66,285)	(210,182)	(35,274)	246,237	-	(900,000)	2,079,104
Cost recovery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	26,263,745	2,439,064	1,700,634	1,438,479	97,588	(1,215,098)	5,139,398	1,166,828	1,730,900	6,107,410	2,264,830	(21,155)	(195,229)	(264,571)	232,552	13,044,568	556,988	(1,897,174)	58,589,757
Expenses:																			
Cost of sales	479,641	435,284	-	223,219	-	-	-	-	49,265	229,528	-	-	-	-	-	12,841	-	-	1,429,778
Salaries and benefits	32,426,216	1,038,731	-	745,949	19,904	171,296	986,633	585,948	658,492	2,941,446	1,290,998	-	-	-	-	5,478,544	670,950	-	47,015,107
Travel	1,177,269	54,905	-	1,145	-	18,836	215,349	24,163	53,532	11,164	8,482	-	-	-	-	333,528	4,027	-	1,902,400
Meetings	469,809	2,424	-	-	-	10,147	17,473	82,051	18,713	10,231	888	-	-	-	-	699,762	-	-	1,311,498
Support costs and administration	8,304,985	281,555	1,158,958	375,413	-	17,416	55,462	13,176	24,682	1,380,983	963,399	13,924	208,326	-	-	1,891,019	349,074	(2,004,569)	13,033,803
Program	5,252,236	141,607	-	16,140	77,683	27,468	528,150	6,255	23,622	1,280,333	246,480	-	-	-	-	3,784,156	84,223	(1,897,174)	9,571,179
Resource development	154,100	-	-	-	-	4,054	69,752	-	12,279	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	240,185
Grants	6,948,702	-	-	-	-	1,041,000	3,806,414	527,949	1,243,918	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,567,983
Total expenses	55,212,958	1,954,506	1,158,958	1,361,866	97,587	1,290,217	5,679,233	1,239,542	2,084,503	5,853,685	2,510,247	13,924	208,326	-	-	12,199,850	1,108,274	(3,901,743)	88,071,933
Change in net assets before transfers	(28,949,213)	484,558	541,676	76,613	1	(2,505,315)	(539,835)	(72,714)	(353,603)	253,725	(245,417)	(35,079)	(403,555)	(264,571)	232,552	844,718	(551,286)	2,004,569	(29,482,176)
Distribution to the Foundation	(1,030,916)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,030,916)
Change in net assets after transfers	(29,980,129)	484,558	541,676	76,613	1	(2,505,315)	(539,835)	(72,714)	(353,603)	253,725	(245,417)	(35,079)	(403,555)	(264,571)	232,552	844,718	(551,286)	2,004,569	(30,513,092)
Beginning net assets	430,916,570	(492,557)	10,322,388	2,143,406	3,627	32,268,324	13,379,597	427,985	1,188,092	3,690,288	(48,595)	794,314	6,219,583	7,824,862	16,410,900	8,452,313	5,502,576	-	539,003,673
Net surplus/(deficit)	(29,980,129)	484,558	541,676	76,613	1	(2,505,315)	(539,835)	(72,714)	(353,603)	253,725	(245,417)	(35,079)	(403,555)	(264,571)	232,552	844,718	(551,286)	2,004,569	(30,513,092)
Ending net assets	\$ 400,936,441	\$ (7,999)	\$ 10,864,064	\$ 2,220,019	\$ 3,628	\$ 29,763,009	\$ 12,839,762	\$ 355,271	\$ 834,489	\$ 3,944,013	\$ (294,012)	\$ 759,235	\$ 5,816,028	\$ 7,560,291	\$ 16,643,452	\$ 9,297,031	\$ 4,951,290	\$ 2,004,569	\$ 508,490,581

Item 11-01

[The assembly answered Item 11-01 by the action taken on Item 11-03. See pp. 47, 53.]

On Adding a New Standing Rule F.5.c. Regarding Social Witness Policy Statements or Resolutions at the General Assembly—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Approve the following position concerning the process for addressing issues of social justice, economics, and politics:

“The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) hereby affirms the importance of and supports engagement of Presbyterians in issues of social justice, economics, and politics. Following the example of Jesus Christ, Christians should engage in matters of social justice, economics, and politics, in addition to matters of the church and theology.

“In carrying out this responsibility as a denomination, the PC(USA) shall cease taking divisive, up-or-down, yes-or-no positions on partisan issues of social justice, economics, and politics at the national level. Instead, the PC(USA), when such matters are properly before the General Assembly, shall call to the denomination’s attention the importance of the issue, explore the various dimensions of the issue, and implore its members to learn about and pray about the issue and to become engaged according to one’s conscience and views at the local church and presbytery level. The PC(USA) shall also develop the schedule and agenda for the General Assembly so that the time allocated for education on such issues in committees, on the floor, and with all other aspects of the General Assembly is not disproportionate with the fact that social justice, economics, and politics relate primarily to just one of the six great ends of the church.”

2. Amend Standing Rule F.5.c. regarding Plenary Meeting Procedures by adding the following new paragraph F.5.c. and re-lettering existing paragraphs c, d, e, f, and g: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“c. Any social witness policy statement or resolution to be proposed at the General Assembly shall first have the concurrence of one-third of the presbyteries. On any such issue, as an alternative to establishing a potentially divisive policy by a yes/no vote, the assembly shall seriously consider calling the denomination’s attention to the issue to explore its various dimensions, and imploring its members to learn and pray about the issue and become engaged at the local church and presbytery level. In developing the docket of plenary and committee meetings, the docket framers shall be mindful that social witness policy relates primarily to only one of the six great ends of the church and not give disproportionate attention to this one.

~~“d. e.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“e. f.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“f. g.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

~~“g. h.~~ [Text remains unchanged.]

Rationale

Jesus was born into and lived in the real world of politics, economics, and social injustice.

The ministry and life of Jesus demands that Christians engage not just in matters of the church and theology, but also in the real world by attempting to right wrongs and combat injustice.

At times the church has not engaged in matters of social justice, economics, and politics, and, in those situations, has perpetuated injustice in the world.

Presbyterians are a diverse Christian denomination with a wide range of views on matters of social issues, economics, and politics.

Presbyterians favor open and respectful debate about matters of social justice, economics, and politics and how the Christian faith impacts such issues.

The General Assembly of the PC(USA) has taken positions as a denomination on a wide range of partisan issues on matters of social justice, economics, and politics about which there is diversity of viewpoints among the denomination.

Taking yes or no positions on partisan issues has caused and continues to cause division within the denomination and loss of members.

The Presbytery of the Foothills believes there is a better way to fulfill the church's obligation to engage in matters of social justice, economics, and politics, but avoid at the national level taking unnecessary positions on controversial issues that have the adverse effects described above.

The makers of this overture understand social witness "policy statements" and "resolutions" according to the definitions approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993) in the report entitled "Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness Policy."

Concurrence to Item 11-01 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, and New Harmony.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-01, from the Presbytery of the Foothills, overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to "cease taking divisive, up-or-down, yes-or-no positions on partisan issues of social justice, economics, and politics at the national level." And requires that "Any social witness policy statement or resolution to be proposed at the General Assembly shall first have the concurrence of one-third of the presbyteries."

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 11-01 be disapproved.

Overture 11-01 should be disapproved because it

1. mischaracterizes the General Assembly's social witness;
2. reflects a flawed understanding of Jesus' gospel and the Great Ends of the Church;
3. exaggerates disagreements over social witness, and
4. would shut down the church's ability to bear prophetic witness, reviving a distorted understanding of the "spirituality of the church."

[For a fuller understanding of why this overture ought to be disapproved, also consider ACSWP's Advice and Counsel related to Item 11-02.]

1. This overture mischaracterizes the General Assembly social policy witness. The General Assembly does not "take positions on partisan issues." We do not endorse candidates, political platforms, or parties. Rather, we seek to bear witness to the mind of Christ on matters of spiritual and moral concern. Neither does the General Assembly, as a particular embodiment of the universal body of Christ (along with congregations, sessions, and presbyteries), presume to speak in the place of Christ for the church, much less all Presbyterians. John Calvin, John Knox, and John Witherspoon, just to name a few leaders in our tradition, understood the church to take decisive stands; their concern was the independence of the church, based in the role of prophets standing unbowed before royalty. And the faithful witness of the church was to impact the world.

General Assemblies make statements of witness to the implications of the gospel for our time and place. Most are reformist, not revolutionary. Most cite earlier General Assembly actions, as well as scripture, confessions, scientific data, and historical experience. These statements are not infallible, and they encourage discernment rather than binding of the conscience. They represent, not a hierarchical magisterium but a most representative body following rules of deliberation we Presbyterians helped develop. They are precisely what this overture claims to want, invitations for churches and presbyteries to prayerfully consider. They are open to reform, both in principle and in practice. The authority of these statements is almost entirely moral, except when they order the work of the church.

2. This overture does not appear to us to reflect the full gospel of Jesus Christ. We say this with trepidation, because "judgment begins in the house of God," (1 Pet. 4:17), yet bring our varied backgrounds together as we were elected to by the assembly. Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mt. 3:2). A kingdom is more than a king, but is a system of governance. Jesus' proclamation included a confrontation with sinful systems and structures that diminished people's lives. For people living without hope, who despaired that evil earthly powers controlled their destiny, the announcement of God's kingdom was good news. Rebellious earthly kingdoms, however, responded to the challenge of God's in-breaking rule by crucifying Jesus. Yet God, by raising Jesus from the dead, defeated these powers, named as sin, evil, and death. The promotion of social righteousness and confrontation with the powers of evil were not incidental to Jesus' ministry. They cannot be incidental to our ministry.

To the extent that this overture believes it can take the Gospel in limited doses, this is reflected in its dividing up the "Great Ends of the Church." By mandating that General Assembly dockets "be organized around one of the Six Great Ends of the Church," it betrays an erroneous belief that the Great Ends is a list of discrete activities; when they are, in fact, integrally related dimensions of the church's single response to God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Consider how the “promotion of social righteousness” is integral to living out ALL the Great Ends. Can we “proclaim Jesus’ gospel” among people who have historically suffered injustice without promoting social righteousness? Can we proclaim the salvation Jesus Christ makes possible without addressing how Jesus heals (a meaning of salvation) our relationships with God and one another? Can we proclaim Jesus’ gospel without also confronting sinful principalities and powers of this world the way he did? Can we “preserve the truth” without also challenging the ways in which we call evil, “good,” and injustice, “necessary”? Can we “maintain divine worship” if we do not confess our complicity in the world’s injustices? Can we foster the “shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the Children of God” if we do not confront sinful systems that divide and diminish us? Can we “exhibit the kingdom of God” if we do not promote social righteousness in Christ’s church and world? If we pass this overture and put the Great Ends on a rigid cycle, we will compromise every aspect of the church’s life.

In conversation leading up to this General Assembly, the overture’s advocates have admitted that the Great Ends are enmeshed. They have then tried to claim that this fact means that their overture won’t diminish the church’s life because we will not be limited by a singular focus on a single Great End. One can only conclude that if that is the case, then this overture was not fully thought through theologically.

3. Almost everything this overture says about conflict in the church is incorrect. Reading this overture one would never know that, with few exceptions, General Assemblies have approved social witness policy on the consent agenda or by wide margins.

Furthermore, the advocates of this overture are so convinced that an overactive General Assembly is entirely responsible for unhealthy division in the church that they cannot imagine that some Presbyterians might be discontented because the church is too often slow to respond in the face of great evil. We observe that those who benefit from structural injustices tend to feel discomfort when the church raises its prophetic voice, but the oppressed hear good news. By exaggerating and characterizing conflict over social witness negatively, this overture forgets that conflict can be a sign of health and evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit.

On the occasions when General Assembly votes have been close, for example, the vote to divest from American companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine, there has been at least a decade of conversation leading up to the vote. Given how some who cannot bear any criticism of Israel badly misrepresented that statement, one must ask whether the ensuing conflict had more to do with confusion sown by others than the substance of the decision. Consider this observation: <http://www.tikkun.org/tikkundaily/2014/06/23/the-presbyterian-divestment-vote-toward-a-new-model-of-community-relations/>.

Clearly, as pastors, elders, and deacons in our own congregations, ACSWP members know how controversy and distrust can be generated in many ways and sometimes for the least of reasons. Conversation and education are essential, with humility in any claim of truth or judgment. Yet avoiding critical thinking and respectful debate would reduce the church to an accompaniment to the status quo, an entirely reactive and even passive-aggressive entity. Who would judge what is a “partisan” issue? Why should the assembly submit itself to arbitrary rules, making the church focus more on itself than God’s mission?

Can the assembly and its agencies, including all its advisory and advocacy committees, do a better job of speaking the truth in love? Yes. Can we do a better job at listening and at teaching? Yes. Do we need to recalibrate the balance of structure and mission program in all parts of our church—recognizing we are all to reflect Christ’s roles of “prophet, priest, and ruler?” Yes.

The General Assembly is the place in our polity where the nature of the church as a conversation with God over time is played out. We believe we are a “church reformed and always reforming.” This is clearly seen in the ways concerns emerge and votes gradually increase over years leading to changes in policy and program. We share a covenant but still differ on matters of importance, though our church has kept a strong doctrine of Jesus Christ through all the matters this overture considers “partisan.”

In sum, this overture makes the passage of any challenging action by the General Assembly very nearly impossible. By demanding consensus, this overture would establish immobility. Theologically and ethically, however, this overture appears to seek a neutral church rather than a truthful one, and the two are sometimes quite different. We agree that theology should not be reduced to ideologies, but to do that, the church must encourage (as the Brief Statement of Faith does) the challenging of idolatries.

4. By muting the General Assembly’s prophetic voice, this overture compromises the larger church’s ability to confront evil and would revive the distorted doctrine of the “spirituality of the church.” The “Spirituality of the Church” is a long discredited view held by Presbyterians who resisted attempts to overturn Jim Crow laws. Observing that confronting segregation cost the church certain members (though it may have enabled the church to reach other members), they claimed that prophetic speech distracted the church from its true, spiritual mission, which they thought was gathering believers for heaven. They encouraged the church to be silent in the face of prejudice and institutional racism. The framers of this overture protest very much that this is not their intent and we do not accuse them of holding racist views held by previous advocates of the spirituality of the church. But at the same time, we note that, had previous General Assemblies been hindered the way this overture would hamstring future General Assemblies, they could not have spoken against segregation. They would not have

been able to create the discomfort and, yes, constructive conflict, that challenged long-held prejudice and was integral to changing church's culture and promoting social righteousness.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 11-01.

According to Mark 1:14–15, Jesus' proclamation of the good news of God is that "the kingdom of God has come near." The gospel of Christ is about the rule of God in human history, and "social justice, economics, and politics" are how we as a church and in society organize ourselves to live out our values—primarily, Christ's love for all people.

"Forming Social Policy" already requires the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to communicate with presbyteries and synods; must they subject a draft report to presbytery votes before it comes to General Assembly?

For clarity, this proposal would probably require amendments to other portions of the *Manual*, such as the provision for commissioners' resolutions and overture advocates (OA) (unless General Assembly committees want to hear from fifty-seven plus OAs).

What does it mean that "as an alternative to establishing a potentially divisive policy by a yes/no vote, the assembly shall seriously consider calling the denomination's attention to the issue to explore its various dimensions, and imploring its members to learn and pray about the issue and become engaged at the local church and presbytery level?" That the General Assembly should vote yes/no on the above—even after a full third of the presbyteries have asked for action? Not establishing a policy is just as divisive as establishing one, for those who are convicted that God calls us to take action.

Further, the vast majority of ASCWP reports, having been considered and sometimes amended by the General Assembly committee, are approved by overwhelming majorities—most are not divisive, and aid the church in its witness. The same is true for many overtures and commissioners' resolutions—at least, those that survive General Assembly scrutiny.

The Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations depend on General Assembly policy for the work they do. Unless the intent is to abolish these ministries of witness and advocacy, this proposal would likely have the effect of freezing current policy in place and preventing them from being relevant to the ever-changing world.

The PC(USA) is in need of living out its social witness, not slowing it down.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 11-01.

The Six Great Ends of the Church collectively speak to the call and ministry of the church, and each one arguably has a social witness bend to them. While only one of the Six Great Ends names "the promotion of social righteousness," each one speaks to the wholeness, healing, and salvation of God's children and God's kingdom in such a way that cannot ignore social witness and policy.

Issues of gender justice, sexism, and patriarchy are recurring and must be addressed in a timely matter. This overture does not allow social witness to take a prominent place in the church's national gatherings, and in so doing, further silences and marginalizes women and issues that are important to the health, spirituality, and faith of women.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-01

Comment on Item 11-01—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 11-01, **on** adding New Standing Rule F.5.c. regarding social witness policy statements or resolutions at the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created "to carry out the assembly's oversight of the Stated Clerk ..." (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly met with representatives of the presbytery in which this overture originated, and appreciates their sincere concern for the well-being of the denomination. However, the overture would represent a deep departure from our historic roots as Presbyterians, and the manner in which we as Presbyterian witness to the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. The General Assembly is responsible, among other things, for: “warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; ... providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of ... prophetic witness...; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world...” (G-3.0501c). The overture, without amending the Constitution, would hamstring the General Assembly in the exercise of these responsibilities. Moreover, in suggesting a higher threshold for business concerning “social witness policies” to come before the assembly, the overture makes it more difficult for the General Assembly to fulfill in the area of prophetic witness the duty of the church to be “Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei” (“The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God in the power of the Spirit” [G-6.01]). Finally, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly is concerned that this overture in effect partitions the Great Ends of the Church. In the view of the committee, each of these Great Ends intertwines with the others, and the church is most whole when it, through the grace of Jesus Christ, works tirelessly to fulfill each and every one of these Great Ends of the Church together.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 11-01

Comment on Item 11-01—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture asks the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to require certain proposed actions and votes to achieve percentages of support at levels that assure they will not be considered by future General Assemblies and assure defeat of those that are.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully reminds the assembly that any General Assembly cannot bind subsequent General Assemblies. Historically, actions that require supermajority of approval of presbyteries have not passed because it limits access to and limits participation in the decision-making process of the church. In effect, it limits the ability of assemblies to discern the will of God.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 11-02

[The assembly answered Item 11-02 by the action taken on Item 11-03. See pp. 47, 53.]

On Setting Aside “Forming Social Policy” at the Next Three General Assemblies—From the Presbytery of the Foothills.

The Presbytery of the Foothills overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to temporarily set aside its Guideline and Policy for “Forming Social Policy” found in the appendix to the Standing Rules of the General Assembly. This section pertains to the role of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. The Presbytery of the Foothills recommends the following to temporarily take its place:

For the next three General Assemblies (223rd, 224th, and 225th), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) shall focus its attention on generating discussion in the presbyteries about any social witness policy concerns that arise. The aim of these discussions will be to work toward forming consensus in the broader church regarding social witness.

For this time period, the ACSWP shall not on its own propose any social witness policy to the General Assembly, synods, or presbyteries, but shall allow any social witness policy proposals to arise from the presbyteries in the form of overtures.

For this time period, the ACSWP shall not serve its usual role as a clearing house or editor for all social witness policy proposals written by any other entity.

Rationale

The Social Witness Policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been decided at General Assembly by up or down votes, sometimes by narrow margins, without first generating a sense of the will of Christ from the broader church. This form of decision making has often led to deep divisions in the church. By spending time and effort at generating conversation and moving toward consensus, social witness policy can be formed that better reflects the wisdom and discernment of the whole church.

As much as possible, these conversations with presbyteries should be held through electronic means or regional meetings to minimize the expense. Any funds that would have been spent to bring ACSWP to its own committee meetings should be redirected toward the presbytery conversations.

In doing this, the ACSWP will be fulfilling the task force policy in section 3.c. of “Forming Social Policy” to develop a plan in which the whole church can participate in the formation of social witness policy.

Concurrence to Item 11-02 from the Presbyteries of Beaver-Butler, Inland Northwest, John Calvin, Middle Tennessee, and New Harmony.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-02 from the Presbytery of the Foothills Presbytery asks the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to set aside its Guidelines and Policy for Forming Social Policy “temporarily” for three General Assemblies (six years) so that the body designated to develop social witness recommendations would perform an educational function to help form consensus in the church. Further, “For this time period, the ACSWP (the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy) shall not on its own propose any social witness policy to the General Assembly, synods, or presbyteries, but shall allow any social witness policy proposals to arise from the presbyteries in the form of overtures ... [and] shall not serve its usual role as a clearing house or editor for all social witness policy proposals written by any other entity.”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 11-02 be disapproved.

Item 11-02 should be rejected because it

1. unfairly blames ACSWP for unhealthy conflict in the church;
2. does not reflect ACSWP’s actual role in General Assembly decision-making,
3. would make it nearly impossible for the General Assembly to speak in an informed way on matters of Christian conscience and justice in society,
4. reflects a faulty understanding of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) united by a General Assembly,
5. ignores the confessional basis of our social witness, and
6. appears to want to slow down change by unhealthy conflict avoidance.

(For a fuller understanding of why this overture ought to be disapproved, also consider ACSWP’s Advice and Counsel related to Item 11-01.)

1. Item 11-02 unfairly blames ACSWP for destructive controversy in our church. Reading this overture one would never guess that about half of ACSWP reports receive such majority support in committee that they are placed on the consent agenda. Or that those items that are brought up for individual attention in plenary sessions of the General Assembly have virtually all received strong majorities. None of the ACSWP reports debated individually on the floor of the 221st General Assembly (2014) (Tax Justice; Drones, War, and Surveillance; and The Gospel from Detroit) were close votes. Not. One.

By contrast, most hotly contested actions over the years, such as the overture on divestment from companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine at the last General Assembly, and those expanding ordination and marriage policies, have come from presbyteries. Many anticipate that the most hotly contested item before this General Assembly will be the overture calling for divestment from fossil fuels. It comes to this assembly with the endorsement of twenty-two presbyteries. What problem is this overture trying to solve?

The rules for forming social policy reflect a careful study prompted by many presbytery overtures and based on A Brief Statement of Faith (1991), then our most recent confession. We encourage commissioners to read it, as it shows the thinking that has served the church since 1993, <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/why-and-how-church-makes-social-policy-witness/>.

2. This overture misrepresents the role of the ACSWP in General Assembly decision-making. The General Assembly created an Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy because, given time constraints, it needed people to look more deeply into complex issues and offer their advice and counsel. Although the assembly has spoken out regularly on matters of “social righteousness” (including prohibition, anti-lynching, women’s suffrage, etc.) from 1903 on, the model of having a representative committee of volunteers dates back to 1936—see Item 11-09, which celebrates the committee’s work.

Toward this end, ACSWP studies issues and consults experts. It forms teams of knowledgeable church people to write papers. Its processes are not insulated from the broader church, despite what this overture claims. The ACSWP listens to concerned people. It holds hearings (as it did with both the two-state update and the drug reform report) and it tests findings (as it did with the Risking Peace affirmations before this General Assembly and is inviting this General Assembly to do with the drug reform study and proposals.). It consults with mission co-workers, people in the Office of Public Witness, and others

responsible for implementing church policy (such as curriculum writers). And then it offers its best advice to committees of the General Assembly charged to consider these issues.

We are truly mystified by the overture's recommendation that, "For this time period, the ACSWP shall not serve its usual role as a clearing house or editor for all social witness policy proposals written by any other entity."

The ACSWP does not collect or screen resolutions that come from presbyteries. We are, however, charged with reviewing overtures, such as this one, that come before the assembly for how they relate with past General Assembly actions and for their spiritual and moral impact. Our role is precisely "advisory" based on the confessions and traditions of our church. The Design for Mission tries to distinguish policy and program to keep the assembly's authority clear. The de facto alternative is to allow staff to act on their own interpretations of past social teachings, in our view weakening the authority of the General Assembly. While ACSWP can suggest edits to overtures (often consolidating matters to avoid repetition), editing itself is the responsibility of the General Assembly commissioners.

3. This overture would make it extremely difficult for the General Assembly to speak based on study to any issue of moral import for the next six years. Past General Assemblies have responded with timely pastoral and prophetic counsel on unforeseen events such as the Balkans Conflict, 9/11, and the War in Iraq. We ought not muzzle the Holy Spirit as this proposes. A young Presbyterian who works for a well-known secular magazine analyzed the problem in a prize-winning essay: <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/muzzling-the-word-of-god/>. Among his points, young adults are more disheartened by a church that is silent than one that is forthright.

4. This overture reflects a faulty, congregational understanding of the church. In congregational polities, the "church" is always finally the local church. Denominational bodies exist solely to resource local bodies.

By contrast, Presbyterians believe that the General Assembly is an expression of the body of Christ along with presbyteries, synods, and General Assemblies. Just as our polity does not privilege local and individual congregations, neither does it privilege the higher bodies as "the church," the way Episcopal polities do or as the writers of this overture charge. Each part exists for the sake of the Christ's body, considered both as parts and together, performing complementary functions.

The localism of congregational polities produces blind spots. We see this in the New Testament, when the Jerusalem Church mandated circumcision and strict adherence to Jewish ceremonial law. At the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), the church heard compelling testimony from representatives from other locales and made the controversial decision to welcome gentiles into fellowship without requiring circumcision. This decision continued to be controversial in much of the church decades after it was made (see Paul's letter to the Galatians).

The promise of councils, such as the General Assembly, is that commissioners hear testimony from the broader church and are enabled to see beyond the blind spots of their local ministry contexts. We've seen this happen over and over again in the life of the church. General Assemblies of the old "Southern church," the PCUS, for example, were able to see the evil of separate but equal schooling in ways that many local congregations found challenging and resisted. By preventing the General Assembly from speaking, this overture would leave only a local, congregational witness.

5. Item 11-02 does not understand how General Assembly social witness is based on confessions. The statements made by the General Assembly should reflect what Item 11-02's rationale calls, "a sense of the will of Christ from the broader church." While they seek to be responsive to the scriptures and confessions, they do not have confessional status. Nor are they infallible teachings as some statements of the Roman Catholic magisterium. They are advisory and not binding on the conscience. This is because we believe, along with the Scots Confession, that "being human, some [church councils] have manifestly erred, and that in matters of great weight and importance" (*Book of Confessions*, 3.20). Most presbyteries, in submitting overtures, do not believe the General Assembly is infallible, but they want timely deliberation and hope that its agencies reflect our shared capacities to do many things beyond what most presbyteries and synods can do alone.

As we point out elsewhere, the Presbytery of the Foothills effectively raises the Six Great Ends of the Church to supplant the confessions of the church, and further misuses them to take them sequentially rather than holistically (see ACSWP Advice & Counsel on Item 11-01).

The rules for "Forming Social Policy" were developed by a study committee put together in response to a range of overtures from presbyteries that wanted careful, moral guidance and public witness by the church. Where previous guidelines reflected the Westminster Confession and then the Confession of 1967, the 1993 "Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness" (the basis for the General Assembly rules) is based on A Brief Statement of Faith. This General Assembly, if it confirms the Belhar Confession, would appear to continue to value a strong public witness. That Belhar itself narrowly did not get a sufficient majority in the presbyteries only four years ago did not make it improper to bring forward again as our church changes.

6. This overture misunderstands the relationship between conflict and ecclesiastical health. This overture's advocates are so convinced that General Assembly action is the source of destructive controversy that they fail to imagine how the church's inaction provokes controversy. Imagine how members whose lives are negatively impacted by structural racism in church and society feel when the church is slow to hear their pain and respond. As commissioners may realize from the scope

of the Presbytery of the Foothills' positions, they propose many other ideas that would hamper churchwide conversation at the assembly, such as requiring that presbytery overtures receive a very high numbers of concurrences.

The Jerusalem Council reminds us that while conflict can be painful, it is not necessarily destructive. It can be a sign of health and the means by which the Holy Spirit brings new life. If we make it nearly impossible for the General Assembly to speak, we run the danger of quenching the Spirit.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 11-02.

The *Organization for Mission* provides that ACSWP has “direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board” [VI.1., p. 20]. Would that also have to be set aside?

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, is responsible for the process of developing and recommending social witness policy to the General Assembly. The term “social witness policy” refers to the positions adopted by the General Assembly to express its stance on and guide response to issues in the public order, including their relation to the church’s own life and mission. These positions may take the form of policy statements, resolutions, study papers, or social involvement reports, as defined in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, p. 65, *Forming Social Policy*, 2.a. (*Organization for Mission*, VI.1., p. 21)

Would ACSWP have to wait for 1/3 of the presbyteries to submit an overture on a topic in order to “generate discussion in the presbyteries?” Or would it be their role to encourage concurrences once one presbytery submits an overture?

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-02

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-02—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 11-02.

The work of the Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is the work of the church. The church is not the church without speaking to social policies and challenging us to dialogue and act accordingly.

The ACSWP’s prophetic role calls us to be a church that is more just and more true to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its focus on issues of social witness helps local congregations as they consider how to be more faithful in our culture and society.

Issues of gender justice, sexism, and patriarchy are recurring and must be addressed in a timely matter. Putting on hold the work of ACSWP may serve to silence and further marginalize the voices of women and the issues that are important to the health, spirituality, and faith of women.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) approved ACSWP’s report, “*God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Pay Equity and Just Compensation*” (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/resolutions/pay_equity_and_just_compensation.pdf) The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns applauds this work as well as others that lift up justice for women, and we are grateful for their continued commitment and partnership in lifting up women’s concerns in the church and in the world.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-02

Comment on Item 11-02—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly respectfully urges the assembly to disapprove Item 11-02, on setting aside “Forming Social Policy” at the next three General Assemblies.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members and was created “to carry out the assembly’s oversight of the Stated Clerk ...” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.C.2.). It regularly reviews the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly met with representatives of the presbytery in which this overture originated, and appreciates their sincere concern for the well-being of the denomination. However, the overture would represent a deep departure from our historic roots as Presbyterians, and the manner in which we as Presbyterian witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. First, the overture seeks to constrain the business future General Assemblies can consider. It is a fundamental principle of our polity that each assembly should be the judge of its own business. Moreover, the General Assembly is responsible, among other things, for: “warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; ... providing encouragement, guidance, and resources to presbyteries in the areas of ... prophetic witness ...; discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, matters of truth and vision that may inspire, challenge, and educate both church and world....” (G-3.0501c). The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is a body intended

to assist General Assemblies in wise discernment as it carries out these tasks. While it does at times make recommendations to General Assembly, recommendations regarding social witness policy just as often come from presbyteries and synods, or commissioners' resolutions. Each General Assembly is free to accept or reject recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and few items of social witness policy are approved by General Assemblies without modification. But to remove the power to recommend business to future assemblies by a permanent committee of the General Assembly would hamper the work of those General Assemblies.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-02

Comment on Item 11-02—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency comments on the implications of proposed actions on the work of the agency. In this case, if the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is limited to an educational role, the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, and other ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency would not be able to speak to new issues with the authority of the assembly. Within the distribution of tasks determined by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy studies issues and builds on precedents in policy, bringing updates and new matters to each assembly, consulting with those engaged in mission and with appropriate experts. Staff would, of necessity, proceed to determine on their own the positions of the church on urgent matters of justice and other moral challenges before our world.

Other parts of the Compassion, Peace, and Justice (CPJ) ministries area provide education on matters related to their areas, such as Peacemaking, Hunger, and Disaster Assistance, using resolutions and policies developed by ACSWP, such as resolutions on gun violence, poverty, end-of-life issues, public education, or "Religion, Violence, and Terrorism." The CPJ newsletter provides information on the range of ministries and resources for them, relying in part on the voluntary networks of those most committed to the issues to help with education in mid councils and congregations.

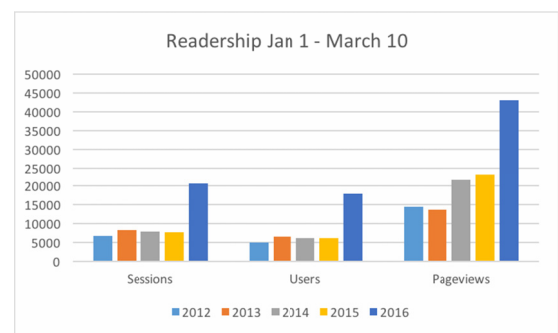
Within Theology, Worship, and Education, there are resources that address some of the concerns of this overture, such as the series of booklets on the Great Ends of the Church.

The PMAB recognizes the concern for increased education about social witness in the church. It is important to note communications efforts of the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy that meet concerns of the overture. One example of the social witness conversation sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has been the on-line journal, *Unbound*, targeted especially for young adults. Below is a report showing a snapshot of the scope of social witness discussion in April, 2016, including the Vice-Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), and several others associated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

Example of online social witness conversation in *Unbound* sponsored by ACSWP (originally an April 2016 update to the Justice Committee of the Presbyterian Mission Agency)

The interaction on social witness as lived by younger adults is something ACSWP has sought to encourage via the online journal, www.justiceUnbound.org. *Unbound* has been a unique part of the PC(USA)'s ecosystem, lifting up personal social witness stories and diverse perspectives. A study of its metrics has been done for comparison with other communications vehicles and a questionnaire is available for comment: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/unboundsurvey>.

The year 2016 has been a very good year so far for *Unbound* (www.justiceUNBOUND.org). As the chart to the right shows, the number of sessions, users, and pageviews in the first part of 2016 has been significantly higher than any previous year. This is, in part, because several articles from our current issue have garnered a great deal of attention on social media. This also likely has to do with the subject matter *Unbound* has chosen to tackle this year. From February to April of 2016, *Unbound* has run a comprehensive issue on race, white privilege, and the church. The table of contents for this issue can be found at: <http://justiceunbound.org/journal/current-issue/>.



Articles of note from "Race, White Privilege, and the Church" issue:

1. "Why I Haven't Felt at Home in a Presbyterian Church in 3 Years" by Rev. Kerri Allen—27,100 pageviews* <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/why-i-havent-felt-at-home-in-a-presbyterian-church-for-three-years/>

2. "Dear White Liberals" by the Reverend Sung Yeon Choi-Morrow—9,966 pageviews* <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/dear-white-liberals/>

3. "What About the White Folks?" by the Reverend T Denise Anderson—4,370 pageviews* <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/what-about-the-white-folks/>

4. “The Time Was Yesterday” by Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia, Vice Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014)—2,369 pageviews* <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/the-time-was-yesterday/>

*Pageviews as of Wednesday, April 27 at 11:00 AM

Other Articles of Note:

“Muzzling the Word of God: A Response to the Foothills Presbytery Overtures” by Ben Perry *Won first place editorial in the Associated Church Press Awards!* <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/muzzling-the-word-of-god/>

“Growing Up in the South During *Brown v. Board*” by ACSWP Co-Chair Dr. Christine Darden: *Second Place for first-person account in ACP Awards!* <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/growing-up-in-the-south-during-brown-v-board/>.

“Serving Ecumenically Is my Profound Joy” by the Reverend Dr. James E. Fother Jr. <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/serving-ecumenically-is-my-profound-joy/>.

Item 11-03

[The assembly approved Item 11-03 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 47, 53.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) notes the advice of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) of keeping together Jesus and justice “in the face of the rise of the ‘nones’ who ignore or write off the church.” Therefore, the assembly wants to urge that alternative sources of funding be sought so that the online voice and presence of www.justiceunbound.org not be lost.]

On Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

The Presbytery of the Cascades overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the PC(USA) to do the following:

1. Recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate with all of our voice for the poor, and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor (in the soup kitchens and catholic worker houses, among the immigrants, with those working to end mass incarceration, and with those who seek to protect all of us, especially the poorest of the poor around the world, from the vagaries of climate change).

2. Call on our churches to commit to a year of Bible study focused on issues of social justice[, with particular attention to the matters of race proposed in Item 11-08 and the application of the Confession of Belhar to these concerns].

3. Call on our presbyteries and synods to examine their own practice, placing these commitments at the center of their concerns, and to streamline the way that issues of immediate significance can be forwarded to the General Assembly by adopting procedures so that overtures and proposals on peacemaking and social justice concerns from sessions and committees may be considered quickly.

4. Facilitate the processes by which these concerns can be brought before us as a national body by resisting new barriers to overture submissions such as additional concurrences, tighter deadlines, or new overture topic restrictions at any General Assembly.

5. Commit to focusing a significant block of the time allotted for future General Assemblies on creating opportunities in consultation with the Committees on Local Arrangements to engage all of the commissioners, delegates, and observers in acts of service to and with communities at risk.

6. Assure that there are voices of those who are most at risk from within our church and outside of it (including interfaith voices), who are invited to share with and challenge the assembly, both in the plenary and committee sessions.

7. ~~[Create a]~~ [Recommend that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries area, implement a coordinated strategy or] “cycle of social engagement” that will assure that concerns around confronting racism, environmental concerns, standing against violence and militarism, and advocating for the dispossessed come before the assembly on a regular and consistent basis, ~~[soliciting overtures from]~~ [consulting on mission strategies and overtures with affected and engaged] presbyteries before each General Assembly on topics of the most immediate concern.

Rationale

This is a moment of great opportunity for our church. Momentum is building within our denomination and throughout our society to courageously confront the challenges of our time. A new civil rights movement, a new peace movement, a new

economic justice movement is on the rise and we are in a position to stand in solidarity with the poor in a uniquely powerful way. It is a time for us to define who we will be for decades to come. May we choose to be a church committed to the gospel of Matthew 25:

- In the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, Jesus tells a story about the church waiting for the moment of the Lord's arrival. Some of those who are waiting are prepared when the time comes, and some are not. The zeitgeist of our age is one of rapidly changing and endlessly creative activism exemplified by the Black Lives Matter movement. Let us be like the bridesmaids whose lamps are trimmed—ready to seize the moment.
- In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus tells a story about a bold slave who was punished for refusing to participate in the empire value of domination. Increasingly we see brave individuals and groups calling out the powerful and standing against the rampant exploitation in our marketplaces, in our prisons, and on our streets. Let us resist evil like that slave, and go stand on the margins of society—in the outer darkness.
- In the Parable of the Judgment of the Nations, Jesus tells a story about how he is encountered among “the least”—the poorest, the most isolated, the imprisoned, the sick, and the hungry. We hear with sober conviction Jesus declaring that a church which fails to serve with and for the poor does not know Him. We agree with Pope Francis who stated that a church that is not actively supporting and serving the needs of the poor has no right to call itself church at all and should be prepared to give up its tax-exempt status to operate as a church. Let us be counted among the sheep who met their King as a stranger.

We see the Spirit blowing through our society, bringing to fruition seeds of peace and justice long dormant. The harvest will be plentiful. Let us heed the call to service, and recommit ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in deeds as well as in words.

Concurrence to Item 11-03 from the Presbyteries of Hudson River, Long Island, Monmouth, National Capital, and Sheppards and Lapsley.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-03—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that Item 11-03 be approved with the following amendments to Recommendations 2. and 7.: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. Call on our churches to commit to a year of Bible study focused on issues of social justice[, with particular attention to the matters of race proposed in Item 11-08 and the application of the Confession of Belhar to these concerns.]”

“7. [Recommend that the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries implement a coordinated strategy or] [~~Create a~~] ‘cycle of social engagement’ that will assure that concerns around confronting racism, environmental concerns, standing against violence and militarism, and advocating for the dispossessed come before the assembly on a regular and consistent basis, [~~soliciting overtures from~~] [consulting on mission strategies and overtures with affected and engaged] presbyteries before each General Assembly on topics of the most immediate concern.”

This item envisions an effective connective process among the councils of the church, particularly presbyteries submitting overtures to a General Assembly that structures a “cycle of social engagement” around fundamental and recurrent justice concerns. Its Recommendations 3, 4, and 5, would strengthen current practice of the church and oppose the set of restrictions proposed in the set of overtures from Presbytery of Foothills.

Overall, this item is strongly connectional and affirms the Presbyterian tradition that the General Assembly is the fullest expression of the church’ voice. At the same time, it does call for a more intentional strategy to “recommit” the whole church to social justice in a way that includes direct solidarity with the poor and “voices long silenced,” to quote from the Brief Statement of Faith.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy sees evidence in younger church members contributing to the online journal, www.justiceUnbound.org, and in the work of Robert Putnam (*American Grace* (2010) and *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (2015), both co-authored) that the church needs to keep Jesus and justice strongly connected in the face of the rise of the “nones,” who ignore or write off the church. Certainly the biblical texts cited in the item show justice to be integral to Jesus’ message.

The amendments are proposed to assist in the implementation of the item’s intent.

ACREC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-03.

Item 11-03 articulates the unavoidable biblical mandate and the mission of the church, which are also documented in the Constitution of the PC(USA):

1. Item 11-03 is aligned well with the very first section of the *Book of Order* on God's Mission: "... The Gospel of Jesus Christ announces the nearness of God's kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord's favor upon all creation. ..." (F-1.01).

2. The Second Helvetic Confession includes the very purpose of this overture: "to commend the needs of the poor to the Church" (*Book of Confessions*, 5.163).

And as one of the functions "Of Religious and Ecclesiastical Meetings," which include: "... and that collections may be made for the poor ..." (*Book of Confessions*, 5.211).

3. The Confession of 1967 warns the church not to violate God's creation and against indifference to poverty:

The reconciliation of man through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation. Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples. The church cannot condone poverty, whether it is the product of unjust social structures, exploitation of the defenseless, lack of national resources, absence of technological understanding, or rapid expansion of populations. The church calls every man to use his abilities, his possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to him by God for the maintenance of his family and the advancement of the common welfare. It encourages those forces in human society that raise men's hopes for better conditions and provide them with opportunity for a decent living. A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God. (*Book of Confessions*, 9.46).

Furthermore, ACREC reminds this 222nd General Assembly (2016) of PC(USA)'s disproportionate obligation as one of the richest per capita churches in the USA.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-03

Comment on Item 11-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

We are grateful that we are a church that is already living a Matthew 25 ministry through programs led by Compassion, Peace and Justice and Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries (www.presbyterianmission.org/cpj, www.pcusa.org/raciaethnic). We affirm the spirit and intention of the overture and give special thanks for congregations that support these ministries by giving to the Special Offerings.

Item 11-04

Item 11-04 has been moved to 12 Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues and has been re-assigned the following item number: Item 12-09. (See p. 938 of the electronic version.)

Item 11-05

[In response to Item 11-05, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 47, 54.]

On the Admission of, and Apology for, Harms Done to the LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends—From the Presbytery of New York City.

The Presbytery of New York City overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Affirm and witness these truths:

a. We come to understand forgiveness, healing, mercy, and reconciliation by God's actions through Jesus Christ's teachings and the Risen Christ in our midst.

b. We are reconciled to God and one another by the forgiveness of our acts of sinfulness, through the Christ who is our peace and who breaks down the walls of hostility and division.

c. Further, we understand that ours is a faith and ministry of forgiveness, healing, mercy, and reconciliation that requires admission of the harms we have done to one another.

d. That the fullness of our new life in Christ calls for a unity of Spirit, a sharing of gifts, and a valuing of all parts of the Body of Christ in the spirit of true forgiveness.

e. We confess that our actions have fallen short of these truths in the marginalization of our sisters and brothers who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ/Q), admitting

(1) that harms have been done to this community by the denomination's participation in the creation of barriers to God's call to our sisters and brothers, based on sexual identity, sexual orientation, and gender identity;

(2) that charges have been instigated with the intention of preventing qualified individuals called by God to serve based on sexual identity and orientation;

(3) that the Constitution of the PC(USA) has been erroneously used to support these charges, resulting in the use of the denomination's court system, in effect, being co-opted to discipline others for who they are; and

(4) that the denomination has participated in or been silent about challenging the destruction of the careers of faithful servants who identified as LGBTQ/Q.

2. Affirm, confess, and apologize as follows:

a. Admit that the PC(USA) has been wrong in the way it has treated the LGBTQ/Q community.

b. Apologize for the teachings and actions that have created marginalization of our sisters and brothers, adding to the erroneous belief that people who identify as LGBTQ/Q should be considered unworthy to serve fully or be honored as family within and without the church.

c. Acknowledge that during this struggle we have often treated one another in ways that did not reflect the presence of the Risen Christ in our midst, including those in opposition to one another, as well as those within their own communities.

d. State publicly that the PC(USA), as a denomination, makes this pronouncement as an act of forgiveness, healing, mercy, and reconciliation.

e. Acknowledge that this admission and apology lifts up the constitutional changes that have been duly implemented to dismantle the lines that have divided us from one another and the ways in which we have been called to serve, including but not limited to Amendment 10-A, Gifts and Requirements (Proposed Amendments to the Constitution: Part 3 of 3, 2010); the authoritative interpretation on marriage, and Amendment 14F, Marriage (Proposed Amendments to the Constitution, 2014).

Alternate Resolution:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) resolves to continue the journey as a denomination to become more open, understanding, and accepting of our LGBTQ/Q family and does the following:

1. **Issues the following statement: "Followers of Jesus Christ know that no person can claim divine favor through personal merit, but only by the grace of God. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledges that actions we and our members have taken over the years have at times led God's beloved children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning to feel that they stand outside the grace of God and are unwelcome in the PC(USA). We deeply regret that, due to human failings, any person might find cause to doubt being loved by God. We affirm the God-given dignity and worth of every human being, and renew our commitment to 'welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed [us], for the glory of God' [Rom. 15:7]."**

2. **Expresses the deep sorrow of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) about all individuals and congregations who have left our fellowship, affirms our commitment to continue to pray with them, and acknowledges our sincere appreciation for those who have maintained relationship despite profound disagreement.**

3. **Challenges all Presbyterians to reflect upon, and repent of, the ways we have mistreated one another, and to seek reconciliation.**

4. **Celebrates the diversity of those called by God into the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).**

5. **Calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to deeper conversations about our differing understandings of what Scripture teaches about faithful living, recognizing that our relationships as God's children are not ultimately dependent upon agreement.**

6. Encourages congregations to reach out actively to those who have experienced marginalization due to decisions of the church, across the spectrum of theological understanding.

7. Encourages presbyteries, when assessing readiness for ordered ministry, to take into account the preparation of those whose ordination process was interrupted by policies that are no longer applicable (*Book of Order*, G-2.06).

8. Urges presbyteries and congregations to be in ministry respectfully, justly, and graciously together with those with whom they may disagree in regard to ordination and marriage policies and procedures.

9. Prays that all Presbyterians, empowered by God’s grace, work to cultivate a renewed spirit of partnership, to live as one community, moving forward in mission and ministry together in faith, hope, love, joy, and peace.

Rationale

The admissions of harms done to one another, the petition of each other for forgiveness, and the public witness of the humility by the church as an institution is required to open our doors as fully as our hearts and intentions have always called us to do.

The last forty years of opening those doors to our sisters and brothers who identify as LGBTQ/Q has not been our only struggle, nor has it been the only place where lives have been harmed in our efforts to change. It is, however, a place where we can bring our experience, strength, and hope in an even greater response that we hope this will initiate, and in which way we encourage others to respond.

We acknowledge that there are many communities and groups who have felt the sting and harms of the church as an institution; an institution in some ways holding on to practices and teachings that separated us, rather than brought us together.

We acknowledge, too, the power and privilege that has not always been exerted in the best interests of those with no power or privilege, and we hope that this “healing overture” will begin broad movement to become a reconciling church in ways that “clean our slate” of harms and injustices for all the world to see.

Further, we believe that such a church is the fullest faithful representation of the Church of Jesus Christ that practices the teachings of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

We also wish to make it clear that we do not see the struggle of the LGBTQ/Q community in our church as exceptional to the struggle of others who have sought justice and welcoming in the denomination. It is where we begin, hoping that this will create an invitation and a process for others to follow, bringing forward their overtures. We hope others will summon the church to acknowledge harms that need to be spoken in their communities, so that we can be the inclusive and welcoming Kin[g]dom on God on earth, beyond anything we have yet to see. We support the efforts of others to follow this process in bringing such actions forward to their presbyteries and the General Assembly.

(NOTE: See Attachment 1 from the Presbytery of Yukon and its statement of repentance to the community of Gambell, Alaska as a precedent, upon which parts of this overture have been based.)

We believe there will be no chance for healing and reconciliation until the PC(USA) admits its mistakes and makes a statement of apology. There are many faithful sisters and brothers who have been estranged by the church because of its teachings, practices, and disciplinary actions towards ministers and others who identify as LGBTQ/Q. A statement such as the one suggested would have the affect of validating our legislative actions with our commitment to changing what has been exclusionary and wrong.

As one of the most constitutionally inclusive mainline denominations in the world, our witness has an impact beyond any borders we might imagine. Our voice of hope, love, joy, peace, justice, and welcoming—the Good News—leads the way for global change and a beginning to the end to the violence of marginalization and discrimination around the world.

Calling the church to admit harms done and apologize to those it has wronged has an impact beyond the LGBTQ/Q community. All gospel and justice/love ministry is about our relationship with each other in this world. An honest statement of apology and determination to herald the changes we have been called to make lifts up the entire denomination in a way that reaffirms who and whose we are.

The theme of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) is *The Hope in Our Calling*—Ephesians 1:18. May it be so!

Attachment 1



An Apology from the Presbytery of Yukon

Offered to the Community of Gambell

We affirm and witness to these truths:

*We come to understand what true reconciliation is
by God's actions through Christ,*

*Who reconciled us to himself by the forgiveness of sin, through Christ,
who became our peace,
who made two become one,
and who break down walls of hostility.*

*Further we understand that
God gave us this same ministry of reconciliation and are Christ's ambassadors.
It is the calling of the church in this and every age
to give shape and substance to this ministry of reconciliation.*

*Our new life in Christ is to be characterized by
peace, reconciliation, a unity of Spirit, a sharing of gifts,
a valuing of all parts of the Body of Christ and
a striving for the full household of God being built together in Christ.*

*Yet, we confess that our actions have fallen short of these truths.
We have participated and even instigated barriers, separation and
a devaluing of brothers and sisters in Christ.*

*Specifically, through our schools and ministry we have
failed to truly understand what the people of Gambell would have wished us to know,
and we have acted in ways that
contributed to the loss of the St. Lawrence Island Yupik language,
caused confusion about proper use of Native drums and other cultural objects, and
caused confusion for some about how to understand their identity in this world.*

*For all of this we repent.
And for any other ways in which our cultural insensitivity has caused harm
We ask the forgiveness of God through our Lord, Jesus Christ,
And we also ask the forgiveness of our brothers and sisters in Gambell.*

Signed this 10th day of March, 2012.

Presbytery Moderator

Leadership Team Moderator

Executive Presbyter

Native American Consulting Team Moderator

PC(USA) GAMC Representative

Sister Church: Jewel Lake Parish Representative

Concurrence to Item 11-05 from the Presbyteries of Chicago, Genesee Valley, and Hudson River.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that in response to this resolution it approve the following resolution as follows:

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016):

“1. acknowledges with deep regret the years of personal and communal rejection experienced by persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) based on prior interpretations of Presbyterian theology and law, especially with regard to ordination and marriage;

“2. affirms the efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a whole in our forty-year process of struggle and transformation, starting with the appointment of the Task Force to Study Homosexuality in 1976, and including many brave witnesses helping both our church and our larger culture have a difficult yet increasingly honest conversation;

“3. recognizes that this struggle has affected the callings of many individuals, created painful divisions among individual members, and has led to the departures of a number of congregations from our communion;

“4. rejoices that in spite of tensions that remain among people of deep faith and commitment with regard to their understanding of the biblical witness on these issues, most of our number have chosen to remain faithful to their vows as members of our church; and

“5. encourages all councils of the church, including the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and related educational institutions, to address openly, caringly, and theologically the impacts of this long period of challenge, dialogue, debate, and change surrounding issues of human sexuality, inclusiveness, ordination, and marriage.”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is authorized by the General Assembly to make recommendations and analysis of proposed actions in light of the church's confessions, theology, and past social witness statements addressing matters of Christian conscience. Thus in most areas of social concern there are corresponding bodies of social teaching and recommendations for applying Christian ethics in practical ways. This is the basis for our proposing a substitute action above, and we review relevant history below.

The proponents of Item 11-05 are deeply right to lift up the forty-year journey taken by our church on matters of sexual orientation. While the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy believes it is not time for an apology such as the one proposed, we urge commissioners to approve this motion to affirm the profound reexamination of sexuality that has been taking place over forty years of struggle, and to encourage prayerful reflection upon the changes involved. As with the impacts that have come through women's ordination and greater equality, greater acceptance of sexual variation also brings a restructuring of traditional patterns and very personal impacts in many of our families. In practical terms, this is a time for remembering and recording experiences and for church leaders, such as co-moderators, to listen intentionally for ways that the church prays and preaches about the elements of pain and healing, grief and grievance, integration and release that are represented in the overture. This overture poses questions to which we should return but which cannot be answered by a single declaration of apology.

During this sometimes conflicted and painful process, the church has grown in awareness of past injustices and of the need for hospitality to persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. We are part of a society in which discrimination and even violence toward LGBTQ persons still occur and with which our faith community is sometimes complicit. At the same time, despite rapid recent gains in social acceptance for marriage equality in U.S. society at large, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has pledged to remain a place where conscientious individual views on both ordination and marriage will continue to be respected. In the larger world, we are well aware that Christians hold a range of views about sexuality, celibacy, reproductive rights, freedom of religious expression, and human rights generally.

In honoring freedom of conscience, the church has seen that matters of theology and sexuality, such as deep beliefs in gender complementarity, reflect long streams of Christian tradition and are held by many Presbyterians to be consistent with the full equality of women and men. The ability to converse and question without intending personal insult or oppression or group exclusion is important, particularly as new dimensions of questioning enter the cultural conversation. From a Christian standpoint, the incarnation commits us to taking bodily identity very seriously. Hence we welcome further understanding of how we human beings are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

We note that some members, in departing or urging others to depart, have falsely claimed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be intolerant or to have changed its core understanding of Jesus Christ. A helpful discussion of this matter can be found here: <http://www.fpc-bethlehem.org/discernmentprocessblog/2016/1/28/notes-from-the-pet-education-event-with-dr-charles-wiley-iii>. Our differences have not been about theology or alleged heresy, but about how Christ's redemption affects changing cultural expectations and understandings. No one who reads General Assembly reports or follows the process of change in our church should imagine that we move quickly in response to cultural movements, but we do take them seriously and try to understand them in God's light.

Some members may seek closure to this long discussion, aware that God calls us to address many other matters. Others may believe that formal church apologies are unnecessary, given the church's ongoing assignment to extend forgiveness and seek reconciliation with those that we have harmed either intentionally or unintentionally.

In light of the dynamics of the sexuality debates, we agree with the proponents that a deliberate and public process is needed. Formal apologies can have great spiritual, emotional, and symbolic value, when the time and leadership context is right. While theirs is a creative proposal, the language proposed here is intended lay more grounding for a process that heals wounds, repairs damage, and deepens commitment to a more inclusive church and a more just society.

Back in 1970, forty-six years ago, ACSWP's predecessor, the Advisory Council on Church & Society, brought a report to the United Presbyterian Assembly called, "Sexuality and the Human Community." While that report was approved, the 1978 report on homosexuality was defeated on the matter of ordination, though it affirmed membership with dignity for all and included valuable resources for biblical interpretation. The Presbyterian Church in the United States, holding a similar position on homosexuality and the church (1979), in 1980 adopted a study paper, "The Nature and Purpose of Human Sexuality," applying themes of character and covenant to a range of behaviors. In 1991, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy brought another report on human sexuality to the assembly, which was defeated, in part for its inclusive views ("Keeping Body and Soul Together: Sexuality, Spirituality, and Social Justice"). In 1992, the Theology and Worship Ministry Unit brought out, "Continuing the Conversation: A Guide for Congregational Study of Issues Related to Human Sexuality," along with a booklet of resources and responses from congregations.

In 1997, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy was asked to report on changes to the family to assist in ministry to children, persons going through divorce, and others impacted by economic and cultural factors weakening relationships and jeopardizing children. That report was approved in 2004, after the 215th General Assembly (2003) requested further theological emphasis effectively on heterosexual marriage. When we look back, what may be needed now is an overall approach to sexuality that does not over-focus on same-sex partnership while illuminating God's faithfulness and love in the lives of all persons who may be married in our church.

Thus, while there have been study resources and curricula on sexuality, and frequent polity actions, assembly social witness policy has not addressed sexuality holistically since 1970. This suggests that at least some of church's anxiety about the whole subject was displaced onto GLBT people, and perhaps also that the language of those studies, even that of the Peace,

Unity, and Purity report, did not yet carry a new narrative for the church. Hence our advice that the councils and educational institutions of our church give this topic wise and healing attention, and that assembly agencies and the assembly itself be part of that conversation.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-05—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-05.

The PC(USA) is a confessing church and the Reformed tradition allows us the opportunity to confess our faith and our transgressions. The *Book of Order* states as worshipping communities to “take [the] opportunity to seek and to offer forgiveness for hurts, misunderstandings, and broken relationships among themselves; [and to] respond to God’s act of reconciliation by exchanging signs and words of reconciliation and of Christ’s peace” (W-2.6001b(1)–(2)).

Hurt and moral injury has occurred within the PC(USA) as sins of omission and commission. Therefore the opportunity to seek reconciliation (conciliation) through confession of wrong is urged and supported. The Belhar Confession calls us to take our acts of repentance and reconciliation personally and corporately.

We believe

- that Christ’s work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God’s Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted; (10.3)

Clergy women who happen to be lesbian or transgendered have been denied the opportunity to share their gifts for the common good. Further, many women have served in silence and have had to deny their full authentic selves. The harm and injury done to the LGBTQ community cannot be overridden by the fear of alienating members of the denomination. The PC(USA) has united its stance on acceptance and ordination of LGBTQ members, and ordered ministries. This acknowledgment and apology servers to unite our members.

References: Daniel 9; Belhar Confession

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-05

Comment on Item 11-05—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 11-05 asks the General Assembly to admit to and apologize for harm done to the LGBTQ/Q members of the PC(USA) and their family and friends. Over the last several years the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has sought to fashion a careful path amidst our strong disagreements with regard to faithful sexual relationship, where our disagreements have focused on ordination standards and marriage. The assembly may find helpful the “Pain and Penitence” section of the final report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Purity, and Unity that focuses on mutual repentance. The final paragraph of that section reads:

Though we know that by stereotyping and demeaning one another we have hurt not only our opponents, but also ourselves and the whole church, we cannot claim that we have recognized all the ways we have damaged the church and hurt one another. Nor can we claim that we have amended our lives adequately to signal full repentance for the harm we have done. What we can report is that as we became more deeply acquainted with one another’s thinking and life situations, we were chastened and humbled by the recognition that insofar as the body of Christ in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) is broken, we have all played a part in betraying and denying our Savior and in inflicting the damage from which the church, as His body, is suffering today. The recognition that the travail of the church is our fault as much as it is others’ sobered and saddened our task force but also brought us closer together. (https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/peace-unity-purity-final-report-revised-english.pdf, lines 340–49)

Subsequently the General Assembly recognized as fully legitimate the affirmation that faithful sexual relationships find their place only in the marriage of a woman and a man and the affirmation that faithful sexual relationships can include same gender marriages.

The denomination has therefore declined to label only one view of these matters “faithful.” This approach is evident in the decision to adopt Amendment 10-A on ordination and the recent adoption of Amendment 14-F on Marriage, both now included in the *Book of Order*. This approach to our understanding of church amid disagreement on these issues is explored in the paper “Our Challenging Way: Faithfulness, Sex, Ordination, and Marriage” (<http://bit.ly/1TIVcCB>) from the Office of Theology & Worship. In addition, commissioners may find helpful “Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians in Times of Disagreement,” a document written to help Presbyterians deal with difficult conversations in healthy and productive ways: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/guidelines.pdf.

Item 11-06

[The assembly answered Item 11-06 by the action taken on Item 11-22. See pp. 46, 54–55.]

On Resources for Learning, Reflection, and Reconciliation—From the Presbytery of John Knox.

The Presbytery of John Knox overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to declare the years 2016 and 2017 to be a time of learning about and reflecting on the ways in which American society, culture, and political institutions have marginalized and disempowered Americans from communities of color, and a time of emphasis on reconciliation among black and white Americans within the PC(USA) and the United States of America.

This call for learning, reflection, and reconciliation should include but not be restricted to the following:

- Development of curricula on issues such as “white Privilege” and racial justice for study on the congregational and/or presbytery level.
- Development of models for peacemaking within communities where racial division is keenly felt.
- Provision of strategies for legislation to deal with issues of racial injustice at local, state, and national levels.
- Provision of resources to congregations/communities of programs that enhance positive race-relations that are already in place within communities across the nation.
- Encouraging church members to face our inherent racial prejudices and confess them to God and to one another, and seek reconciliation on an individual level as well as throughout our church and nation.

Rationale

Within the last eighteen months our nation has experienced a number of instances in which unarmed black Americans have been killed at the hands of or while in custody of police officers, generally white police officers.

Other communities have witnessed the racially motivated killings of innocent persons, including some while attending Bible studies in their congregations.

Americans of all races and ethnic background have taken to the streets in protest and organized awareness-raising movements such as “Black Lives Matter.”

The issue of race generally, and the treatment of people from communities of color by police more specifically, has generated commentary and conversation that has been divisive and, at times, hateful and accusatory.

The role of police officers in our society should be and generally is a respected and honorable one that seeks to preserve the peace among all citizens and to preserve and protect life, yet the failures of our society have placed increasingly difficult demands on our police officers and subjected them to ever-increasing danger to their own lives.

The Presbyteries of John Knox, in the death of Tony Robinson of Madison, Wisconsin; Baltimore in the death of Freddie Gray; Giddings-Lovejoy in the death of Michael Brown of Ferguson, Missouri; and New York City in the death of Eric Garner; and in addition the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic in the killing of eleven church members attending Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, recently have experienced firsthand the tragic killing of unarmed people from communities of color.

The Confession of 1967 states: “To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as his [sic] reconciling community. This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God’s message of reconciliation and shares his [sic] labor of healing the enmities which separate men [sic] from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and gives it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his [sic] call” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.31).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) professes that racism, in all its forms, is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, it acknowledges that racism is a reality in both church and society. In faithful witness to the love of Christ, the church is committed to confronting racism and racial oppression in the church and the world, working to overcome racism with prayer, discernment, and worship-based action.

Concurrence to Item 11-06 from the Presbyteries of Giddings-Lovejoy and Milwaukee.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-06—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-06 from the Presbytery of John Knox requests that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) declare the years 2016 and 2017 be a time of learning, reflection, and reconciliation regarding racial injustice in the U.S., and requests the creation of resources, including appropriate curricula, models for peacemaking, and legislative strategies.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 11-06 be approved with the following amendments: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and an underline.]

“The Presbytery of John Knox overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

“[1.] to declare the years 2016 and 2017 to be a time of learning about and reflecting on the ways in which American society, culture, [church] and political institutions have marginalized and disempowered Americans from communities of color, and a time of emphasis on [justice and] reconciliation among black and white Americans within the PC(USA) and the United States of America.

“[2. to call upon the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), in collaboration with the Advocacy Committee on Racial and Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), to include work on the following, in conjunction with the updated antiracism policy paper and six accompanying study guides produced in response to the 2014 referral of Item 08-06 and other treatments of racism coming before this assembly:]

“~~[This call for learning, reflection, and reconciliation should include but not be restricted to the following:]~~

“• Development of curricula on issues such as “white Privilege” and racial justice for study on the congregational and/or presbytery level.

“• Development of models for peacemaking within communities where racial division is keenly felt.

“• Provision of strategies for legislation to deal with issues of racial injustice at local, state, and national levels.

“• Provision of resources to congregations/communities of programs that enhance positive race-relations that are already in place within communities across the nation.

“• ~~[Encouraging]~~ [Encouragement of] church members to face our ~~[inherent]~~ [unacknowledged] racial prejudices and confess them to God and to one another, and seek reconciliation on an individual level as well as throughout our church and nation.”

The ACSWP supports the intent of the overture, but believes that it needs to acknowledge the church’s own role in structures of racism, and to pair “reconciliation” with “justice.” [See, for example, Jennifer Harvey, 2014, *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans)]. The overture suggests that new materials should be created; we consider many of its concerns to be answered in material already prepared for this assembly. Hence, the additional language proposed asks the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns and the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries to work on the issues identified in light of these existing resources, minimizing costs. In the final clause, “inherent” is replaced by “unacknowledged,” as the former implies that these prejudices can never be removed.

This overture requests that resources from all levels of the church support PC(USA) efforts to understand the elements of racism within our church and society. Though specific items are requested, the resources should not be limited by that list. This effort should utilize, among other things, the updated antiracism policy paper and six accompanying study guides, produced in response to the 2014 referral of Item 08-06. This material can help members throughout the church understand the policy and its racism concepts. This overture proposes work on areas that go beyond that recently updated study and may complement it and the report from a Fall 2015 consultation at Stony Point, so it is a worthwhile effort.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-06

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-06—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-06.

In light of the General Assembly’s mandates related to Climate for Change/Cultural Proficiency, ACREC’s own self-study, Item 11-19, reflects efforts toward the learning, reflecting, and reconciliation embodied in the overture from the Presbytery of John Knox. The Christian Spirit collaboration encouraged by ACREC’s recommendations is one and the same spirit believed to be called for within the Item 11-06. It encourages the undeniable imperative for candid, transparent dialogue

around the issues that divide both the church and society and promotes the spirit of the Climate for Change/Cultural Proficiency mandates intended to improve relationship and enhance our ability to carry out the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Therefore, ACREC enthusiastically advises approval of this item.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-06

Comment on Item 11-06—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long held that it must face racism, confess our complicity in the system of institutional racism, and work towards racial justice and reconciliation in church and society in our witness to the Gospel. As we begin to commemorate the 50th year anniversary of the Confession of 1967 and as this General Assembly considers adding the Confession of Belhar to the *Book of Confessions*, and approving a revised Churchwide Antiracism Policy (Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community) we acknowledge in the words of the proposed revised antiracism policy that,

This is not a time for timidity. The current struggles over racial justice in the United States mark a kairos moment. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long held strong convictions regarding the sinfulness of racism and the need to struggle against it. Speaking our own convictions now, with clarity and power, could make a tangible difference in the current struggle. Furthermore, it is required of us, as the church is called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Neglecting to speak powerfully in this moment would also be regrettable.

This overture calls for a time of learning, reflection, and reconciliation. It also calls for “the development of curricula on issues such as “‘white privilege’ and racial justice for study on the congregational and/or presbytery level.” These materials have already been developed and are available.

In response to a referral of the 221st General Assembly (2014), training materials on antiracism were created. These training materials are available for presbyteries and congregations. Also, staff and antiracism trainers from the Office of Gender and Racial Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency are available to visit presbyteries and congregations to offer trainings and/or to train antiracism trainers.

In 2008 the General Assembly directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency (formerly the General Assembly Council)

... to expand on the basic antiracism training to include modules on the intersectionality of race, gender, and class, and to provide focused training on internalized oppression and privilege with a timeline as follows:

- (a) the Intersections of race, gender, and class by 2010;
- (b) internalized oppression (race & gender) by 2012; and
- (c) white privilege and male privilege by 2014 (*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 54, 55, 965)

In response to this General Assembly referral, antiracism training materials were expanded, and in 2010 new modules on the intersectionality of race, gender, and class were created; and in 2011 a new module on internalized oppression was completed; and in 2014 a module on privilege was completed.

The Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team has also created study guides based on topics and concepts covered in the 2016 proposed revised antiracism policy *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community*. The topics of the six guides are:

1. Biblical Imperatives to Antiracism,
2. Envisioning a New Way of Life Together,
3. PC(USA) and Racial Reconciliation,
4. Racism 101,
5. Enduring Legacy of Racism in the U.S., and
6. Responding as a Community of Faith. This training tool includes a list of antiracism resources for congregations or presbyteries desiring further information. The study guides are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice> (Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Racial Justice web site).

Since antiracism modules, including a module on privilege, already exists, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in consultation with its Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team, suggests that the most useful strategy is to make these study materials, resources, and the antiracism policy more accessible.

Item 11-07

Item 11-07 has been moved to 12 Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues and has been re-assigned the following item number: Item 12-10. (See p. 941 of the electronic version.)

Item 11-08

[The assembly approved Item 11-08 with amendment. See pp. 47, 54-55.]

On Offering an Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.

The Presbytery of Baltimore overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to offer an apology to Native Americans, Alaska natives, and native Hawaiians^[1] and to do the following:

1. That the PC(USA) and its members apologize to United States citizens of Native American ancestry, both those within and beyond our denomination. We offer this apology especially to those who were [and are] part of “stolen generations” during the Indian-assimilation movement, namely former students of Indian boarding schools, their families, and their communities.² That the PC(USA) approve and issue the following words of apology:

We apologize for the pain and suffering that our church’s involvement in the Indian boarding school system has caused. We are aware of some of the damage that this cruel and ill-conceived system of assimilation has perpetrated on United States citizens of Native American ancestry. For this we are truly and most humbly sorry.

To those individuals who were physically, sexually, and emotionally abused as students of the Indian boarding schools in which the PC(USA)³ was involved, we offer you our most sincere apology. You did nothing wrong; you were and are the victims of evil acts that cannot under any circumstances be justified or excused.

We know that many within our church will still not understand why each of us must bear the scar, the blame for this horrendous period in U.S. history. But the truth is, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors, and therefore, we must also bear their burdens.

Our burdens include dishonoring the depths of the struggles of Native American people and the richness of your gifts. Therefore, we confess to you that when our Presbyterian ancestors journeyed to this land within the last few centuries, ~~[you shared your Sacred Vision with us, to our Presbyterian ancestors, and to our country’s leaders; essentially none of us heard you]~~ [we did not respect your own indigenous knowledges and epistemologies as valid].

In our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ, our hearts and minds were closed to the value of your ~~[spirituality]~~ [own epistemologies and lifeways]. We did not understand the full extent of the Gospel of Christ! We should have affirmed the commonality between your spirituality and our understanding that God’s sovereignty extends with length from East to West, with breadth from North to South, with depth throughout the Earth, and with height throughout the Sky and Heavens.

Even worse, we arrogantly thought that Western European culture and cultural expressions were necessary parts of the Gospel of Christ. We imposed our civilization as a condition for your accepting the Gospel. We tried to make you be like us and, in so doing, we helped to diminish the Sacred Vision that made you who you are. Thus, we demonstrated that we did not fully understand the Gospel we were trying to preach.

We know that apology is only a first step in the larger hope of repentance and reconciliation. We seek the guidance of relationships with your people within and beyond our church as we seek to identify and act on restorative practices and policies at the relational, communal, and national level.

We are in the midst of a long and painful journey as we reflect on the cries that we did not or would not hear, and how we have behaved as a church. As we travel this difficult road of repentance, reconciliation, and healing, we commit ourselves to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a church to hurt others with our attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority.

We seek God’s forgiveness, healing grace, and guidance as we take steps toward building mutually respectful, compassionate, and loving relationships with ~~[Native American]~~ [indigenous] peoples.

We also seek your forgiveness and hope you will walk together with us in the Spirit of Christ and partner with us as equals as we participate in God’s redemption of the world so that our peoples may be blessed and God’s creation healed.

Finally, we pray that you will hear the sincerity of these words and that you will witness the living out of our apology in our actions in the future.

2. That the Moderator of the PC(USA) share this apology with the ninety-five PC(USA) Native American congregations on behalf of the denomination. The means of sharing this apology shall be coordinated with the Presbyteri-

an Mission Agency’s Native American Congregational Support Office and with the PC(USA)’s Native American Consulting Committee (NACC).

3. That the Office of the General Assembly share this apology with ~~[Native American tribal authorities]~~ [the leadership of Native Nations] in the United States. The means of sharing this apology shall be coordinated with the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Native American Congregational Support Office and with the PC(USA)’s Native American Consulting Committee (NACC).

4. That the General Assembly commend this apology to the entire PC(USA) in all its expressions for their use in the work of reconciliation among all peoples.

Rationale

For tens of thousands of years more than 500 tribes of our Native American brothers and sisters lived on the land that is now the United States of America—not as owners but as cohabitants respecting and caring for land as a sacred trust. This spiritual perspective of cohabitation was only a part of the full Sacred Vision, received by their Elders, of creation and of the mystery that surrounds us all. This Sacred Vision is rich and deep and is a treasure for them and could be for us.

On the other hand, the European American peoples of the United States arrived in North America with an unquenchable thirst for land, claiming the Doctrine of Discovery⁴ as justification for the brutal conquest of indigenous lands and the destruction of native peoples. The ensuing colonization from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean eventually was further entrenched under the U.S. policy known as “manifest destiny.”

In the early 19th century, Congress passed the 1830 Indian Removal Act that legalized the theft of tribal lands east of the Mississippi River for replacement lands west of the Mississippi River. President Andrew Jackson facilitated this removal even after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the 1830 Indian Removal Act unconstitutional. In late 19th century, the U.S. government called the resistance by Native Americans to the effort to acquire these lands as the “Indian problem” even while Native Americans were being settled on reservations. These reservations were overseen by U.S. government officials.

The U.S. government undertook expensive and destructive wars with Native Americans in order to gain lands. President Grant (4 Mar 1869–4 Mar 1877) chose another approach: to Christianize tribes as the best solution of the “Indian problem.” Grant stated his “Indian Peace Policy” to Congress (5 Dec 1870) with a major ingredient being *cultural assimilation*. One feature of assimilation was the founding of Indian boarding schools, which started in 1879 with the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The founder, Captain Richard Henry Pratt, believed that white ways were superior to Indian ways and popularized “kill the Indian and save the man.” Native American children were taken forcefully to these schools—sometimes thousands of miles away—where students were punished for speaking their native language, having a cultural artifact such as an amulet or a beaded bracelet, practicing their culture such as praying to Mother Earth or to Father Sky, wearing native clothing, or growing and cutting their hair Indian-style. Punishment was physical, sexual, and emotional.

During this time several Christian denominations had their missionaries living among Native Americans, proselytizing, and establishing churches. The “Indian Peace Policy,” taking advantage of distributed missionaries, removed the oversight function of some Indian agencies from government officials and gave it to religious men nominated by their denominations. The states of Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, and Utah each had some Indian agencies overseen by Presbyterian religious men. Presbyterians gave credence to U.S. Indian-assimilation laws and policies by directly supporting Indian Boarding Schools—even becoming U.S. Government Indian Agents and serving as headmasters and staff.

“Episcopalians and Presbyterians encouraged removals, arbitrary divisions of Indian land, and separation of families; Sioux, Omaha, Ponca, and Makah children were literally kidnapped and placed in reservation or eastern boarding schools” (Heller Jr., Robert H., *American Protestantism and United States Indian Policy*, 1869–82. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London. 1983, page 152. Note that “Publication of this book was aided by grants from the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota.”)

Throughout this painful history our Native American brothers and sisters shared their Vision with us and stories of suffering due to our church’s involvement in the operation of these Indian boarding schools and the removal of Native American children from their families, their communities, their language, and their culture. In addition, they shared the personal and historic pain that they still bear. Finally, they shared with us their strength and wisdom born of the life-giving dignity of their communities and traditions and their stories of survival.

We acknowledge that we are poorer because we did not truly listen to them. The image of the Creator in us is twisted, blurred, and misshapen, and we all have fallen short of what God intends us to be.

The offering of an apology is in keeping with earlier statements of the General Assembly of the PC(USA). Native American congregations within the PC(USA) continue to hold national and regional gatherings, such as the annual Camp Meetings and Missions Meetings, which offer an opportunity for the sharing of this apology.

Endnotes

[~~1. In this statement the term “Native American” respectfully refers to all three of these indigenous groups.~~]

2. PC(USA) realizes that there are some Native-American Presbyterians for whom boarding schools are not problematic. For some students, the boarding schools gave them skills that they used to lead successful lives. Our denomination rejoices for each of you.
3. To include the institutional precursors to the PC(USA).
4. The Doctrine of Discovery was issued in 1452 by the Pope for Catholic explorers and was subsequently included as a patent to John Cabot by the King of England for North American exploration. The doctrine authorized and justified the destruction, killing, and appropriating of the lands of indigenous peoples and nations.

Concurrence to Item 11-08 from the Presbyteries of Denver, Santa Fe and Upper Ohio Valley and the Synod of the Southwest.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) refer this overture to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns to be considered in conjunction with the study of the Doctrine of Discovery and its impact on First Peoples in the Americas.

The matters in this item are grave matters that have affected social relations of every kind since 1492. The facts of these matters are not generally in dispute. Commissioners, like members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, may wish simply to assent to the action in an act of corporate repentance and send it out.

At the same time, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns is tasked with addressing the nature of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s obligations, mission history, and current ministries. The concerns of the proponents are similar to those motivating the call to “repudiate” the Doctrine of Discovery, and this action in fact makes considerable reference to that early period. The item’s earlier paragraphs, in fact, summarize the colonization process and its motivations largely in terms of a quest for land related to that doctrine. That summary does not take into account the full motivations of many of the early white settlers, their mission efforts, pre-existent conflicts among Native peoples, the internal debate within the white majority population over the treatment of Native Americans, and previous expressions of repentance, such as those made in the period 1991–92. The Presbyterian Mission Agency comment points out other items not included in the apology. Thus, if further work were done on this apology, it might appropriately be done by the same persons examining the relation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the Doctrine of Discovery.

Item 11-08 notes that “apology is only a first step in the larger hope of repentance and reconciliation.” Item 11-10 calls for “radical reconciliation,” focused on racial justice in our cities. Item 11-12 calls for a “Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)”. Commissioners may wish to consider the relation of this action related to First Peoples and actions related primarily to African Americans, and also consider how these proposals relate to ongoing racial justice programs of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

With regard to Native American concerns, the extensive experience of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (PCC) may be instructive. That church ran eleven of at least 130 residential schools for indigenous children until 1925, and two schools until 1969. Beginning in 1976, that church joined a predecessor of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition, and, after stories of abuses began to be heard, in 1987 the PCC issued a pastoral statement. In 1991 they started work on what became a confession adopted by their general assembly in 1994, a theologically framed apology rather than a doctrinal confession. The PCC then participated in a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) formed as part of a 2006 settlement of a \$5 billion class action suit. As reported by Katharine Masterton (see www.justiceUnbound.org), that TRC finished in December 2015, “naming the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.” Concurrently, the PCC developed a Healing and Reconciliation Program with a Seed Fund for local initiatives, as well as their ongoing Native Ministries Fund.

If further work on the apology proposed were referred to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and to a task group on the Doctrine of Discovery, then the Office of Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries could also be consulted as to how these matters relate to the ongoing mission of Native American Presbyterians. We would note the 2004 report of the Task Force on Reparations for some parallel considerations, work that led ultimately if indirectly to the PC(USA)’s consideration of the Confession of Belhar.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-08

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-08—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-08.

The following part of A Brief Statement of Faith in our confessions as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states soundly the spirit of this overture:

In a broken and fearful world
 the Spirit gives us courage
 to pray without ceasing,
 to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
 to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
 to hear the voices of peoples long silenced
 and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4, Lines 65–71)

Boarding schools continue to carry a negative and hurtful experience for many Native American people. Their official policy was to promote assimilation and effectively extinguish the cultures of Native Americans. Many of these schools relied on a severe and often brutal program of military-style discipline and Christian indoctrination. Many churches, including the PC(USA), forced more than 100,000 kids from their families, and many of them suffered years of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Most of the schools were closed by the 1990s. This apology does not restore stolen lands or lives. Nor does it relieve the nightmares of mistreated students who attended boarding schools. But it sets the stage for making amends with important members of the beautiful body of Christ.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-08

Comment on Item 11-08—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

There has been a Presbyterian presence in Native American communities and reservations in the United States since the late 1600s. When the first presbytery in this country was formed in 1706, it is believed that there were thirty-seven Native American Protestant ministers in Eastern America. While the history is complex as well as long, one thing is clear: Presbyterians have had a long connection to Native American ministry, and Native Americans have long identified as Presbyterians.

In this history, the PC(USA) and its predecessors have committed wrongs against Native Americans. Church leaders from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) apologize to Native Americans for its participation in removing traditional ceremonies, rituals, and language from Native communities. We have not valued the personhood and spirituality of Native peoples and we have neglected to recognize and affirm the great gifts that Native peoples offer to the church and society.

In the period following World War II, Presbyterian General Assemblies consistently took positions supportive of Native American land rights. The Council on Church and Race and the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. received a set of recommendations from the Consulting Panel on Indian Ministries, which was established to review Indian church proposals for funding projects. The 184th General Assembly (1972) approved a recommendation that the Consulting Panel on Indian Ministries continue its work through the newly established Native American Consulting Committee with full authority and budget for planning, review, and validation. Between 1972 and 1983, the United States Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. supported the concept of self-determination of Native Americans. In 1983 there were 109 Native American congregations in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and six Native American congregations in the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Following the reunion in 1983, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) supported the American Religious Freedom Act. (For more information about actions taken by the General Assemblies after World War II, please see the Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans, approved by the 212th General Assembly (2000) at <http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/nativeamerican/strategy/>.)

The Office of Native American Congregational Support in the Presbyterian Mission Agency has assisted the PC(USA) to respond to Native American congregational issues and to enable Native American Presbyterians to participate actively and effectively within the PC(USA) at all levels. The office also serves as an important source of information and orientation for national church agency and mid council staff in the PC(USA).

This overture calls for an apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, and to United States citizens of Native American ancestry, both those within and beyond our denomination. However, the content of the apology seems to be directed toward one group. Much of the content does not apply to Native Hawaiians, for instance. Thus, the apology should be revised, so that it is broad enough to apply to each of the groups listed in the overture, and should include a repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

We commend for study and reflection to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) the “Statement on Relationship with First Nations Peoples, Native American Peoples, and Inuit and Metis Peoples in North America,” page 123, approved by the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in 2010.

A number of groups have issued apologies and letters to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, and have committed to support Native peoples in the righting of previous wrongs. The language of these apologies could be reviewed in order to help perfect the apology, as it is difficult to address each specific situation and circumstance, which is so varied. The spirit of the overture is helpful, however, the apology requires editing, in order to speak more broadly on behalf of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians and their experiences in

the church and in their communities. Thus, it may be helpful to look at apologies that have been issued by other groups to find wording that provides clarity, addresses different Native communities, and affirms the PC (USA)'s support of members of its Native American family.

Item 11-09

[The assembly approved Item 11-01. See pp. 14, 55.]

On Celebrating a Significant Social Witness Anniversary—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Affirm that our Presbyterian involvement in society in the quest for justice and peace is a fundamental aspect of Reformed Christianity as “the promotion of social righteousness,” as well as the “exhibition of the Kingdom of God to the world,” both of which are Great Ends of the Church and fundamental to the unity of theology and ethics in our Confessions, notably The Confession of 1967 and the Belhar Confession.

2. Celebrate the 80th anniversary of the formation of social witness bodies in both the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., respectively the “Department of Social Education and Action” and the “Permanent Committee on Moral and Social Welfare” (both described in the rationale).

3. Commend those many Presbyterians who have served on the successor committees and many study teams over the years, including the current members and staff of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, for their faithful and consistent stewardship of the social witness policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

4. Urge the Presbyterian Mission Agency to devote significant space in one of its publications’ remaining editions in 2016 to this anniversary and a survey of significant developments and accomplishments of each body.

5. Urge the presbyteries and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to plan events and studies during the next year to commemorate this anniversary of an important responsibility in the life of our Reformed denomination and recommit to faithful discernment and action.

Rationale

The year 2016 marks the eightieth anniversary of significant developments in the social witness commitment of the two predecessor denominations to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Both had made statements of public concern before that time, and both had diverse boards responding to matters of mission and justice, yet the scale of social challenges and the need for deliberate and in-depth responses led both denominations to form bodies specifically dedicated to addressing matters of Christian social responsibility.

The 148th General Assembly (1936) of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. adopted the report of a Committee of Five authorized by the 1935 General Assembly: The Reverend George Emerson Barnes, chair; the Reverend Edmund B. Chaffee; the Reverend Ralph C McAfee; S. Frank Shattuck, and President Charles J. Turck. Recommendation #1 ordered the merger of the Unit on Social and Industrial Relations of the Board of National Missions and the Department of Social Education of the Board of Christian Education to create the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education, noting that “there is an inescapable obligation resting upon the Presbyterian Church to unify her responsibilities in the field of social welfare, to direct the thought and conscience of her ministers and people concerning social problems, and to clarify and emphasize the meaning and implications of the whole gospel.” This department and its successor bodies continued as a distinct entity within the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. until the consummation of the reunion between the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. on January 1, 1988.

The 76th General Assembly (1936) of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. adopted the first substantive report of the Permanent Committee on Moral and Social Welfare, which had been created by the 1934 General Assembly: Stuart R. Oglesby, J. McDowell Richards, Ernest Trice Thompson, Dunbar H. Ogden, Henry Wade DuBose, Melton Clark, E. L. Secrest, and R. B. Clinton. Concurrently with the authorization of this permanent committee, the 1934 assembly also approved a significant interpretation of the historic “Spirituality of the Church” doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. While giving “unqualified assent” to that doctrine, the assembly also declared: “We believe however, that the Church in fulfillment of its spiritual function must interpret Christ’s ideal for the individual and for society, must warn men of the presence of sin and of its effect in individual life and in the social life and must seek with the spiritual weapons at its disposal to establish His Lordship in the hearts of all men and over every area of human life.” The permanent committee and its successors continued as a distinct entity within the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. until the consummation of the reunion between the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. on January 1, 1988.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues this heritage and responsibility of a distinct unit on social policy formation, to “clarify and emphasize the meaning and implications of the whole gospel,” “direct the thought and conscience of her ministers and people concerning social problems,” and “interpret Christ’s ideal for the individual and for society.”

As a servant of the General Assembly, with members elected directly by the assembly, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy makes recommendations to the assembly: all social witness policy reports must be approved for action or received for study by the assembly itself. In addition to guiding the programmatic work of General Assembly agencies, such as the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, policies approved by the assembly are intended to deepen the prophetic dimension in all our ministries. In accord with the historic principles of the Reformed faith, these statements do not intend or pretend to require obedience: “God alone is Lord of the conscience. . . .”

This significant anniversary is an appropriate occasion to challenge the councils, congregations, and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reflection and renewal of social witness commitment in this time of critical issues of peace and justice confronting our nation and the world community.

Concurrence to Item 11-09 from the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-09—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-09.

Since this overture and its rationale trace the “social righteousness” tradition in both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Church U.S. that brought the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy into being, commends the work of those who have staffed and served on this committee, and promotes its continued role as a distinct institutional body, it will surprise no one that the committee appreciates and supports this social witness anniversary action. Surely the growing complexity of the range of social and ecological justice issues currently facing the church and the larger society warrants not a downsizing of attention to the this worldly implications of the Reign of God, but an expansion. And surely this is no time to institute a form of benign neglect that makes the General Assembly and its ministries and committees only secondary and infrequent sources of social witness alerts. Clearly this overture would stand in opposition to the Presbytery of Foothills’ proposals to change the function of a body that past assemblies in both “Northern” and “Southern” streams have long maintained.

The rationale offered with the overture effectively cites the support of the Reformed confessions, including the Confession of 1967, the Brief Statement of Faith, and the Confession of Belhar in making its case. Still another not-quite confessional resource that merits mention is “A New Social Creed of the 21st Century.” Approved by our General Assembly in 2008, this new social creed is an anniversary witness just as this overture is. In its opening paragraph, it states: “Just as the churches responded to the harshness of early 20th century industrialization with a prophetic “Social Creed” in 1908, so in our era of globalization we offer a vision of a society that shares more and consumes less, sees compassion over suspicion and equality over domination, and finds security in joined hands rather than massed arms.”

That one-page, non-doctrinal summary of what our church stands for in public ethics was developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and adopted as well by the full Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) will also mark the end of a decade since the General Assembly endorsed the New Social Creed. This overture’s enactment would show that we are taking our ecumenical commitments seriously as well as our Reformed tradition of thoughtful social engagement.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-09.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-09.

Social witness and advocacy are foundational tenets of the Reformed tradition. Eighty years of witness provides the denomination to recount a historical past and create an intentional future as we seek to remain “faithful over a few things.” In celebrating the work of social witness and policy, we concur with this recommendation as we seek to set a future tone for the denomination.

The celebration will recount the numerous ways that Presbyterian women and clergy have worked alongside each other to unmask idolatries in church and in culture as we work for justice freedom and peace (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4, Lines 69–71).

The voting representatives to the 2000 Churchwide Business Meeting of Presbyterian Women unanimously approved a resolution declaring Presbyterian Women an antiracism organization and reaffirmed their 1997 commitment to strive to eradicate racism. The voting representatives acknowledged that, “racism is imbedded in the very structure of our society and thus requires a very intentional effort to eradicate it” (http://www.warnermemorial.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=171549).

This significant anniversary is an appropriate occasion to challenge the councils, congregations, and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to reflection and renewal of social witness commitment in this time of critical issues of peace and justice confronting our nation and the world community.

Resources: A Brief Statement of Faith (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/brief-statement-faith/>).

Item 11-10

[The assembly approved Item 11-10 with amendment and with comment. See pp. 14, 55.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) affirms the lessons from Charleston and the role of the church in preventing violence.]

On Reconciliation and Engagement in a New Civil Rights Movement—From the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

In the aftermath of the death of Michael Brown Jr. on August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri, and the community unrest that followed, the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, named for slain abolitionist the Reverend Elijah P. Lovejoy, overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to call for radical reconciliation and an active engagement in a new civil rights movement. This should begin with both deep self-examination and bold action within the PC(USA) and our nation addressing the structural racism all around us. Since the justice system in the United States is not now serving and protecting each of us equitably, God calls us in this moment to respond beyond our collective comfort to demand urgent reforms of police policies and judicial practices. The period of reflection and action should begin with, but not be limited to, the following Calls to Action issued by the Ferguson Commission.

The PC(USA) is urged to act with others to demand:

1. That the U.S. Congress enact “Protecting Communities and Police Act,” proposed by Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill.
2. That local and state jurisdictions, in order to ensure that all citizens are treated with equal dignity and justice,
 - [review and] revise[, as needed,] use of force policies and training,
 - appoint special prosecutors in police use of force cases,
 - [review and] update[, as needed,] use of force policies related to fleeing suspects,
 - improve police training to include social interaction, implicit bias, [de-escalating violence,] and cultural responsiveness,
 - create, develop, and strengthen meaningful civilian review of police departments.
3. That local and state courts
 - eliminate incarceration for minor offenses,
 - establish alternative sentencing options,
 - treat nonviolent offenses as civil violations,
 - create community justice centers.

Rationale

At this moment in time, we are being called anew to a ministry of radical reconciliation. The Confession of 1967 in the PC(USA) *Book of Confessions*, written in a previous time of racial turmoil in our country, made reconciliation its main theme and calls us to urgent action for justice “in each time and place” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.43) The Ferguson Commission’s Calls to Action were informed by the need for reconciliation based on equality. The chairs of the commission, the Reverend Starsky Wilson of the United Church of Christ and Rich McClure, drew on wisdom of the South African Reformed theologian, the Reverend Allen Boesak, who recognized that reconciliation can only happen when two parties stand on equal footing.

The Confession of Belhar, approved for constitutional standing by the presbyteries, emerged out of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, proclaims: “We believe ... that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.” (Confession of Belhar, 10.7) The call to reconciliation and justice is now urgently before our church and nation. We begin by recognizing the equality of all people, honestly dealing with white privilege and systematic racism, and putting right the sins of our past and present.

Confessional statements that compel us to action:

We believe

- that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged;
- that God calls the church to follow him in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
- that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; ...
- that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged;
- that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others. (*Book of Confessions*, 10.7)

4. Reconciliation in Society

9.43 In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations. The following are particularly urgent at the present time.

9.44 a. God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, God overcomes the barriers between sisters and brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary. The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life: in employment, housing, education, leisure, marriage, family, church, and the exercise of political rights. Therefore, the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination and ministers to those injured by it. Congregations, individuals, or groups of Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize others, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess. (*Book of Confessions, Inclusive Language* Confession of 1967, 9.43–44)

Concurrence to Item 11-10 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore and New York City.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-10—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of this item.

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy has shown a Reformed Christian approach to the tragedy and protests in Ferguson, Missouri. It has claimed the reconciliation theme in its theology and it has worked in the public sphere to reform an inequitable local justice system, sharing its insights with the broader church through the General Assembly. Their recommendations are consistent with the 2000 General Assembly’s resolution on police accountability and the 2002 assembly’s resolution on Restorative Justice. If commissioners approve Item 11-10, these statements may be seen as updating those statements. This item’s recommendations may also point to the larger pattern of urban violence addressed in the report coming to this 222nd General Assembly (2016), “Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs,” Item 11-25.

The presbytery’s call for “a new civil rights movement” encourages reflection and action by the Presbyterian church on institutional racism as a background for advocacy for specific laws. This call may be answered in the Race and Reconciliation actions of Item 11-12 and others that the Advisory Committee on Social Policy advises combining with study of the Confession of Belhar, as Giddings-Lovejoy has already done.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-10.

Item 11-10 addresses the plight of racism from which our society continues to suffer despite a long history of engagement. The church has often been complicit, silent, and internally divided by the legacy of racism. The church has also played a major role in the civil rights movement and must continue and intensify its efforts since racism is not fully defeated. In order to achieve racial justice the church must be intentional about its indispensable role in promoting, advocating, and implementing the practical measures for which the overture calls.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-10

Comment on Item 11-10—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is engaged in a strong interfaith effort through its Office of Public Witness to pass legislation that would reform the criminal justice system primarily by reducing mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and investing in reentry programs. We believe this is also the work of addressing systemic racism, and message it as such.

Item 11-11

Item 11-11 has been moved to 09 Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues and has been reasigned the following item number: Item 09-12. (See p. 562 of the electronic version.)

Item 11-12

[The assembly approved Item 11-01 with amendment. See pp. 46, 56.]

On the PC(USA) Continuing Its Efforts to Dismantle Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society—From the Presbytery of Baltimore.

The Presbytery of Baltimore overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to continue its efforts to dismantle racism within our denomination and the larger society by doing the following:

1. **Direct the Office of the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Executive Director, to present to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) a detailed six-year plan containing explicit procedures for renewed implementation of every strategy detailed in the churchwide strategies (as listed under the “Points of Engagement” and specifically directed towards the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, and congregations) in [~~“Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community,”~~] [**“Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community” (Item 11-22),**] which [~~was approved~~] [**is up for approval**] by the [~~211th~~] [**222nd**] General Assembly [~~(1999)~~] [**(2016)**].**

2. **Establish and convene a “Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” that is charged with conducting a churchwide listening campaign to hear the voices of peoples long silenced regarding the state of institutional racism and oppression within our church.**

a. **This commission shall report the result of its listening campaign to the General Assembly meeting in Baltimore in 2020. The report shall include a statement of findings and recommendations to be voted upon by the General Assembly. Approved actions shall begin implementation within the following year.**

b. **The commission shall consist of twenty persons (ten ruling elders and ten teaching elders); fifteen of these persons shall identify as people of color. In addition, every effort should be made to achieve geographic representation from every synod. The commission shall be appointed by the Moderator and shall be constituted no later than December 31, 2016. It shall be chaired by a former Moderator or Vice-Moderator of the General Assembly who will serve as a member of the commission. The commission shall be resourced and funded through the Office of the Stated Clerk.**

c. **The commission shall meet twice annually beginning in 2017, and shall conduct the work of the listening campaigns on a regional basis. The commission shall determine strategies to carry out its work and present these strategies in a report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) for their approval.**

Rationale

In recent years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has approved resolutions and initiated programs as a faithful effort to address racial injustices in the United States of America. In 1999, the General Assembly received the report, “Facing Racism: In Search of the Beloved Community,” in which the church acknowledged that “dismantling racism is a long-term struggle.”¹ The rising calls for racial justice from our African American brothers and sisters is evidence that despite the efforts of the past fifteen years to do so, we have far to go to realize that Beloved Community to which both God is calling us and our hearts long.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) called for a national consultation to develop a vision for racial ethnic ministries. Since that assembly, we have witnessed numerous acts of violence and heightened racial tensions across our country in places like Ferguson, New York, Baltimore, Charleston, and Chicago that have awakened again the need to confront the systemic racism that continues to divide us both as a church and as a nation. This renewed awareness is evidenced by the many presbyteries and churches who have engaged in anti-racism trainings and discussions since the 221st General Assembly (2014). As

we make this overture, we recognize that we have not done enough to address racism in our own community. Therefore, we are in the early phases of developing concrete steps to address the issues of racism, injustice, and poverty.

Rationale Regarding Recommendation 1:

To be agents of change in dismantling racism in our society, we must acknowledge that it exists within the church. In so doing, we recognize our own history of racism both internally as an organization (at all levels of the church) and as institutional members of society.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy currently requires anti-racism training of national staff and has urged the training of mid council committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry in the areas of cultural competency, antiracism, and antisexism. Furthermore, the Presbyterian Mission Agency has collected data on the extent to which mid councils are providing such trainings, and is to report this data to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Technological advances have expanded the potential for developing and sharing of resources (multimedia and print) to encourage and equip congregations, mid councils, and their members in order to deepen their understanding of institutional racism and develop strategies to end it.

Less attention has been given to the development and dissemination of training resources for teaching cultural competency and antiracism with our children and youth. Resources identified on the PC(USA) website fail to adequately identify resources designed for congregational use with children and youth of various age groups.

Rationale Regarding Recommendation 2:

Despite the efforts to change public policies and put an end to segregation, we continue to live in divided neighborhoods with divergent experiences. We have failed to fully comprehend the ways that racism persists today, both inside of and outside of our church. As an institution founded and dominated by “white” Christians, we need to create opportunities to listen to those who suffer from racist policies and practices.

Racism persists even as we become more ethnically and culturally diverse as a nation, extending racist policies to new groups of people of color. We are aware that racial injustice is experienced differently in different regions of the U.S. and between rural and urban areas. Therefore, we need a regional approach in order to hear from all corners of our country and the variety of circumstances. Efforts have already begun to identify a more regional approach to building cultural competency and the ways we can work to end racism that would benefit from a broader and deeper listening campaign.

As our brothers and sisters in South Africa have taught us, “unity is ... both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ.”² In order for such reconciliation to occur, however, we must be willing to hear and tell the truth of our sins, trusting “that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.”³

On February 11, 2016, the Presbytery of Baltimore passed a recommendation to direct the Committee on Local Arrangements for the 224th General Assembly (2020) (Baltimore) to make racial atonement and reconciliation its central theme and focus.

Endnotes

1. Cover letter to the *Facing Racism: In Search of the Beloved Community* report signed by Cliff Kirkpatrick, former Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.
2. The Confession of Belhar, Article 2, 10.3.
3. The Confession of Belhar, Article 3, 10.5.

Concurrence to Item 11-12 from the Presbyteries of Denver, National Capital, New Castle, New York City, and Western North Carolina.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 11-12 calls for a six year “Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” that would update the 1999 Facing Racism resolution and conduct a churchwide listening process on experiences and recommendations regarding “institutional racism and oppression within our church.”

In agreement with the intent of the overture, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of an alternate resolution as shown below:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016), in light of the imminent addition of the Confession of Belhar to the *Book of Confessions*, the preparation of two new antiracism resources (Items 11-22 and 11-24), ongoing consultations on ‘creating a climate for change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’ (Item 11-18), and the call for Presbyterian engagement in “a new civil rights movement,”

“1. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Racial Ethnic ministries and its Women’s Concerns ministries, to focus its training and teaching efforts over the next two years on the concerns identified in the updated “Facing Racism” document (Item 11-22) and the study guide “Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity” (Item 11-24), in coordination with any trainings on representation or “race audits” developed by other agencies of the assembly, and to summarize participant responses and understandings of racism in both church and society.

“2. Directs the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns to consult with the Racial Ethnic and Women’s ministries, the General Assembly Committee on Representation, the racial ethnic caucuses, ecumenical partners, and other groups working with presbyteries on antiracism, and to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) on ways the church’s internal efforts may contribute to a ‘new civil rights movement’ (Item 11-10) and “Season of Jubilee” (Item 11-24) in our larger society.

“3. Directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Racial Ethnic ministries and its Women’s Concerns ministries, and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns each to designate a point person familiar with the tasks of Recommendation 1. and Recommendation 2. to work with a third person jointly appointed by the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Stated Clerk to conduct hearings, listening sessions, and public prayer sessions in conjunction with antiracism events and other church gatherings (noted above and in Item 11-24, Recommendation 1.d.) using the Confession of Belhar as a framework for considering matters of truth, unity, and reconciliation, reviewing any proposed versions of a U.S. accompanying letter to help interpret that confession, and reporting findings and possible plans to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

“4. Recommends that racial justice witness and study efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) be done whenever possible with Full Communion and other ecumenical partners and councils.”

The proponents of this overture did not have in hand the good work done in Items 11-22 and 11-24. They do rightly reference the Confession of Belhar and the ideas of truth and reconciliation, though they focus the work of a commission on the church’s internal practices. Those internal practices would be part of any discussions or trainings, which are part of the purposes of both the Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC). The ACREC is, in fact, authorized to monitor the work of the General Assembly and its agencies on antiracism, as well as ministries designed to strengthen ministry with the several large U.S. population groups deriving from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy believes a designated three-person team, working with the program ministries of the church, would be more effective in implementing and promoting the work of Belhar and other studies and strategies developed in response to previous assemblies than a large body of volunteers over a six-year timeframe. The three-person team could well propose additional tasks to the 223rd Assembly (2018) in line with the concerns of this overture, and could be asked to report periodically via the Internet and other means.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-12

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-12.

Please see ACREC A&C for Item 11-10, p. 718.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 11-12

Comment on Item 11-12—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

Recommendation 2 of this overture establishes and convenes a “Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” [sic] charged with conducting a churchwide listening campaign to hear the voices of peoples long silenced regarding the state of institutional racism and oppression within our church.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) is mindful of the echoes in this invitation from the Brief Statement of Faith, Confession of 1967, and Scripture. It values its role as an advisor to the Stated Clerk and other agency executives, boards, and ministries at the assembly level. It welcomes inclusion in any examination of institutional racism and oppression in the church and offers itself as a source for statistical evaluations of patterns in this regard.

It reminds commissioners that committees on representation are a Constitutional structure/function required at all councils above session and are therefore an available advocate for diversity in connecting marginalized, raced peoples (and other groups cited in F-1.0403) to the listening sessions called for in this overture. The GACOR may be a helpful connector to presbyteries and synods. The work of committees on representation is to first and foremost understand the cultural context of its council and listening is an essential tool in the work. We see this initiative as helpful to expand skills, capacity, and will for the work of deeper and meaningful inclusion.

The GACOR offers trainings for councils and its representation bodies at a national event biennially and by request in between. The GACOR assists partners in doing cultural proficiency work and integrates a cultural proficiency framework in its offerings on topics related to expanding participation and representation. The GACOR encourages explicit, contextual conversations in church settings. Outcomes and insights from this examination will be considered for inclusion in future GACOR materials.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-12

Comment on Item 11-12—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

This overture seeks the development of explicit procedures for renewed implementation of every strategy detailed under “Points of Engagement” in the 1999 General Assembly statement “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community.”

The General Assembly should be aware that the 221st General Assembly (2014) directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency “... to update and revise churchwide antiracism policies and develop implementing procedures...” The response of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to this referral was to update the 1999 policy addressed in this overture. This response is before this assembly as Item 11-22.

Item 11-13

[The assembly approved Item 11-13. See pp. 14, 56.]

Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

1. Approve the following response, “Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance,” to both Items 09-15 and 09-06 from the 221st General Assembly (2014) on voter suppression and campaign finance reform, and that this response serve as the requested update to “Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform (2008),” which is to be sent by the Stated Clerk to mid councils as a resource to advocate “for voter rights in a more just and democratic society.”

2. Approve the following statement:

Statement of Concerns for the U.S. Electoral Process

Respect for the conscience of the individual anchors Presbyterian reverence for the right to vote for everyone. Public service is seen by us as a high calling, and government itself a servant and agent of the people, accountable to all citizens. Politics as public decision-making has an ethical purpose and benefits from laws that prevent corruption by special interests against the common good. Weakening the rights of citizenship for some and unfairly enhancing the power of others distort the practices and legitimacy of democracy.

As a Reformed Christian church, understanding God’s covenant to have been opened by Jesus Christ even to “the least of these,” the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to live out and witness to its values of love and justice in the public sphere. Today, both the protection of voting rights and the integrity of our electoral process due to unlimited private spending are matters of concern. This statement and recommendations address these matters that have emerged since the 218th General Assembly (2008) approved, *Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform*, with the principles enunciated in that policy and its predecessor, *Reformed Faith and Politics* (1983).

Historically, racial discrimination limited the franchise, and since 1965 the Voting Rights Act, repeatedly renewed, provided federal oversight for jurisdictions deemed most resistant to allowing African Americans and

other racial ethnic minorities to vote. With the effective suspension of the “pre-clearance” oversight section of that act in June 2013, a good number of those jurisdictions and others are renewing methods to suppress voter turnout. These efforts, reinforced by the tailoring of districts to demographics (gerrymandering), threaten the promise of “one person one vote.” This situation is complicated by the polarization in the Federal Election Commission that has largely stalemated its enforcement of election law.

Since January 2010, with the *Citizens United* decision by the Supreme Court, reinforced by the appeals court decision, *SpeechNow* (March 2010) and *McCutcheon* (April 2014), and building on *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), campaign finance reform and limits to personal and corporate spending have been struck down. At the least, campaign funding from wealthy individuals and interests buys access; the elimination of funding limits on allegedly independent political action committees and technically nonprofit “social welfare organizations” allows for unlimited and often undisclosed political spending, monetizing our democracy and allowing small numbers of donors enormous influence on political discourse, regulatory protections, military spending, etc. This is a phenomenon virtually unique among democracies but unfortunately reflective of a pattern of economic inequality whereby, since 2007, 1 percent of the U.S. population has held at least 35 percent of the nation’s wealth.

Without claiming to be a judicial body, but in accord with our understanding of the impacts of concentrated power on the common good, the General Assembly affirms the words of the Supreme Court in 1990 in *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* as it spoke in favor of the government having a compelling interest in legislation to prevent or restrain: “the corrosive and distorting effects of immense aggregations of wealth that are accumulated with the help of the corporate form and that have little or no correlation to the public’s support for the corporation’s political ideas.”

As a corollary, the assembly supports measures and judgments that distinguish clearly between technical corporate personhood and the personhood of individual citizens, and opposes laws and rulings that allow the spending or communications of corporations and other private enterprises to be considered free speech, necessary to it, or otherwise accorded the rights due human persons.

3. Further, to address these concerns, to increase voting levels, and to decrease dysfunctional polarization in our country, the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

a. Supports the reversal of measures to suppress voter turn-out, such as

(1) additional and burdensome registration requirements, often linked to the purging of voter rolls;

(2) roll-backs and restrictions on voting times, including for early and same-day voting;

(3) elimination or narrowing of means for felon re-enfranchisement after they have paid their debts to society;

(4) inequality of polling site resources, including antiquated or faulty voting machines, as create long lines, discouraging voters; and

(5) lack of enforcement for violations of election law, including dissemination of false or misleading information in particular neighborhoods, intimidation of voters, use of public funds for campaigns, etc.

b. Encourages congregations and presbyteries to study the downloadable *Lift Every Voice* social witness policy booklet, which contains biblical, theological and ethical foundations and application of Presbyterian principles yielding affirmations of an affirmative national right to vote (Constitution allows state definition and practice), universal voter registration, nonpartisan legislative districting (to prevent gerrymandering), national minimum quality and verifiability requirements for voting equipment, professionalized and nonpartisan election commissions, election day as a holiday or weekend, campaign finance reforms, and structural proposals to shorten and diversify the primary process and testing of instant runoff and proportional voting to broaden potential representation.

c. Supports the election of the president by popular vote through the National Popular Vote Plan (by which states would award their electoral votes to the person receiving the highest national vote), constitutional amendment, or apportioning all electoral votes by congressional district, in order to prevent presidential elections like that of 2000, where the popular vote winner was defeated, and to end a process that gives inordinate attention to ten or less “swing” or “battleground” states while neglecting the forty or so “spectator” states.¹

d. Supports the restoration of meaningful limits for political contributions by corporations, unions, political action committees, superPACs (“527’s”), and individuals, while eliminating the capacity of 501.c.4’s and 501.c.6’s (nonprofit social welfare organizations) to contribute to election campaigns and political referenda.²

e. **Supports restructuring the Federal Election Commission on a nonpartisan and adequately funded basis with special election courts, if necessary, to adjudicate election law violations in a timely way.**

f. **Endorses proposals for full disclosure of political donations and lobbying costs by corporations and the ability of shareholders to review and refuse to be party to partisan donations, receiving proportionate dividend increases instead.**

g. **Endorses the continuing prohibition of partisan political endorsements by religious organizations or their leadership and other measures to respect both religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) strongly supports the freedom of religious organizations to speak on matters of policy, but personal endorsements and partisan ties may present the appearance of or opportunity for collusion, special treatment, and the violation of nonprofit tax status.**

Rationale

This statement and recommendations are in response to the following referrals:

Item 09-15: A Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Develop Programs of Education and Advocacy for Full Voting Rights and Against Disenfranchisement Due to Racism, and Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to Update Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform, Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008), to Include Changes in the Voting Rights Act (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38–39, 659ff.).

Item 09-06: On Advocating for Financial and Political Reform. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to Advocate for Financial Reforms and Campaign Finance Reform and Other Efforts to Reduce the Influence of Special Interest Money in Politics (Including That of the Financial Sector, the Gun Lobby, the Oil Industry, etc.) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 36, 635ff.).

This action combines the two referrals because “Lift Every Voice” itself treats the two main forms of racial and economic disenfranchisement. Further, although the first action does not require a report back to the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy considers the matters addressed to go beyond prior policy at several points, requiring accountability to the General Assembly for any advocacy on its behalf.

As an update, this action is designed to be distributed with “Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform,” a General Assembly resolution from 2008: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/lift-every-voice-democracy-voting-rights-and-elect/>. This background documentation begins with the situation of voting rights, then looks at electoral and campaign finance reforms, and concludes with theological reflection on the Reformed civic ethos noted in the 2008 report. This update has been prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in consultation with the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Washington, D.C., which is also preparing a resource for congregations interested in increasing political participation, pursuing electoral reforms and, in particular, “sponsoring conversations about the negative social impacts of voter suppression and why this matters to the church, providing ideas for congregations to help in local efforts to stop voter suppression” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 660) as requested by the 221st General Assembly (2014). Recommendation 3.c. views the Electoral College as a mechanism that gives individual votes different value, depending on one’s state, and hence supports measures that would end its distortion of the general election.

The key argument on both the racial justice/voting rights side and the electoral reform side is that the structures of voting are too liable to partisan capture, as when incumbent legislators through redistricting choose their voters, rather than be chosen by them. Clearly many profit from the current system, but all would profit more from a more even playing field.

Historical Context

The PC(USA) has a long history of advocacy for civil and voting rights. Beginning in 1947, PUCS assembly stated its official civil rights support by condemning all organizations and individuals who aim to hinder any minorities on the basis of creed, class, or color. In 1956, the northern church called upon Christians to work to eliminate the poll tax “and other restrictions which prevent many citizens from exercising their legal rights at the polls” (*Minutes*, PCUSA, 1956, Part I, p. 235; see also *Minutes*, PCUS, 1957, Part I, p. 194). In 1965, the PCUS affirmed the historic Voting Rights Act, saying “The basic purpose of the civil rights movement should be to obtain for the Negro—and of course, for all minority groups—justice in the affairs of daily life and the right to respect as a human being under the redemptive concern of God. Jesus, by His words and life, calls us, as his followers, to support him in this struggle . . .” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1965, Part I, p. 159).

The 2008 *Lift Every Voice* resolution referenced above supports the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, in its form prior to changes described below, and opposes any measures that would disenfranchise voters on the basis of race or other condition. It supports the re-enfranchisement of felons (or returning citizens) who have paid their debt to society and “full voting rights” for the District of Columbia, while leaving the voting status of territories undefined.

The Supreme Court and the Voting Rights Act's Pre-Clearance Review Provision

Despite the near unanimous re-approval in 2007 of the Voting Rights Act and its “pre-clearance” provisions for counties in eleven states that had previously kept African Americans from voting, in response to a challenge from an affected town, the Supreme Court in June 2013 struck down Section 4 of the Act that determined which states and counties were covered by Section 5’s provision that required Justice Department approval of state changes in election administration. The majority of the 5-4 decision claimed that Section 4 reflected historic patterns identified in 1965 and that new studies would be needed to determine where oversight was still needed. In the current polarized political climate, obtaining new congressional agreement on jurisdictions to cover is effectively impossible, eliminating the force of implementation for the Act. Shortly after the Court’s decision, a majority of the states and counties (not all in the South) began to reduce voting times, restrict advance voting, purge rolls by adding new registration requirements, and impose new voter identification documents (such as photo ID’s); collectively termed “voter suppression” methods.³

*Examples of Measures Used to Suppress Voter Turnout⁴*1. *Photo ID Requirements*

Antifraud legislation has been introduced in some states that will require voters to produce new types of identification on election day (despite very little to no evidence of fraud). A driver’s license or an accepted state-issued alternative is usually specified, requiring working poor and elderly citizens to make special and sometimes costly arrangements. Twelve states now require voters to show a form of photo identification while approximately thirteen other states are pursuing similar legislation.⁵ In 2011, the state of Alabama passed a law that required voters to have valid photo identification in order to vote. In the same time period, Alabama law enforcement offices closed thirty-one driver’s license locations, meaning that twenty-nine counties will not have a place where they can receive a valid driver’s license on photo identification card. Eight of the ten Alabama counties with the highest nonwhite registration will lose their primary location to receive valid voter identification and will depend on visits from a kind of registration-mobile.⁶

2. *Purging Voter Rolls*

Purging voter rolls is intended to remove duplicate names, people who have moved, died, or are otherwise ineligible to vote. On November 3, 2015, the NAACP in Georgia filed a federal voting rights lawsuit against election officials in Sparta and Hancock counties. The lawsuit was filed because Sparta and Hancock county election officials repeatedly challenged and purged eligible voters due to alleged address changes and without complying with federal guidelines. These challenges and purges predominantly affected African American voters.⁷ A lawsuit on improper purging of voter rolls has been filed in Kansas as well, in response to a 2013 law requiring proof of citizenship, often time-consuming for working people. More than 36,000 Kansans have tried to register since this law went into effect, (many 18–24 year olds), but were unable to compete their registrations. The purge removed these people from the list and required them to restart the entire registration process over again.⁸

3. *Felon Disenfranchisement, Often Permanently*

Felon disenfranchisement is often permanent in the United States, barring people with felony convictions from voting for life. The United States is the only democracy in the world that regularly bans large numbers of people from voting after they have completed their sentences. Many countries, such as Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Peru, Sweden, and Zimbabwe, allow prisoners to vote unless convicted of crimes against the electoral system. The 2008 *Lift Every Voice* presents more discussion but as of that time, approximately 5.3 million Americans were denied the right to vote because of previous felony convictions.⁹ These missing votes have a great impact on elections. In Florida during the controversial 2000 presidential election, even some non-felons were banned due to recordkeeping errors and not warned of their disqualification until the deadline for contesting had passed.

In the United States, felon disenfranchisement disproportionately affects communities of color because they are disproportionately arrested, convicted, and subsequently denied the right to vote. As result, as much as 10 percent of the population in some minority communities are unable to vote.¹⁰ Given current incarceration rates, 30 percent of the next generation of African American males can expect to be disenfranchised at some point in their lifetime.¹¹ In 2011, Florida Governor Rick Scott disenfranchised 97,491 ex-felons and prohibited another 1.1million prisoners from being allowed to vote after serving their time.¹² Similarly in Iowa, Governor Terry Branstad overturned his predecessor’s decision to restore voting rights to 100,000 ex-felons.

4. *Misinformation About Voting Procedures*

There have been multiple cases of misinformation about voting procedures and practices in the past years. In recall elections for the Wisconsin State Senate in 2011, Americans for Prosperity (AFP) sent many Democratic voters a mailing that gave an incorrect deadline for absentee ballots. Voters who relied on the deadline in the mailing would have mailed in their ballots too late for them to be counted in the election. The organization responded by saying that the mistake was simply a typographical error; however, this was not the last time this would occur.¹³ In April of 2014 in West Virginia, voters in at

least eight counties received a different kind of misleading leaflet from AFP. These leaflets led people to believe they were not properly registered to vote in the May primary, when many were registered.¹⁴

5. *Inequality of Resources Available on Election Day*

Underfunded election areas can result in long lines at polling places, requiring some voters to either wait hours to cast a ballot or to forgo their right to vote. Voters with disabilities or who cannot afford the wait are therefore disenfranchised. Delays at polling places are generally greater in urban areas, often home to working-class families and communities of color.¹⁵ A marginalized group often overlooked by federal and state governments are Native Americans living on and off reservations. In San Juan County Utah there is a large Navajo population with only two voting options. Most people mail in their votes, or they can go to the single polling place, located in a predominantly white area often inaccessible due to lack of transportation or inability to get time off.¹⁶

6. *Restricting Early Voting*

Since 2011, eight states that saw recent increases in minority early voting usage have sharply cut back on early voting hours and days. States including Florida, Georgia, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wisconsin slashed the days and hours most available to working-class communities: Sundays and evenings.¹⁷

7. *Ending Same-Day Voter Registration*

About 10 to 15 percent of voters register to vote or update their addresses at the polls during major Wisconsin elections. The law is credited with giving Wisconsin one of the highest voter turnout rates in the nation, but legislation has been introduced to end same-day voter registration.¹⁸ Voter turnout is much higher in states using election day voter registration than in states that do not. According to official turnout data reports in the 2014 edition of *America Goes to the Polls*, voter turnout in election day registration states have averaged 10 to 14 percent higher than states that do not have the option.¹⁹

8. *Database (Mis)matching*

In 2008, more than 98,000 registered Georgia voters were removed from the roll of eligible voters because of a computer mismatch in their personal identification information, leading registrars to conclude that they were no longer eligible voters at their registered addresses. People were being told that they were not eligible to vote based on information in a database that had not been checked and approved by the Department of Justice and had known flaws.²⁰ In a separate case in Florida, election officials found that 75 percent of approximately 20,000 voter registration applications were mismatched due to typographical and administrative errors.²¹

Campaign Finance Issues

In the initial statement of concern, the pattern of 5-4 Supreme Court rulings against more than 100 years of campaign finance laws was referenced by the names of key decisions. The one early case cited from 1976, *Buckley v. Valeo*, did open the door to money being considered speech, though its position was that any effective expression of political or other opinion required money in our developed economy. Thus it expanded the amount of money that could be used, though a range of spending caps on individuals, parties, corporations, unions, and others were still in place. Since that time, and accelerating today, all caps are off and only direct, quid pro quo exchange of money for legislation is considered corruption by the Court. Fundraising, even by those foregoing PAC monies, dominates communication. Legislators' lives, in fact, are initially consumed with fundraising, even though gerrymandered districts usually guarantee reelection to more than 90 percent of federal officeholders.

Perhaps the most illuminating data point regarding the role of money in politics is that as of June 2015, (only) 158 families contributed almost half the money for the early efforts to capture the White House. "Just 158 families, along with companies they own or control, contributed \$176 million in the first phase of the campaign, a *New York Times* investigation found. Not since before Watergate have so few people and businesses provided so much early money in a campaign, most of it through channels legalized by the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision five years ago."²² Yet this is not the full picture, which the public is likely never to have, since the Internal Revenue Service has been prevented from establishing regulations on "social welfare organizations," which can give money without disclosing donors, and the Securities and Exchange Commission has been prevented from "finalizing" rules for companies to disclose their political contributions.²³

The result of this lack of disclosure by 501.c.4 and 501.c.6 organizations is that an estimated \$500 million has entered the U.S. political system as "dark money" prior to 2016.²⁴ This could well include funds from other countries, or from individuals of dual citizenship whose primary allegiance is not to the United States. So far, President Obama (who did not accept public funding limits in his elections) has declined calls to issue an executive order requiring government contractors (most of the largest corporations) to disclose their political contributions to PACs or 527 organizations.²⁵

Presbyterians and others of good faith certainly will differ on how effective the U.S. government has been in addressing the problems of unemployment, housing (especially since the credit crash of 2008), climate change, long-running wars, and particular problems, such as the extraterritorial prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Some will point to a declining deficit, jobs regained,

and health insurance made available to almost 20 million additional people. Others will see problems of immigration and mass incarceration still inadequately addressed, manufacturing and mining under pressure, and undesirable cultural changes.

In Jane Mayer's book, *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*, she traces the millions already spent to influence the redistricting of states, the cutting of taxes, and the halting of regulation. This story is ongoing, as Jane Mayer reports that "the Koch network aimed to spend \$889 million in the 2016 election cycle."²⁶ This number creeps toward the \$1 billion each the parties are expected to spend, but more than that, it suggests a downgrade of political parties and the public communications they are based on. The non-party spending translates into hundreds of full-time staff across the country pushing elected officials and candidates to take preset stands against greener energy and labor protections, for example, and in favor of the interests of the funders.

Brief Theological Reflections on Current Politics: Money Is Not Yet All

This resolution focuses partly on the undemocratic financial distortions of the U.S. political system. This section briefly argues that money still does not determine everything, and that the church has other ways to influence the character of politics, without itself becoming a partisan actor through direct endorsements. When emotional appeals (even borrowed from church practice) are made, the church can model civil discourse and identify ethical claims.²⁷ In response to both populism and false populism, Christian leaders and communities may need to point to persons and acts of prophetic character.

Presbyterians and many other Protestants understand the link between voting and individual conscience. Most probably consider the right to vote an essential of citizenship. Presbyterians, in particular, may point to structural similarities between their church's government and that of U.S. representative and democratic polity, even down to the Constitution's sin-aware checks and balances. Yet the influence of religion comes more through the continuing impact of revivalism on popular democracy in America, in its use of all emerging technologies, from theatrical techniques and imitations of courtroom logic to cheap printing and transportation. Even though these practices were pioneered in the 19th century, they still influence the nature of televised and tweeted political speech and performance today.

In *The New Measures: A Theological History of Democratic Practice*, Presbyterian minister, Ted A. Smith, describes the transformative effects of emotional worship on elections and the authority that more charismatic (though not Pentecostal) preaching stars came to have over more traditional authorities. Personality trumps policy as experience trumps theology: "... the authority of celebrity requires the display of whatever counts as private, and so as real. This leads to the instrumentalization of interests, feelings, activities, and relationships."²⁸ People claim that politics has become a "circus."

In *Democracy & Tradition*, Jeffrey Stout responds to critics of "liberalism" who see the marketplace of political ideas and feelings to be increasingly empty of value. This resolution maintains that there is too much market in politics, and seeks to protect human free speech from being overwhelmed, even if some of that speech is not great. Stout agrees with Stanley Hauerwas and others who see a need for moral exemplars and virtuous communities influencing public discourse, yet any insistence on standards of competence seems to be swept away in the merger of entertainment and desire for success (a problem also for the church). Yet Stout reminds us that:

The Bible says that such [moral] gifts might be found in any human being among us—old or young, male or female, free or enslaved (Joel 2:27–28, Acts 2:17–18). No idea is more central to modern democracy. ... Its motivating premise is that society must take care not to block the expression of thoughts that might prove to be inspired. It is therefore at odds with the silly notion that all speech will be equal in value ... Everyone knows that free speech increases the volume of mediocre ethical discourse—in both senses of "volume." But this is the price we pay for democracy, not the reason we pay it. ... Freedom of speech, like freedom of religion, rests on a crucial point of spiritual concord between the forms of Protestantism that influenced Madison (Presbyterianism—ed.) and the unchurched forms of Emersonian heterodoxy that emerged several decades later.²⁹

Given the enormous crossover of religious and political practice and preaching, why should ministers and other religious leaders not endorse particular political leaders or parties? If power can be used for good purposes, can the religious leader not guide members of a congregation to identify the right candidate? This is where the invaluable work of James Hastings Nichols, *Democracy and the Churches* (1950), reminds us of the core Reformed cautions against idolizing fallible sinners, no matter how eloquent, and about Calvin and Knox's insistence on the independence of the church. To endorse candidates is to put the pulpit in service to the platform, a step that ultimately distorts both. There should be cooperation and even mutual support between religious communities and political and social movements, but no concordats.³⁰

At another level, all churches are always aware that patriotism, though sometimes noble, can be like tribalism, ethnic superiority, and class distinctions: a barrier and not a conduit for the love of neighbor.

In terms of the limits of speech, the Reformed churches regularly wrestle with the boundaries of membership and leadership (ordination) within a tradition that is both democratic and confessional. In the United States, with the Constitution seen primarily as a procedural Book of Order, the tradition of democracy finds its free speech boundaries when threats are perceived, as in the perceived threat of terrorism today or communism in the 1950s. In 1953 John Mackay and Eugene Carson Blake led the General Assembly Council in a prophetic letter confronting the government's witch-hunting hysteria of that day, an example of institutional leadership worth remembering.³¹ The recent General Assembly resolution, *Drones, War, and*

Surveillance, echoes that concern about the monitoring of speech violating the rights of citizenship and the turning of “strangers” into “enemies” out of fear rather than evidence.³²

To conclude this reflection on Presbyterian ethos regarding the influence of money in politics, we may simply ask whether a Presbyterian aware of human fallibility and naiveté could have written what Supreme Court Justice Kennedy did in *Citizens’ United*: “We now conclude that independent expenditures, including those made by corporations, do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption.” After affirming that corporate contributions were effectively part of free speech of their chosen speakers, he noted, “the fact that speakers may have influence over or access to elected officials does not mean that these officials are corrupt.” His aspirational conclusion: “The appearance of influence or access will not cause the electorate to lose faith in our democracy.”³³

Writing as a \$3-4 billion campaign heats up, perhaps we may hope that the excess of expenditures being spent may conversely restore a faith in democracy, precisely in reaction to a system so dominated by money at all levels.

Endnotes

1. The Electoral College has been changed twice since the Constitution was written, though there have been many other proposals for change. The three options provided here are drawn from two respected nonpartisan groups with expertise, Common Cause: <http://www.commoncause.org/democracy-wire/new-york-legislature-backs-national-popular-vote.html> and FairVote: http://www.fairvote.org/presidential_elections#presidential_elections_the_electoral_college. Both document the focus of the U.S. political system on 10 “swing” states and other undemocratic distortions.
2. These articles describe the removal of limits on section 527 organizations after the Citizens United reversal of previous election law: <http://www.fec.gov/law/litigation/speechnow.shtml> March 2010 and <http://www.scotusblog.com/2010/03/widening-impact-of-citizens-united/>.
3. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/26/us/supreme-court-ruling.html?_r=0.
4. The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is a key group in protecting voting rights, and studying the impact of the Supreme Court case weakening the Voting Rights Act. They have a toolkit for faith communities: <https://lawyerscommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/0381.pdf> and a one pager on how to protect voting rights: <https://lawyerscommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/0406.pdf>.
5. “Voter ID laws in the United States,” Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter_ID_laws_in_the_United_States> (2 November 2015).
6. “Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America,” Center for American Progress, <<https://www.americanprogress.org/events/2015/09/25/122091/give-us-the-ballot-the-modern-struggle-for-voting-rights-in-america/>> (October 6, 2015). The mobile units may give out free voter IDs, but they will only stop in one location in each county and are open for just two hours at a time. This makes it nearly impossible for many working families to obtain the identification cards needed to vote. Only 29 people have received IDs this way so far in 2015 while an estimated 250,000 potential voters still lack an appropriate ID as of publication date.
7. “NAACP files lawsuit to stop alleged voter purges in Hancock County,” 13WMAZ, <<http://www.13wmaz.com/story/news/2015/11/03/suit-alleges-voters-illegally-purged-in-sparta-and-hancock-county/75114908/>> (November 3, 2015).
8. “Voter ID Battle Shifts to Kansas,” *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/16/us/politics/kansas-voter-id-law-sets-off-a-new-battle-over-registration.html?_r=0 (October 15, 2015).
9. “Voter Suppression in the United States,” Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter_suppression_in_the_United_States#Impediments_to_voter_registration> (23 January 2014).
10. “Felony Disenfranchisement,” Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voter_suppression_in_the_United_States> (October 15, 2015).
11. “Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States,” The Sentencing Project, <http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/fd_Felony%20Disenfranchisement%20Laws%20in%20the%20US.pdf> (November 2, 2015).
12. “The GOP War on Voting,” *RollingStone*, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-gop-war-on-voting-20110830> (November 10, 2015).
13. Op. cit. at 2 (ii). Further examples of this particular group: Two years later in Virginia, voters reported receiving a mailing from Americans for Prosperity that told them they were not registered to vote, when in fact many were. The mailer also threatened to contact neighbors of the recipients and inform the neighbors of the recipient’s lack of registration. Again in 2014, Americans for Prosperity mailed out more misleading leaflets.
14. “Voters getting misleading info from group, Tennant says,” *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, <<http://www.wvgazettemail.com/article/20140422/GZ01/140429746>> (November 2, 2015).
15. Op. Cit. at 2 (2).
16. Op. Cit. at 6 (6).

17. “Voter Suppression: How Bad? (Pretty Bad)” *The American Prospect Longform*, < <http://prospect.org/article/22-states-wave-new-voting-restrictions-threatens-shift-outcomes-tight-races>> (October 6, 2015).
18. “Ending same-day voter registration would cost \$5.2 million, board finds,” *Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel*, <<http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/ending-sameday-voter-registration-would-cost-52-million-board-finds-vn804tl-182996661.html>> (November 2, 2015).
19. “Election Day Voter Registration,” Wikipedia, < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Election_Day_voter_registration> (November 2, 2015).
20. “Some voters ‘purged’ from voter rolls,” CNN, < <http://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/10/26/voter.suppression/>> (November 2, 2015).
21. Ibid.
22. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/10/11/us/politics/2016-presidential-election-super-pac-donors.html?WT.mc_ev=click&WT.mc_id=NYT-E-I-NYT-E-AT-101515_a-L3&nl=el&nid=26025810&r=1.
23. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/26/opinion/political-dark-money-just-got-darker.html?emc=edit_th_20151226&nl=todayshheadlines&nid=26025810&r=0.
24. See the data built on by the New York Times: https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/nonprof_summ.php.
25. For definition of how social welfare organizations maintain secrecy: https://www.opensecrets.org/outsidespending/nonprof_summ.php.
26. Mayer, Jane *Dark Money*... (N.Y.: Doubleday, 2015), p. 377.
27. See Davis, James Calvin. *In Defense of Civility: How Religion Can Unite America on Seven Issues that Divide Us* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).
28. Smith, Ted A. *The New Measures: A Theological History of Democratic Practice* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge UP, 2007), p. 216.
29. Stout, Jeffrey. *Democracy & Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004), (pp. 167–8).
30. This has led the Presbyterian church always to oppose even Vatican ambassadors, whose vestigial medieval state symbolizes exactly the confusion of realms Reformed Christians distrust.
31. See: <http://pres-outlook.org/2014/06/general-assembly-detroit-1954-personal-retrospective-david-m-evans/>.
32. The resolution, *Drones, War, and Surveillance* comes in four parts due to the topics it covers, although a booklet version is also available: <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=4787>.
33. These quotes from the conclusion of the Citizens’ United decision are in an article that tries to explain Justice Kennedy’s longer term framework on the place of corporate contributions in politics: http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/citizens_united_supreme_court_justice_anthony_m_kennedys_gift_to_moneyed_i/

Item 11-14

Item 11-14 has been moved to 14 Theological Issues & Institutions and has been reassigned the following item number: Item 14-14. [See p. 1018.]

Item 11-15

Item 11-15 has been moved to 03 General Assembly Procedures and has been reassigned the following item number: Item 03-12. [See p. 175.]

Item 11-16

[The assembly approved Item 11-16 with amendment. See pp. 53, 56.]

On Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Equip and mobilize its member congregations to better serve those living among us with HIV-AIDS by the development of the following initiatives:

a. A mission-based program to create a certificate program in response to the action of the 219th General Assembly (2010), “Becoming an HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C] Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and

Compassionate Action” (*Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 72–73, 1370ff*). This effort will support the church in its continued prophetic witness on issues of HIV and AIDS, to specifically expand the prophetic witness into practical application.

b. ~~[An annual HIV/AIDS conference that would be conducted in partnership with the ten seminaries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)]~~ [Commission delegates of the denomination to attend an existing domestic or international HIV/AIDS conference.]

2. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) to coordinate a development strategy and activities to raise the following revenue to support these initiatives: \$150,000 over a three-year period to be utilized to operationalize ~~[these two initiatives]~~ [this initiative].

Rationale

The 219th General Assembly (2010) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved the document “Becoming an HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action” in response to HIV and AIDS pandemic. Included in that document were the following actions:

Challenge the PC(USA) to become an HIV and AIDS competent denomination at all levels of the church and in all its ministries ...

Call upon congregations to accept the challenge to become an HIV and AIDS competent church by studying the HIV and AIDS related policies and resources of the PC(USA) ...

[Develop] denominational standards defining the [criteria] of HIV and AIDS competent congregations and ministries, in accordance with PC(USA) policies and in collaboration with ecumenical partners in HIV and AIDS ministries ...

Call upon presbyteries to include pastoral training related to HIV and AIDS competency as part of a qualified candidate’s preparation for ministry.

Commend Presbyterian theological seminaries that have incorporated HIV and AIDS education into their community life. (*Minutes, 2010, Part I, p. 1370*)

In response to this action by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and the release in 2015 of the 2.0 version of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States, we propose to develop a four-course certificate program that will focus on pastoral care for those living with HIV-AIDS, preaching sermons that lift those oppressed by HIV-AIDS, scientific education to ensure the HIV-AIDS literacy of participants, and practicum study opportunities with local agencies providing services to those living with HIV-AIDS.

The purpose of this program is to gather, equip, and mobilize church leaders to develop the skills and resources for creating AIDS competent congregations. Without advancing a particular biblical or theological position, the goal is twofold: (1) increase the health literacy of congregations related to HIV-AIDS, and (2) to work with church leaders to formulate and articulate biblical, theological, pastoral, and moral/ethical foundations, which are consistent with each church’s mission/vision. Throughout the duration of the program, participants will actively work with their congregations to address HIV and AIDS systematically and to integrate the foundations from the program into the everyday life and ministry of their congregations.

In addition to the certificate program, it is essential that the church conduct regular opportunities for the Presbyterian AIDS Network (PAN) to gather together and share best practices and skills to further the creation of collaborations in the various presbyteries of the church. The mechanism for this effort would be the annual HIV-AIDS conference that will not only be a platform for the “HIV-AIDS Competent Church” agenda but it will also serve as a recruiting tool for the certificate program as the target audience will primarily be the students of our various seminaries. These are the future leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and as such it is imperative that they be introduced to this critical social justice arena during their formative theological education.

Too often, reports such as “Becoming an HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action” are just left to collect dust on shelves. We stand at a critical juncture in the trajectory of this pandemic and if we are to win the battle, it will require all hands on deck including first and foremost the church.

With financial support from the General Assembly, PAN will be able to systematically develop these two programs that will serve as the benchmarks for creating a standardized approach to the delivery of HIV-AIDS services and ministry throughout the entire body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

It has been five years since the creation of the report so now is the time to move forward by activating the strategies outlined in the 2010 report. We look forward to support from the General Assembly to continue this critical work toward getting to ZERO in terms of new infections, deaths related to HIV-AIDS, perinatal infections, and overall discrimination related to HIV-AIDS.

Concurrence to Item 11-16 from the Presbytery of Ohio Valley.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-16

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-16—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of Item 11-16 with amendment to Recommendation 1.a. to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through.]

“a. A mission-based program to create a certificate program in response to the action of the 219th General Assembly (2010), ‘Becoming an HIV, AIDS[, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C] Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action’ (Minutes, 2010, Part I, pp. 72–73, 1370 ff). This effort will support the church in its continued prophetic witness on issues of HIV and AIDS, to specifically expand the prophetic witness into practical application.”

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy affirms the need for continued ministry to persons with HIV-AIDS, preventive action by public health authorities, and international cooperation in medical research and treatment. The two initiatives are creative possibilities. So why the recommended change in the title?

The wording of the title of the report that appears in quotation marks was, in fact, clarified on the floor of the 219th General Assembly (2010) by Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons in response to a challenge by a medical doctor from North Dakota. Late the Friday night before, a commissioner had recommended that everywhere in the report that “HIV-AIDS” appeared, so should the words, “Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C,” as these diseases do often accompany the spread of HIV-AIDS by shared needles. This was quickly approved. The next morning, however, the MD commissioner asked if the assembly had realized that this action would make much of the text literally false, as the diseases, their treatments, and their stigma are quite different. In response, the Stated Clerk affirmed for the record that the assembly would not knowingly publish falsehood or false witness in any form. While the wrongly amended title appears in the *Minutes*, the printed and downloadable version of the report uses the corrected title: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/becoming-an-hiv-and-aids-competent-church/>. Certainly if fundraising for the initiatives were to be effective, the original name of the report would need to be used.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-16

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-16—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-16.

Clear evidence from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicating that racial ethnic groups, particularly African Americans, constitute the majority of the population living with and at risk for the HIV/AIDS virus is readily available (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/ataglance.html>). That being the reality, ACREC, in concurrence with the action of the 219th General Assembly (2010) in its approval of “Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action” (Item 19-05: <https://pc-biz.org/#/search/3227>) in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, strongly advises approval of this overture.

ACWC ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-16

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-16—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-16.

The Advocacy for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) fully supports this overture and concurs with the Presbytery of Baltimore on its rationale for raising this critical issue. The ACWC is particularly concerned about the significant impact of HIV/AIDS on women in the United States and around the globe. Worldwide more than half of the people who live with HIV/AIDS are women. For women in their reproductive years, HIV is the leading cause of death, with 62 percent of new diagnoses occurring with adolescent girls. In the United States, 1 in 4 people living with HIV are women and, at 62 percent, black women are a disproportionate number of the diagnosed with HIV.

As all of God’s creation is created in the image and likeness of God, Jesus beseeched us to show care for God’s creation. And he implored us to particularly care for the sick, among others. As the church we are called to show the unshakable fidelity of God’s love and this overture demonstrates that love in action.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 11-16

Comment on Item 11-16—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has consistently advocated to increase global AIDS funding through its Office of Public Witness, and was a key part of the coalition advocating for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This overture will enhance current social witness policy.

Some of the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s global partners in Africa have made fighting AIDS and preventing its resurgence a priority. Our World Mission personnel were consulted in the drafting of the overture and its inputs are already reflected in the submitted overture.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency cannot presently devote an existing staff person for the activities suggested in the overture, but would need to create a new position outside the budget if financial resources became available. Mobilizing a funds development effort toward this new priority would require a significant diversion of resources away from currently established mission and funding priorities. The startup costs for a new effort would be unlikely to generate consequential funding for the cause during the first five years of such efforts. We would, therefore, encourage congregations to use existing methods of fundraising, such as the portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering retained locally to be used toward this cause, either by encouraging the support of the Presbyterian AIDS Network, or another Christian HIV/AIDS ministry with which the PC(USA) is in partnership.

Item 11-17

[The assembly answered Item 11-17 by the action taken on Item 11-24. See pp. 46, 56.]

On Reviewing the Doctrine of Discovery—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to do the following:

1. Initiate a process of review of the Doctrine of Discovery that would commence at the end of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and that would
 - a. include a comprehensive review of the history of the Doctrine of Discovery;
 - b. include a review of actions taken by other denominations and religious groups to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, including the explanatory and educational materials created and recommendations developed by these groups related to the Doctrine of Discovery; and
 - c. include contacting Native American tribes and individuals in order to understand how this doctrine impacts them.
2. Prepare a report that
 - a. describes the Doctrine of Discovery and explains its history;
 - b. makes recommendations of how congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights;
 - c. describes how relationships with specific Native American individuals and tribes can be developed;
 - d. suggests specific ways in which congregations may recognize, support, and cooperate with Native American individuals, tribes, and nations who reside within their communities; and
 - e. recommends whether the 223rd General Assembly (2018) should or should not repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

Rationale

The motivation of the congregations and presbyteries that initiated and concurred with this overture is the desire to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. It is the intention of these groups that this repudiation would result in changes in the attitudes and actions of individuals and organizations toward Native Americans. When this suggestion was presented to various groups and individuals, the first questions asked were, “What is the Doctrine of Discovery and why have we not heard of this before?”

It became clear at the outset that a process of education was needed to help people understand the history of the Doctrine of Discovery, its role in the creation and development of our country, and its continued impact on our people and institutions. It was felt that asking the General Assembly to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery before understanding it would be “putting the cart before the horse.”

For this reason we decided to recommend that the General Assembly commit to study the Doctrine of Discovery, develop an understanding of what it is and does, and to share these understandings with the entire denomination. Our belief is that we should understand what the Doctrine of Discovery is about before we act to repudiate it.

This study and ultimate report should include the following information, which we believe will be helpful to everyone in understanding the Doctrine of Discovery:

- The Doctrine of Discovery was first articulated in 1452 by Pope Nicholas V as the Papal Bull “Dum Diversas” and in 1496 by King Henry VII of England as a patent granted to John Cabot, which authorized and justified the destruction, killing, and appropriating of the lands of indigenous peoples and nations.
- During Colonial times in the United States our leaders used the Doctrine of Discovery, which they claimed was inherited from England by the United States, to rationalize their actions against Native American tribes whose land they wished to appropriate.
- The Doctrine of Discovery was incorporated into U.S. law in the 19th century when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case, *Johnson vs McIntosh*, 1823, stating that European nations had assumed dominion over the lands of America upon discovery and as a result Native Americans had lost their rights to complete sovereignty as independent nations and retained a mere right of occupancy in their lands.
- In the mid-19th century the term “Manifest Destiny” was coined to affirm the concept of the Doctrine of Discovery as the right to dominate the continent of the United States for the free development of America’s inevitable growth.
- During all these periods of American history, Christian churches, of which we are one denomination, have accepted and supported the various forms of the Doctrine of Discovery, sometimes called the Christian Doctrine of Discovery. We have participated both actively and passively throughout our history in discriminatory behavior directed against Native Americans. We have stood by while Native Americans were killed and their lands taken, while the story of their participation in the history of our country was distorted and suppressed.
- The Doctrine of Discovery has never been repudiated in the courts of the United States and court decisions against Native Americans continue to be made on the basis of the Doctrine of Discovery as interpreted by the Supreme Court in 1823.
- In 2007 the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution that is called the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This declaration was passed overwhelmingly by the member nations and has been signed by the United States of America. The declaration condemns “all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences.” Without specifying it by name, the primary “doctrine” about which the resolution was drafted and passed was the “Doctrine of Discovery.”
- The UN declaration is concerned that “indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests.”
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a comprehensive document that addresses the rights of indigenous peoples throughout the world and can be used as a guide to develop actions within our denomination with respect to the human rights of the Native Americans who live within our communities.
- Other faith communities who repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery are the Episcopal Church (2009), the Anglican Church of Canada (2010), the Unitarian Universalist Church (2011), the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (2012), the United Methodist Church (2012), the World Council of Churches (2012), the Disciples of Christ U.S. and Canada (2013), and the United Church of Christ (2013). Many of these denominations have developed study materials related to the Doctrine of Discovery and we recommend that our denomination review these materials in order to recommend materials to our member congregations for study and action.

As committed Christians and members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)], we can no longer remain silent about the plight of Native Americans or the impact of the Doctrine of Discovery.

The Session of Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of National Capital are recommending that after a period of study and consideration the Doctrine of Discovery be repudiated and that member congregations of our denomination be made aware of what the Doctrine of Discovery is and how it has been used to dispossess Native Americans of their lands, territories, and resources, and thereby of preventing them from exercising their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests.

Concurrence to Item 11-17 from the Presbyteries of Hudson River, Long Island, and the Pacific.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-17

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-17—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 222nd General Assembly approve 11-17 with amendment as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to instruct the [~~Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)~~] [Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns] to do the following:”

This overture recommends precisely the kind of actions for which the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns was developed, as that body includes two members representing and coordinating with the Native American Consulting Committee. Since the Doctrine of Discovery most impacted those peoples whose ancestors lived in North America prior to 1492, it is important that a study team with significant and sustained Native American participation be developed before action is taken on their behalf. The word “review” is well-chosen, as a number of denominations have already conducted literature and legal research, although not all ecumenical bodies have used the word, “repudiate,” to characterize their disavowal of this legal construct and its consequences in various contexts.

Commissioners should know that approving this review would mean disapproving Recommendation 7 of Item 11-24. That recommendation calls for repudiation first and study second, though it does suggest ecumenical conversation to be part of future action.

The proposed review would serve as a means of tracing the effects on Native Americans of the Doctrine of Discovery, prompting a repudiation or similar determination of it if its negative influence is confirmed, and educating the membership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to advance the human rights of Native Americans or First Peoples. Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries would be the appropriate program area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to work with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns to conserve resources. If the Office of the General Assembly were to be involved, the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the Presbyterian Historical Society might offer particular assistance.

This project would advance the support of past General Assemblies for respecting the culture, values, traditions, sovereignty, unique needs, and right to self-determination of Native Americans (1963, 1969, 1971, 1979, 1981). It would also signal our church’s adherence to the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and our agreement with the actions of several sister denominations as listed in the overture’s thoughtful rationale. An Historical Overview of the PCUSA’s “Racial-Ethnic Ministry Policies” by Archie Crouch (*Journal of Presbyterian History*, Fall 1979, 57:3, pp. 272–312) shows ministries of evangelism and education (“civilization”) to Native Americans starting in 1646. There is no explicit endorsement of the Doctrine of Discovery mentioned in that survey, though the church becomes more self-critical throughout the 20th century about its relationships with native peoples.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-17

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-17—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-17.

In the past seven years, many faith communities have repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery. The United Nations (UN) was also the leader in guiding these faith communities to support this important action. Although, to many of our PC(USA) saints, this movement and action is not something many are aware of or have important information about. In our continued effort of being a church that respects one another through social witness and justice, we should practice, “Respect begins with understanding.”

Making and taking the time to learn more about the Doctrine of Discovery will enhance our understanding, if we do it with a spirit of reconciliation. This is certainly more than reading from the history books, and actually talking and sharing among our Native American sisters and brothers, especially those within the PC(USA). This would include but not be limited to the office of Native American Congregational Support, PC(USA) Native American teaching elders and ruling elders, and the national PC(USA) Native American racial ethnic constituency, the Native American Consulting Committee (NACC). To initiate such a process by the General Assembly will be good in making a future decision to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-17

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-17—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-17.

The ACWC concurs with the rationale given by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns on this item.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 11-17

Comment on Item 11-17—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This overture instructs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to host a process of review of the Doctrine of Discovery that will report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with a recommendation on further action.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation respectfully advises that the assembly expand Recommendation 1.c. and require Native American persons be included in the process of review and reporting (Recommendations 2.a–e). The recommendation directs the agency to contact the group of peoples that are centered by the race impact of a generational, systemic, theological, and ideological commitment and is not enough. Native and Indigenous American peoples, harmed most of all and often silenced or missing from the church’s consideration, must be at the table from the beginning. Diversity in a majority white church has to be intentional, recognized, and fostered in this process in accordance with F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. The GACOR supports the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joining with mainline denominations in denouncing the Doctrine of Discovery.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 11-18

[The assembly approved Item 11-18. See pp. 47, 57.]

A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

- 1. Direct the six agencies of the General Assembly to have their leadership meet twice a year to collaborate and improve their cultural proficiency (or comparable initiative) goals and resources.**
- 2. Direct the six agencies of the General Assembly to ensure that all employees of their agency are aware of and have access to the agency’s cultural proficiency (or comparable initiative) plan and goals.**
- 3. Direct ACREC, in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), to set a two-year focus for each cycle of cultural proficiency goals for all of the agencies to follow in order to cover all aspects of cultural proficiency effectively and with clarity.**

Rationale

The partnerships forged between the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) by way of this General Assembly cycle’s Climate for Change consultations portend to be an invaluable asset to the larger denomination. The collegial and collaborative spirit that characterized both consultations bodes well for our collective work of living into being the church that God calls us to be.

The *Companion to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, in its characterization of the essential elements of the annual meeting of the session and board of deacons, also happens to characterize well what ACREC believes the PMA and OGA cultural proficiency consultations reflected, as well as what all future Climate for Change consultations should be: A “time for planning, making in-course corrections, assessing work done or in process, and deepening the spiritual life of [those present] (Frank Beattie, 2007 Revision of *The Companion to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, [Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999], 154. https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/publications/constitution-companion.pdf).

Further on in the document, it is noted that this is a time to “dream dreams and see visions together (Joel 2:28)” (Ibid.).

With both the PMA and the OGA, ACREC acknowledged that we are still learning into the most effective and efficient method of creating a space for meaningful consultations. It is ACREC’s hope that the collaborative spirit with which ACREC enters this process was evident to all involved in the consultations.

Some general questions and concerns that remain for ACREC in considering the work of both agencies are as follows:

1. There does not appear to be much effort made to receive feedback from the average staff person of each agency regarding how they perceive the “climate” of the workplace. It is ACREC’s hope that the agencies will look into how to seek

out and receive honest feedback from employees in order to continue to set relevant goals and continue to grow into truly culturally proficient organizations. It matters deeply how the lowest paid staff person perceives her or his work environment.

2. While it is critical to have the leadership of each agency engaged in cultural proficiency work, ACREC continues to have some concern about the agencies ensuring that leaders are themselves fully equipped to model cultural proficiency to the agency. It is essential that some level of cultural proficiency expertise exist within each agency, and ACREC continues to question whether engagement with cultural proficiency trainings and education and commitment to moving forward in cultural proficiency is sufficient enough when expertise is lacking.

3. It is ACREC's hope that more and more employees of all agencies will become aware of and familiar with their agencies' cultural proficiency plans.

The following outlines some of the highlights of ACREC's time with each of the two agencies and provides specific rationale for the recommendations at the beginning of this report.

Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)

Presented with a detailed progress report of the PMA's 2014–2015 goals, ACREC was able to see the renewed vision and intent behind the PMA's commitment to cultural proficiency. Honest reflection on where the agency had hoped to be revealed that the PMA has not reached most of the cultural proficiency goals it had set out for the agency. That said, PMA leaders acknowledged that mid-cycle the agency had chosen to take what it found to be a more effective route to working toward being a culturally proficient employer, setting them back with regards to the original goals they had laid out for themselves.

The focus within the PMA shifted to "cultural humility" as opposed to cultural proficiency. The ACREC initially expressed some concern with this language shift, but PMA representatives explained that this is meant to start in a more honest place, earlier on in the continuum of cultural proficiency. However, ACREC agrees this acknowledges a need to be genuine about where we start.

One question that was raised by ACREC was related to where the cultural proficiency expertise comes from in the PMA. While the focus of the most recent PMA cultural proficiency efforts has been educating and training those in leadership, this has been done sometimes by those within the organization and sometimes by outside resources. The ACREC appreciates the use of outside experts, as there is more room for objectivity and risk-taking when not entrenched in the organization. That said, the PMA stressed that they've had difficulty with outside trainers not fully understanding the inner workings of the PMA, which has presented a stumbling block in such trainings.

The PMA's focus on leadership was a heartening revelation to ACREC. A relevant question that remains, however, is how the organization ensures the commitment and proficiency of the Executive Director (with whom the primary responsibility for organizational cultural proficiency lies). The Six-Year Cultural Proficiency Plan of the PMA notes that the PMA Board shall review the Executive Director with regards to cultural proficiency. The ACREC is pleased to see that this is a normal part of the Executive Director's review, but questions how the PMA ensures that those on the board are equipped and capable of making such an essential assessment.

It was refreshing to ACREC to be met with such honesty from the PMA leaders. They acknowledged that not only has cultural dominance been institutionalized in their work, but that there is still very much to be done to counteract that. They noted that what they most need is focus and a clearer definition of cultural proficiency (which is so broad in scope), both of which they hope ACREC can help them with. One suggestion was for ACREC to suggest a focus for each two-year cycle on which the agency can center particular cultural proficiency goals. For example, one cycle might focus on antiracism and white privilege, while the next might be disability concerns, and so on. From this discussion, it occurred to ACREC that this might be a helpful tool for all of the agencies in their cultural proficiency work.

Office of the General Assembly (OGA)

Consultation with the OGA consisted not only of a formal meeting with leadership, but also several instances of intentional communication and collaboration between staff and ACREC, often initiated by OGA staff. The OGA's commitment to forming a partnership with ACREC in this work was immediately evident. The OGA also sees itself as a leader in this work in the church and has expressed a hope to collaborate more with the other five agencies of the General Assembly in this work. This is a hopeful prospect to ACREC. Each agency surely has something to offer the others in this work, so collaboration makes sense and anticipates promising results.

A clear goal of the OGA is to prioritize cultural proficiency learning and modeling within their senior management. To this end, they've set goals and projected outcomes from education and training programs to occur throughout the next two-year cycle. Their two-year cultural proficiency plan update is clear and concise.

Commitment to education and training are blatantly evident in the OGA's two-year plan, including a comprehensive approach to cultural proficiency that includes and highlights addressing racism, but not to the exclusion of addressing other

oppressions also included within the broad context of cultural proficiency. Further, an awareness exists amongst leaders in the OGA concerning the importance of having experts outside the organization come to lead trainings and reflect back to the agency the work needed to continue to live into cultural proficiency.

As the OGA prepares to see a shift in leadership with the retirement of the Stated Clerk, ACREC made a point to address whether there was any concern about ensuring the next Stated Clerk would be committed to the cultural proficiency work of the OGA. In the OGA's response, ACREC perceived confidence in the commitment of the agency as a whole that will in essence give the new leader no choice but to join in that commitment.

The ACREC looks forward to continuing to collaborate and partner with the OGA in this work.

Board of Pensions (BOP), Presbyterian Foundation (FDN), Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

At the time of the submission of this report, ACREC had received a two-year cultural proficiency plan update from the Foundation and intended to send reminders/inquiries to the remaining three agencies to determine whether they had also updated their plans.

GACOR COMMENT ON ITEM 11-18, RECOMMENDATION 3

Comment on Item 11-18, Recommendation 3—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR).

This recommendation directs the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), to set a two-year focus for each cycle of cultural proficiency goals for all of the agencies to follow.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation welcomes consultation that involves them in the substantive formation of the goals. A question that has our attention is how setting goals external to the agencies will help them make progress in cultural proficiency. Another consideration is the time-frame for such external goal setting, whether it extends permanently, and how that impacts the accountability being asked of agencies in this work.

The General Assembly Committee on Representation is made up of fourteen persons, elected by the General Assembly, who are drawn from members and elders, ruling and teaching, from across the church in accordance with F-1-0403. Its Constitutional mandate and central functions are described in G-3.0103 of the Book of Order (Form of Government).

Item 11-19

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

[The assembly approved Item 11-19, Recommendation 1. See pp. 14, 57.]

1. Incorporate the review of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns' Manual of Operations and meeting minutes as a part of ACREC's regular six-year, self-study review process with the General Assembly, removing this responsibility from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, in alignment with the process used for the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

Rationale for Recommendation 1

The General Assembly has a system of regular, comprehensive review in place for holding ACREC accountable to the work to which it is called, and the committee believes this system to be effective. Aside from the regular six-year review cycle, ACREC is required to submit an agency review of the work the committee has completed in each two-year cycle for review by the assembly. The challenge every six years of comprehensively studying oneself results in understanding best practices, setting new goals, and making adjustments to be as effective as possible in fulfilling the church's calling for the committee. Since the General Assembly is the parent body to which ACREC is accountable, it makes sense to incorporate the review of ACREC's meeting minutes and Manual of Operations into the regular review process. This would also align ACREC with its partner committee, ACWC, in this practice, which was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014).

[The assembly approved Item 11-19, Recommendations 2.–4. See pp. 14, 57.]

2. Direct the two agencies that are under their six-year General Assembly review to assign a representative to attend one ACREC meeting per year in their two-year review cycle for the purpose of developing a collaborative work relationship.

3. Direct the two agencies that are under their six-year General Assembly review to invite one representative from ACREC to attend one meeting of that agencies' board or comparable governing body per year in the two-year cycle.

4. Direct all six agencies to apply Recommendations 2 and 3 above in the years when all six agencies are under review by the General Assembly.

Rationale for Recommendations 2–4

In an effort to establish a collaborative working relationship with the six agencies, ACREC completed a two-year monitoring cycle in 2015 with Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and PMA. In 2015, ACREC found that both OGA and PMA were working towards compliance to the General Assembly (GA) mandates of supplier diversity and cultural proficiency. As expressed in appreciation by both of these agencies, our work with them was collaborative, productive, and mutually encouraging. In addition, our collaborative efforts resulted in a streamlined, user-friendly approach to goal setting and six-year cultural proficiency plan implementation. We would like to celebrate this success with OGA and PMA, and expand this model relationship and spirit to the other four agencies. In this way, ACREC’s role of advocacy may be seen and utilized as a resource in assisting the agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in their commitment to comply with the directives and policies of the General Assembly.

Item 11-20

[The assembly approved Item 11-20. See pp. 12, 47, 57.]

Recommendations Regarding “Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision”—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following:

1. Approve the following brief affirmation in partial fulfillment of the action of the 221st General Assembly (2014):

City Churches: Convictions, Conversations, and Call to Action

The biblical Jerusalem is the archetypal city to which the people go up in joyful parade, for which they fight and pray and grieve, and upon which they build their hopes. In the New Testament it becomes a symbol of a shared dwelling of peace whose temple can be “a house of prayer for all the nations” (Mk. 11:17).

Our actual cities are not the New Jerusalem; they are more often like Detroit, places of suffering and abandonment, yet still grand, hopeful, and inviting. In 2014, when the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s General Assembly met in Detroit, the commissioners went out to worship in the churches of that city and responded to its realities by seeking to renew the church’s urban vision. We affirm that “Gospel from Detroit,” and pledge to seek Christ’s presence and message in each of the cities where we meet: Portland for our 222nd General Assembly (2016), St. Louis for our 223rd General Assembly (2018), and so forward.

The statement presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014), though called *The Gospel from Detroit*, listened to Detroit’s warnings, but was not only about Detroit. It was an invitation to those reentering our cities to reenter them spiritually, to be welcome in our worshiping communities, and for our whole church to reaffirm our conviction to serve Christ in the city. Thus the booklet version of that report includes a chart of the Presbyterian congregations that have existed in Detroit, and a response by Michigan black pastors, as a model for each urban area or presbytery to take its own inventory and develop its own strategy: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/gospel-detroit-renewing-churchs-urban-vision/>.

The urban ministry roundtable has only just begun its work, but has already shared wisdom and passion for the struggles in places that are both welcoming new residents and forcing older and poorer residents out. The urban roundtable points to the costs of inequality and poverty on the livability of cities for all people. The roundtable is grimly aware of events since the assembly’s meeting in Detroit: more gun violence, including unarmed African American young men killed by police; the grim lead poisoning of Flint, Michigan’s public water supply; public education funding and school re-segregation debates; and the struggle against homelessness that continues alongside glittering towers.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as represented by the General Assembly, opposes the economics and practices of exclusion that restrict people from zones of privileged access, whether by law or custom. How long will patterns of separation and segregation be allowed to replicate fear and prejudice? Recalling the Confession of 1967 as we come to Portland, Oregon, in 2016, forty years after that confession was sent to the presbyteries, we lift up the phrase, “with an urgency born of this hope” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.55). May we share an urgency born of the hope that our cities may be places of healing more than violence, of love more than fear, of creativity more than desolation, and of community more than exploitation.

2. Affirming God's call to seek the welfare of the city and to organize God's people for the proclamation of the Gospel and the promotion of racial, economic, and social equity and justice for all citizens of Detroit, Portland, and other cities, take the following actions in both mission strategy and public witness:

a. In mission strategy:

(1) Commend the efforts of Presbyterians in city congregations and presbyteries that embody an urban Christian vision; who see the urban poor as clearly as the glittering skyscrapers; who seek to understand urban trends theologically and ethically; and who unite ministries of mercy and justice with evangelism, education, and cultural outreach, recalling our heritage of urban mission leadership and working to renew or build new worshipping communities grounded in a creative Reforming spirit.

(2) Strengthen the church's witness and outreach "on the ground" by encouraging presbyteries to (a) examine their own histories and statistics of city congregations and (b) renew their own urban strategies in response to existing racial and economic inequity and to new urban demographic, economic, and transportation dynamics, including the promising movement of more young people into cities.

(3) Strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitment to bear the gospel of Jesus Christ to the cities of this nation and to support mid council efforts by renewing its urban mission strategy and coordinating resources related to metro/urban ministry, including ministries of racial and economic equity; and by continuing the work of the urban roundtable at least through 2018, using existing investments and resources to

(a) work with presbyteries, congregations, and synods to organize local, regional, and national networks of metro/urban ministry practitioners;

(b) develop partnerships with other faith-based and community-based organizations, especially those creating multiracial and multiclass constituencies that support metro/urban ministry;

(c) coordinate and catalog resources available to support metro/urban congregations and ministries, such as grants, training, and volunteer opportunities;

(d) encourage the expansion of metro/urban ministries related to intentional communities of mission and worship, including communities of young adult volunteers and older volunteers, cooperative "tent-making" ministries, "co-housing" groups for mutual support, and other experiments;

(e) work with presbyteries, synods, seminaries, and other related metro/urban ministry organizations to develop training and networking opportunities, particularly with attention to racial and economic justice; and

(f) explore the creation of nonprofit economic development vehicles to help presbyteries and congregations transform, redevelop, consolidate, and otherwise manage church properties with a multiracial strategy for mission, evangelism, and church building, operating ecumenically with Full Communion partners when feasible.

(4) Equip new ministries and worshipping communities by organizing regional conversations on "Race, Class, and the Current Challenges of Urban Ministry," gathering the resources of those who have significant experience in urban ministry, particularly the rich resources of people of color who have worked with the poor; that the collective wisdom of such conversations be edited, organized, and published periodically in the print, video, and digital media of the PC(USA) for wide availability.

b. In Public Witness:

(1) Faced with the application of bankruptcy law to Detroit and other cities, to state its concern that democratic governance not be overridden by measures more appropriate to corporate receivership; to urge that state laws recognize the mutual dependence of healthy cities and suburbs and rural areas and seek measures to reduce tax competition; to require rigorous cost/benefit analysis of all tax giveaways to distinguish between units of civil government and private/for-profit enterprises; to provide transparent and objective analysis and comparative data on the performance of city and state investment agencies; to support policies that share benefits and burdens fairly across metropolitan areas; and to prevent the dismantling of public assets, infrastructure, and social protections.

(2) In view of court decisions and legislation that could allow public employee pension benefit programs to be considered as unsecured creditors (rather than deferred compensation contracts), to state its concern that such precedents tend to weaken rather than strengthen public trust, to devalue public employees and their collective bargaining rights, and to add to problems of economic inequality and therefore urges federal and state lawmakers to improve statutory protections for all public employee pensions and to improve the oversight, disclosure, and administration of public pension funds.

(3) In view of the need to protect both retirees and taxpayers from poor pension fund administration, to recommend that governments be legally required to make pension contributions every year, that state and municipal employees be included in the Social Security system for efficiency and fairness, that any cuts in current salaries and benefits be distributed with intergenerational equity, and that when public and corporate pension benefits must be adjusted to ensure viability, they not be converted to 401(k)s, which substantially increase market risk for workers.

(4) To support stronger environmental and public health protection in areas such as clean water, sanitation, waste disposal, reclamation, zoning to prevent “environmental racism” (a named concern of the General Assembly since 1996), and in the use of “green” energy resources and renewables. Further, recognizing the particularly acute lead poisoning and infrastructure deterioration in Flint, Michigan, the assembly supports churches and communities as they strive to ensure full protection by regulators, oversight of state level officials, and planning for the educational and other impacts of long-term toxics exposure.

(5) To support national and state urban policies that favor redevelopment rather than sprawl; regional efficiency in transportation and energy use; holistic, sustainable, and accountable approaches to “promise zones”; and other targeted strategies to assist abandoned or distressed areas.

(6) To include consideration of these urban concerns alongside assembly affirmations of antiracism, stronger measures of police accountability and community policing, as well as reforms of drug laws that emphasize public health and prevention over punishment and the selective violence of the drug wars that affect parts of our cities.

(7) To direct the Stated Clerk to post the full text of this resolution and its link to *The Gospel from Detroit* on-line, that it be part of the resources for urban ministry and mission, available for communication and public witness to state, city, and federal lawmakers and regulatory agencies.

Rationale

Background

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *Item 08-08. The Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.* (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 40, 42, 503ff).

Item 08-08 was referred “to the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to convene an urban ministry roundtable with groups and individuals engaged in urban ministry including, but not limited to, ACSWP, ACWC, ACREC, and racial ethnic caucuses for the purpose of developing a method of fulfilling the goals of Item 08-08 and to report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 503).

Further, in the recommendation section of Item 08-08, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy was requested to provide a “resource of theological and practical experience-based guidance for all engaged in metro/urban ministry, and that this guide be made available to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)” (Minutes, 2014, Part I, p. 504). This brief affirmation and practical recommendations are part of that guidance.

At the 221st General Assembly (2014) in Detroit, its report, “The Gospel From Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision,” the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommended the reestablishment of an Urban Ministry Office at the General Assembly level and to make urban (city) ministry a priority again in the PC(USA). Given financial limitations, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) did not see it possible to reestablish an office for urban ministry, but instead developed the urban ministry network idea through the referral, which reflected the assembly’s overwhelmingly positive response to “The Gospel from Detroit.”¹ The roundtable did not convene until October 26, 2015, due to the resolution of staffing issues in the Louisville office.

Chicago Roundtable

Eleven invitees gathered on the campus of the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, for a three-day conversation in October. Members were identified partly through the Urban Presbytery Network (a network of approximately thirty-five presbytery executives whose presbyteries are located in metro/urban areas). The group met with representatives of Interfaith Worker Justice and the Gamaliel network for the development of faith-based community organizing in the Chicago area. The group agreed to go back to their respective presbyteries and initiate the kind of conversations focused upon issues of race, class, and current trends in urban ministry, as recommended in “The Gospel from Detroit.”

Current Trends

The Chicago conversation and subsequent roundtable conference calls have identified some flashpoint concerns/trends. First, the dynamic of a continued shrinking PC(USA) presence in cities constituted by a significant population of people of color challenges the denomination’s faithfulness in its discharge of the Great Commission (making disciples of all nations/peoples), and its requirement “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8).

Second, the PC(USA) in particular and white America in general, need to engage in a deeper process of confession and reconciliation pertaining to the legacies of systemic racism in the cities. Third, along with this awareness of deeply rooted black/white and Hispanic/white discrimination (depending on region), our church is being called to understand and welcome other racial ethnic groups, among which Korean American Presbyterians may be the most influential. A fourth concern brought by the regulatory failures in Flint, Michigan, has to do with reversing years of underfunding and neglect in the infrastructure of cities, including the effects of environmental racism.

Whereas racial separation was part of the dynamic of white flight and suburban expansion that were primary challenges to urban ministry from the 1950s to the 1980s, gentrification has been posing new issues from the 1990s forward. Demographic studies project younger middle- and upper-class people moving back into the core city areas from the suburbs and often staying to raise families, with the subsequent displacement of the urban poor (more often people of color) and immigrants to inner-ring suburbs. Unusually low oil prices and lack of public transportation and planning have allowed sprawl to continue, sometimes in ecologically unsustainable areas, posing other challenges, including to the definition of what is “urban.”

The challenge to be addressed in resources for the church is how much we build up Christian congregations while also helping build up liveable neighborhoods and larger urban communities. This is where urban ministry and urban mission are joined and, we pray, new allies and members found in both service and justice. Just as there are massive infrastructure needs languishing from lack of public investment, condemning many urban residents to unemployment and underemployment, massive spiritual infrastructure investments are needed to reverse the abandonment of whole lost communities. It is for this reason that we bring recommendations for both mission strategy and public responsibility.

Moving Forward

The roundtable strongly believes that the urban initiative needs to be sustained, and its composition needs to be expanded. The group lacks any presence from the southeastern U.S.A. region, for example. It was also recognized that the origin of “The Gospel From Detroit” was ACSWP’s hope to prepare the assembly to engage with urban mission in Detroit (then facing bankruptcy and other issues). This recognition is not lost in preparing for the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in Portland, Oregon, still burdened by the legacy of being the only state in America to incorporate into its articles of formation language explicitly denying blacks residency and property ownership. This recognition of urban contradictions is not lost as well in looking forward to the convening of the 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis, Missouri. The St. Louis metropolitan area gave much impetus to the formation of the Black Lives Matters movement following the racial discord in suburban Ferguson, Missouri, with the shooting of Michael Brown in 2014. The Urban Roundtable believes that honest and searching conversation is much needed, can produce valuable fruit, and that God’s providence may be seen in this succession of cities for our church’s deliberative meetings. May God use our congregations and presbyteries in these host cities to help illuminate the hope of the Gospel for all of us!

Endnote

1. In terms of urban ministry history, it was the Presbytery of Detroit that originated the overture, adopted by the 1992 assembly, “urging presbyteries to designate 80 percent of net proceeds... from the sale of inner-city Presbyterian church buildings ... to be used for inner-city redevelopment, evangelism, and mission outreach ... [and] urging that the remaining 20 percent be designated to establish a national urban ministry endowment fund ... (*Minutes*, 1992, Part I, p. 868).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-20

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-20—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-20.

Item 11-20 calls the church to reach out to local communities and neighborhoods that are often ignored as central to the mission of the church. Often racial ethnic populations represent a disproportionate percentage of the inhabitants of cities and urban centers, and too often such centers are underserved by government agencies and increasingly undergo gentrification, exacerbating racial, social, and economic injustice. Too often these very cities and urban centers include PC(USA) congregations that generally have been experiencing various challenges disproportionate to those faced by suburban congregations. The ACREC urges the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve the objectives and strategy outlined in this overture in order to cast a renewed vision for ministry and to empower congregations, presbyteries, synods, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and other entities to reach out beyond pulpit and pews. The church must be challenged to reinvest in the cities and urban centers instead of withdrawing, to refocus its mission instead of retreating away.

Item 11-21

[The assembly approved Item 11-21. See pp. 12, 47, 57.]

Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommend that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following:

1. Approve the following statement of concern on human trafficking,

Statement of Concern: The Many Faces of Human Trafficking

Human beings, created in the image of God, are not for sale. This deep conviction requires new applications in a global economy where part of the problem of forced labor is the trafficking of workers, women, men, and children, into exploitation in other regions or countries. Beginning in the 1970s, Presbyterian Women and Presbyterian mission co-workers began to focus on the exploitation of women around military bases overseas and the related dangers of sex tourism. Since then, the church’s efforts have broadened to include freeing people from bonded labor, sometimes called modern slavery, in agriculture, sweatshops, and service industries. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has developed ministries to reach out to people trapped in these circumstances and has joined campaigns and coalitions to address some of these many faces of trafficking.

In fulfillment of the direction of the 221st General Assembly (2014), this report provides a comprehensive policy on trafficking based on a human rights approach. As stipulated, this report covers forced labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, child sex trafficking, illegal adoption, and organ harvesting, underlining the conditions that affect vulnerability. A study team has gratefully drawn on expertise from those coalitions with whom the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long worked, including Freedom Network, U.S.A., the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT-USA), part of an international network.

Following the church’s anti-trafficking experience, this report challenges the predominant focus on the sex trafficking of women and children. It broadens the understanding of trafficking and, in applying the human rights approach, shifts from the paradigm of criminalizing perpetrators and rescuing victims to addressing the economic inequalities and structural violence that make people vulnerable to forced labor. Human rights based policies then protect persons and empower them as workers, while also seeking to prevent their victimization.

Our church is thus not responding out of a “moral panic” focused on sexualized victims to be rescued, but with mission experience and analysis. It is “victim-centered,” but in ways designed to end the effects of victimization and then to support empowerment, dignity, and restoration of rights to that person.

Our primary definition of trafficking is forced labor, whether the person or group has been moved within a country or across borders. The scope of human trafficking is significant. In 2012, the International Labor Organization projected 20.9 million persons engaged in forced labor in 124 countries producing \$150 billion in illegal profits. This estimate includes bonded labor within countries, but not all those living in absolute poverty, a vast population for whom the church also seeks economic justice, civil rights, and sustainable development. It is not the same as prostitution, although many persons in the sex industry are trafficked. Labor trafficking may resemble slavery; economic coercion may effectively be physical coercion as well, as for daughters of poor families trapped and mistreated in domestic service overseas. Voluntary migrant laborers may become exploited and even held captive; however, they are not technically owned or classified as property. Prison labor that is forced and minimally compensated may come closer to slavery and should be improved or ended, but is not trafficked labor.

Theological Basis

The church stands against human trafficking and forced labor based upon its conviction that each person bears the image of God, or *Imago Dei*, and that work is both a necessity and a calling: “the laborer deserves to be paid” (1 Tim. 5:18). We may understand the image of God as the capacity for personal, covenantal relationship that gives all humans individual worth and responsibility to help redeem creation. The prophetic vision in Isaiah 65 presents a harmony of humanity within nature and without violence; Jesus’ message of the kingdom or reign of God calls into question every structure that excludes or dominates others. We do not deny the degree of complicity that all of us share in the market system, but insist that human beings should never be treated as commodities.

Theological Responses to Globalization

This resolution affirms the concerns prophetically expressed in the Accra Confession¹ of the World Communion (then Alliance) of Reformed Churches in 2004, which named unregulated economic forces increasing inequality, instability, and unsustainability in the “World House.” A similar concern for lack of protections for labor, community stability, and the environment is found in the 2008 policy of the General Assembly, “Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Accountability.”² The Accra affirmation identifies poverty and inequality as church-dividing matters and addresses them in confessional terms. The PC(USA) statement, responding in a particular country context, provides specific recommendations to address outsourcing and off-shoring practices and the virtual export of unemployed persons when trade policies wipe out local industries. These church statements put immigration and trafficking issues within the context of large-scale economic choices as well as environmental pressures and oppose self-undercutting competition among countries.

The Human Rights Approach

By strengthening freedom and economic justice for persons in whole categories of work, the goal is to reduce the incentives for traffickers. While supporting legal protections against “force, fraud, and coercion,” to quote the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the human rights approach puts a priority on providing legal recourse and social supports to persons who have been trafficked. International labor protections (including child labor laws) are needed to balance national criminal justice approaches that can focus on low-level traffickers and miss the larger forces propelling migration and marginalization. The concentration of resources on criminalization may also reinforce the social exclusion of non-citizens who may be pressured by both traffickers and law enforcement, especially when they lack documentation or legal protection and fear deportation or prison if they testify.

This social witness policy statement thus adheres to the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking promulgated in 2002 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, based on: “(1) The primacy of human rights, (2) the prevention of trafficking by addressing root causes, (3) the extension of protection and assistance to all victims (instead of criminalization), and (4) the punishment of perpetrators and redress of victims.” A 2013 paper in *The Judges’ Journal* of the American Bar Association further defines these principles:

Adopting a human rights-based approach implies that national, regional, and international responses to trafficking be anchored in the rights and obligations of international human rights law. [including]

—Identification of rights-holders (e.g., trafficked persons, potential victims, those accused or convicted of trafficking-related offenses), their entitlements, and the corresponding duty-bearers (usually States) and their obligations are required in order to strengthen the capacities of rights-holders to claim their rights and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations. States’ obligations stem from the well-established principle of due diligence, which means that States have the responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of all individuals, including victims of trafficking.

—Principles and standards derived from international human rights law (such as equality and nondiscrimination, universality of rights, and the rule of law) should guide all stages of the response to human trafficking.”³

2. Approve the following recommendations for Christian social witness.

Following the *Book of Order* maxim that “truth is in order to goodness,” that our knowing God’s purposes should lead to acting on them, these recommendations provide direction for agencies of the General Assembly and guidance for presbyteries, synods, congregations, and individual members. Thus the 222nd General Assembly (2016) supports:

a. *Public Policies for Trafficking Prevention and Restoration of Rights to Victims of Trafficking in the United States*

(1) In principle, the General Assembly affirms that persons who have been trafficked are legally entitled to: safety, privacy, information, legal representation, be heard in court, due compensation for damages, access to medical and social assistance, and either residence in the United States (depending on immigration status) or safe return to their country of origin.

(2) The adoption and use of a human rights approach to human trafficking by communities and states which (a) focuses on the situation, needs, and rights of persons who have been trafficked, (b) respects individual autonomy and rights, (c) is empowering and nonjudgmental, and (4) affirms the rights of the individual to participate in the prosecution of traffickers, if they so choose.

(3) Transparency in Global Supply Chains: As in the Presidential Executive Order, “Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts,” and other measures requiring retailers and manufacturers doing business in the U.S. with private and public entities to disclose subcontractors and sources so as to ensure both adequate wages and working conditions and protection from trafficking and forced labor. Such measures enable consumers to know that they are not supporting trafficking or other labor violations.

(4) **Worker Driven Social Responsibility:** In addition to investment-based methods of corporate social responsibility pioneered by the PC(USA) Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), this provision affirms the maximum feasible participation of workers in the design and monitoring of anti-trafficking and worker protection programs. Whether or not workers have exercised their right to organize, we endorse industry-specific and rigorous third-party inspections of plant, equipment, worker safety, and personnel policies with public reporting on any corrective measures needed.

(5) Comprehensive U.S. policies and laws to regulate foreign labor recruiters with strengthened enforcement, investigation, and prosecution of labor trafficking by registered or unregistered (or unlicensed) individuals, groups, or enterprises.⁴ Where federal and state laws exclude protection for agricultural (often termed, migrant) workers and others, equitable extension of living, fair, or minimum wage laws may still reduce exploitation and conditions sometimes compared to “modern slavery.” The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) opposes debt bondage and bonded labor arrangements that tie workers, including children, to traffickers or employers who pay sub-minimum wages, omit benefits, and restrict access to labor protections, as violations of U.S. labor law as well as violations of basic freedoms and human rights.

(6) Testing and evaluating policies that would decriminalize or decrease penalties for those engaged in sex work, while affirming the PC(USA)’s traditional goal of ending prostitution.⁵ Jurisdictions should evaluate the applicability of policies such as that of Sweden, where only consumers and procurers of sexual services are prosecuted, and of other nations where social services and exit from this activity are supported. All prohibitions of exploitation and underage involvement should remain in force, yet the prohibition model contributes to underground economies. Some research data shows that persons without criminal records are better able to leave this work and at least fifteen states have record-clearing policies.⁶ Accompaniment and outreach strategies to prostitutes or sex workers can be more effective than the threat of punishment, which can deepen reliance on traffickers and other predators, especially when those engaged in prostitution are non-citizens.

(7) Advocacy for instituting or strengthening “Safe Harbor” laws (which at least twenty-eight U.S. states have in some form). These laws exempt underage persons engaged in prostitution and related exploitive activities from prosecution and mandate social services. These laws should not weaken the appropriate prosecution of those who exploit those under eighteen years of age.

b. Public Policies for Trafficking-Related Immigration Reforms

(1) **Guestworker Program Safeguards:** Beyond public oversight of appropriate federal and state regulation to ensure living wages, appropriate benefits, safe working conditions, and freedom to return to countries of origin, federal policy should allow accountable contracts for fair compensation whereby workers could change employers while retaining their visas, depending on a religion service. Ideally, this should be part of comprehensive immigration reform.

(2) Advocacy for appropriate federal agencies to conduct a thorough review of “continued presence” policies and practices that involve human trafficking, tracking the number of “continued presence” requests made in comparison to the number of requests granted. This calls upon Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to expedite “continued presence” applications and other protections for victims who are assisting trafficking investigations.

(3) Upholding in practice existing protections for trafficking victims, as in cases where an emphasis on enforcement incarcerates asylum-seeking families and effectively prevents discovery of trafficking situations. Elected officials should resist efforts to weaken screening protocols and other protections for detained migrants, including unaccompanied children fleeing drug war and other violence.

(4) Support for alternate approaches to granting temporary immigration relief and work authorization for unauthorized immigrant trafficking victims in the event “continued presence” is not appropriate, such as fast-tracking the T visa process. This calls on the Department of State and other government agencies to offer greater support, including the necessary funding for comprehensive services, including family reunification for trafficking victims, and both emergency and transitional shelter.

(5) Encouragement for U.S. embassy and consulate staff and border officials to provide to persons obtaining visas to the United States information regarding their rights and numbers to call for guidance, depending on their location, such as the number for the National Trafficking Resource Center [1(888) 373-7888] and consulates of other nations, and for those personnel to receive training on the identification and assistance of trafficking victims.

c. Public Policies for International Cooperation in Anti-Trafficking Work

(1) Utilize the guidance of the 217th General Assembly (2006) policy, *Resolution on Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Responsibility* (Minutes, 2006, Part I, pp. 825ff), particularly in the areas of protections for

workers in trade agreements, support for living wage laws, worker safety regulations, the rights of workers to organize and practice collective bargaining.

(2) Advocate substantial global support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, a new framework that deepens the analysis present in the Millennium Development goals.

(3) Regarding the use of minors as soldiers, affirm universal ratification and enforcement of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and direct the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN to advocate, educate, and coordinate with efforts such as the Red Hand Campaign to end this practice.

(4) Direct MRTI in its review of investments with the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation to pay particular attention to labor practices and the transparency of product movement in global supply chains.

(5) Encourage major airlines to adopt the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct and so develop, in consultation with anti-trafficking experts and persons who have survived trafficking, short awareness training videos and brochures to be used with staff and customers to raise awareness of trafficking activity and the appropriate response.

(6) Support through our Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations the international human rights system that plays a central role in promoting the effective implementation of the international legal framework around trafficking including the Palermo Protocols.

(7) Support provisions in international law that protect families and the vulnerable within families from forced adoption⁷ and forced marriage, and that outlaw trafficking in organs, with safeguards for living donor and end-of-life donation.⁸ To prevent the devaluation of the human, societies and the community of nations appropriately limit the rights of individuals and families to sell or sacrifice members or monetize parts of the reproductive process.

(8) Direct the Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations to advocate with the United States, at the United Nations and around the world, for policies that will protect those most vulnerable by dismantling unjust systems of racism, classism, patriarchy, discrimination against LGBTQI persons, and related systems of oppression that contribute to exploitation and trafficking.

d. Civil Society Coalitions and Strategies

(1) Sustain the church's partnership, through the Human Trafficking Roundtable and its member offices and programs, with ECPAT-USA in seeking to enlist the tourist industry in signing on to The Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct and in working to strengthen laws related to child sex trafficking.

(2) Affirm the work of the Educate a Child initiative and encourage continued attention to the role of education globally in protecting against vulnerabilities that contribute to trafficking.

(3) Affirm the work of World Mission in its critical global initiatives that address root causes of trafficking. Encourage the expansion of the training of mission coworkers and young adult volunteers in recognizing the signs of human trafficking and in identifying appropriate procedures, partners, and responses to trafficking.

(4) Monitor and support legislation and the development of programs related to human trafficking so that the human rights of those trafficked, particularly the prohibition of discrimination, the right to freedom of movement, and the right to seek and receive asylum from persecution are honored.

e. Actions for Congregations, Members, and Friends of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

(1) Encourage Presbyterians to educate themselves about the indicators for human trafficking, and commit to making themselves aware of possible situations of human trafficking in their communities.

(2) Encourage Presbyterians to assess their own benefit from forced or exploited labor through such means as the survey of one's "slavery footprint" at www.slaveryfootprint.com and committing to taking action to reduce that unfair benefit or "footprint."

(3) Encourage Presbyterians to seek out fairly traded products and locally produced goods, where profits go directly to small producers.

(4) Encourage Presbyterians to educate themselves about, and refrain from purchasing, products identified as being produced by forced labor.

(5) Encourage Presbyterians who travel to seek out carriers and hotel accommodations whose managements have signed on to The Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct (members and signatories are listed at <http://www.ecpatusa.org/code/>).

f. Concrete Points of Intervention and Strategies for Implementation

(1) Presbyterian members and congregations are called upon to advocate for the end of trafficking in persons, and for countries to adopt international standards to uphold and protect the human rights of victims.

(2) Presbyterians are called upon to recognize gender and age-specific vulnerabilities to trafficking, to contact law enforcement and social services as necessary, to join or support agencies and programs to ensure that the human rights of trafficked individuals are respected at all times, to share best practices as well as obstacles to anti-trafficking in order to prevent re-victimization, and to identify protection gaps in this regard, working with such groups as Freedom Network, USA.

(3) The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly are directed to continue the work of a Human Trafficking Roundtable of staff with responsibilities in these areas, currently including among others the offices of Immigration, Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries, Presbyterian Hunger Program, Office of Public Witness, Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Men, World Mission Critical Global Initiatives, and area offices, modeling the comprehensive approach of this report.

(4) The Presbyterian Mission Agency is directed to continue addressing justice in global supply chains through fair-trade measures and the worker-driven social responsibility model exemplified by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

(5) The Presbyterian Mission Agency is urged to support Presbyterians engaged in anti-trafficking work, through existing networks of women's advocacy and empowerment, programs and coalitions to end child/sex/labor exploitation, and as feasible in providing coordination assistance to a Human Trafficking Network.

(6) The Presbyterian Mission Agency is directed to engage in ongoing evaluation of denominational anti-trafficking work in light of emerging areas of concern and new structural and funding realities across the church, to ensure effective education, witness, and action.

(7) The Stated Clerk to directed to post online a free downloadable version of this report, making available a hard copy for each mid council and session so requesting, providing a limited number of copies for public witness, and notifying the church at large of its availability.

3. Receive the supporting study, considering all three parts as "Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale."

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2014 Referral: Item 11-13. A Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 69, 890–92).*

The *Rationale* or supporting statement takes the form of the following study.

Human Trafficking and Human Rights

- I. Introduction and Mandate
- II. Theological Imperatives
- III. Definitions and Depictions
- IV. Analysis of Existing Policies and Course Correction
- V. The Human Rights Approach and Free, as Opposed to Forced, Labor
- VI. Conclusion: Recommendations, Relationships, and Responsibilities
- APPENDIX A: Related Presbyterian Policies; Gender Justice, Labor, Children, Human Rights, Immigration, Trafficking, Prostitution, Child Sex Trafficking
- APPENDIX B: The PC(USA) Trafficking Roundtable and Anti-Trafficking Work Across the Church: Note on Reference Group for this Study

I. Introduction and Mandate

Because I work from their house morning 6 o'clock to at night 12 o'clock, and I take care of two kids ... and when she [the trafficker] come in from work and she every day, every night and she start yelling at me, abusing me, hitting me and all these thing. She don't have any reason but I don't do

any wrong but ... she want make me scared from her and stay inside, make sure I don't go outside. Because ... after finished that three month [of the visa] she start abusing me because she don't want [that] I go outside.—woman trafficked for domestic servitude

Whose children are they who stitch footballs, yet have never played with one? They are our children. Whose children are they who mine stones and minerals? They are our children. Whose children are they who harvest cocoa, yet do not know the taste of a chocolate? They are all our children.—Kailash Satyarthi, 2014 Nobel Prize laureate

Two employers “had a workforce of over 400 men and women in Florida and South Carolina, harvesting vegetables and citrus. The workers, mostly indigenous Mexicans and Guatemalans, were forced to work 10–12 hour days, 6 days per week, for as little as \$20 per week, under the watch of armed guards. Those who attempted escape were assaulted, pistol-whipped, and even shot.”—Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW 2010).

The face of a trafficked person in the public imagination is usually a young female taken for sex work across borders by force, and less often children stitching footballs, young men in tomato fields, women cleaning up after someone else’s children, or bonded laborers at brick kilns.

Recent legal, sociological, and critical theories on trafficking are concerned about the “moral panic” around sex trafficking and an impetus to rescue. They have begun to question and challenge the widely-held anti-trafficking paradigm, the stakeholders, and the definitions of trafficking that propel and sometimes misdirect interventions.

This study will argue for a primary definition of trafficking as forced labor as it speaks to real drama of the hospital, though we look at other definitions and their implications. There are many faces of human trafficking; the report’s subtitle comes from the cover story of the *Presbyterians Today* issue focused on human trafficking of January/February 2016, coincident with this report.

In the decade since the PC(USA)’s last policy report on trafficking, new studies indicate that trafficking has become the third largest form of global crime. While statistical estimation is difficult, the International Labor Organization (ILO) projects 20.9 million victims in 124 countries producing \$150 billion in illegal profits.⁹ Kevin Bales, a well-known anti-trafficking advocate, identifies three key factors in this explosive rise in trafficking. The first is the geopolitics of population growth—now at 7.3 billion. Half the population in poor countries is under the age of fifteen.¹⁰ The second factor is the rapid economic and social change brought about by globalization, and closely related to this phenomenon is the third factor, the rise of government corruption and economic inequality both globally and in-country.

Presbyterian policy has already analyzed the root cause of the many faces of human trafficking, a global nightmare brought on by “... free trade, free markets, and the free movement of capital without reference to the size of the economic actors, the social results of enterprise, or the impact on individuals in any of the countries involved.”¹¹ Such economic inequality commodifies people who are poor and increasingly disposable on a global scale. The corresponding explosion in trafficked persons has led to a range of definitions, causes, and approaches.

Increasingly researchers and advocates have called for a shift in the dominant focus beyond women and child sex trafficking and into two primary directions: first, toward a broader category of human trafficking, and second, to move away from the strategy of criminalization to a human rights framework. The latter indicates a significant shift from criminalization of the perpetrators and “rescue” of the “victims” to change the economic inequalities and structural violence that produce the vulnerabilities that lead to forced labor. This “human rights approach” promotes policies that protect and empower the worker.

The Presbyterian church’s commitment to those trapped in human trafficking has been following this paradigm shift. Beginning in 2006, the denomination responded to the call to address trafficking by taking action, first against the sex trafficking of children, and then expanding that action in 2008 to include a call to respond to the trafficking of adults, especially women. While these actions provided the starting point for a Christian response, a call for a more comprehensive policy was made at the 221st General Assembly (2014). [See Appendix A for a review of PC(USA) social witness policy.]

The 221st General Assembly (2014) thus directed the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns to create a study team to serve as a reference group with staff from the PC(USA) Human Trafficking Roundtable. Their task was to review current PC(USA) policy and to propose a comprehensive human trafficking policy grounded in a human rights based approach. This policy would cover a broader range of trafficking including forced labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, child soldiers, child sex trafficking, and organ harvesting, examining all the conditions that affect vulnerability. The team was to consult a variety of groups working on the issue of trafficking, including Freedom Network, U.S.A.; the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT), and General Assembly programs and ministries.

This paper will address:

- A theological orientation based on (a) our bearing God’s image, an image trafficking cannot erase, (b) the prophetic description of labor in the world that God envisions for humanity, and (c) guidance from Jesus’ parables on how to seek justice and redress injustice.
- Definitions and depictions of trafficking.

- An analysis of existing policies and a course correction that would examine among other things (a) the movement from trafficking as female sexual exploitation and a prohibition-rescue approach, to a larger conceptualization of trafficking as including labor trafficking and a more person-based, human rights approach, and (b) the implications of a proliferation of types of trafficking and its effect on effective intervention.
- An approach that explains why free labor and human rights are a more effective holistic approach to trafficking.

II. Theological Imperatives

Scripture and the Reformed tradition provide guidance for our response to human trafficking. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon faith communities such as the PC(USA) to articulate a response to the crisis from a biblical standpoint. Several biblical texts address trafficking and slavery in ways that have current resonance. The story of Joseph in Genesis 37 is a quintessential precursor of modern-day trafficking situations wherein victims are often sold by those they trust. In Philemon verses 8–21, Paul asks Philemon to treat Onesimus as a brother, though the call for manumission is only implicit. In an apparent challenge to slavery, however, Paul rescues the slave girl in Acts 16, risking his own imprisonment. Here we briefly apply the concept of being made in God’s image to the commodity-making of human trafficking and for broader perspective, lift up Shalom in its global dimension, underlining the accent on labor in the vision of Isaiah 65. This section ends with a look at our responsibilities through Jesus’ parable of the Great Banquet.

- *Imago Dei*

In the first chapter of Genesis, we read:

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in [God’s] image, in the image of God he created them; male and female [God] created them. God blessed them ...¹²

There are competing views on the precise meaning of being made in the image of God. Karl Barth maintains that this image is the capacity of humans to relate to God. Being in the image of God means that God and humans can engage in a personal relationship and participate in covenant. Humans can speak with God (*Church Dogmatics*, III. 1.183–187). Humans can seek, petition, and call upon God; and God calls and responds to us. Another understanding of the image of God views humans as God’s vice-regents in creation, caring for it and watching over it. Both views have implications for a Christian response to human trafficking.

First, both male and female are made in God’s image, and are a part of that “very good” totality of creation. All people have standing before God and are to be valued and valued equally. For Christians, the imago dei undergirds concepts of human dignity, worth, and rights. Second, to the degree that being made in God’s image reflects a kind of human vice-regency for God on earth, that vice-regency includes the faithful stewardship of creation so it may fulfill God’s purposes.

Human trafficking is thus a violation of the image-bearers whom God has created. It is an affront to God and a rejection of God’s purposes for humankind. To allow the social structures that create demand for human trafficking, and to allow human trafficking itself to persist, uncontested and unopposed by the church’s voice and activism, is to fail in the dominion-as-stewardship to which the Church and its people are called, and to become, in Thomas Merton’s term, a guilty bystanders.

The Brief Statement of Faith speaks to this world that God created, the devastating effects of sin in destroying community, and God’s acts to redeem creation:

In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God’s image
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God’s commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature ... (*Book of Confessions*, 10.3, Lines 29–37)

In obedience to God we must seek that restoration of the creation that God purposes for all humanity.¹³

- *A vision of the creation redeemed*

From the Pentateuch to the Prophets to Revelation, we are afforded glimpses of the world that God would have for humankind. It is a world of shalom. Shalom is often poorly translated as “peace” in English, though it has a far richer meaning. Shalom

...is one of the most significant theological terms in Scripture, [having] a wide semantic range stressing various nuances of its basic meaning: totality or completeness. These meanings include fulfillment, completion, maturity, soundness, wholeness (both individual and communal), community, harmony, tranquility, security, well-being, welfare, friendship, agreement, success, prosperity.¹⁴

Shalom is both individual and communal; in a reciprocating relationship, the individual is to seek the wellbeing of the community and the community is to seek the wellbeing of the individual. Neither can have shalom without seeking the shalom of the other. But, what would such a world look like? The vision of the prophet Isaiah 65:17–25 tells us of the world that God had originally created and ultimately plans for humanity. God creates a new heaven and a new earth that is one in which:

...no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; ... They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—and their descendants as well. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord. (Isa. 65:19–25)¹⁵

This new creation is not for Israel alone, but for the whole creation, including all humanity. It is one of joy, health, wellbeing, safety, and security. It is also a world in which each person justly benefits from the fruit of his or her own labor. While many passages portray God's new order, Isaiah's vision points to issues of labor. This is not life in grinding poverty, servitude to others, hunger, lack of shelter, debt, or exploitation. Instead, it is a world of blessing, unenslaved, at peace at home.

- *Engaging the World for Justice; the Great Banquet Parable*

This vision of the redeemed creation living in shalom inspires the church to engage the world in ways that multiply justice. Here again the Brief Statement of Faith guides us.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4, Lines 65–71)¹⁶

Working for justice, freedom and peace can take different forms. In Luke 14, as well as in other places, Jesus describes God's reign by comparing it with banquets where expectations concerning status and inclusion are reversed. This chapter begins with Jesus observing the competition for the best seats at a banquet he is attending. He responds by talking about a wedding feast where one does not seek the high table's seats of honor. He then admonished the host that he/she should invite not peers and friends, but persons who were poor, maimed, lame, and blind.

Following this Jesus presents the parable of a Grand Banquet to which precisely none of the aforementioned persons of lower status have been invited. We draw here on the New Testament scholarship of Raj Nadella to explore possible irony and resistance in the text that traditional interpretations miss.¹⁷ In traditional interpretations it is assumed that this host is a metaphor for God. But this would be an unjust banquet with seats only for a privileged in-crowd. To attend such a banquet would to approve its exclusionary nature.

Notably, the specifically invited guests decline the host's invitation. In the traditional interpretation they are distracted by misplaced priorities. However a deeper reading sees that none of the excuses is pressing, some even seem absurd. Moreover, none of the invited guests seems malnourished.

Just what are the invitees thinking in turning down the invitation? Nadella's interpretation is that their excuses constitute a kind of noncooperation or even boycott of an unfair opportunity. And the result? The grand host ends up including the very people Jesus just encouraged his host to include. While he tells his servant even to "compel" people to attend, the host has himself been compelled by the resistance of his intended guests to throw a more shalom- or kingdom-like feast.

If the socioeconomic structures of our time benefit the few and exclude the many, depriving them of identity and dignity as humans, does the parable not invite those with access (like us) to make a statement by not participating in those structures? It is essential to ask who is included, who is excluded, and why. The corporations, institutions, and politicians that perpetuate exclusion may have lost their capacity for moral embarrassment, but if enough who commit to an inclusive society refuse to participate in such exclusive banquets, the party cannot continue. Blessed are those who make excuses that unmask hidden domination.

Sometimes, justice requires active intervention to bring about justice; other times it requires refusal to participate in injustice. Clearly there are instances of rescue in the Bible that can apply to trafficking. Yet Jesus' recognition of the temptations of inequality and exclusion address situations where, like the widow wearing down the Unjust Judge with her pleas, change is slow. So our faith also applies when human authorities do not intervene, insisting that God hears the cries of the suffering. And in faithful obedience to God as Lord of life and creation, the church must act both as a community of prayer and as a community of engagement.

Our faith calls us to confront and confess our complicity in global forces that have given rise to and perpetuate human trafficking. Our faith helps us hear the "long silenced voices" of the trafficked. The theological "tools" with which we confront human trafficking affirm the "imago dei" basis of human rights and dignity. They seek that shalom where no one is a

commodity to be consumed. The great ends of the church call us to the promotion of social righteousness and the exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world. Isaiah gives us a vision of that world, and Jesus gives us strategies to get a bit closer to it. No policy tool or approach is the whole Gospel, but there is evangelical energy in confronting trafficking patterns and protecting every endangered child of God.

III. Descriptions, Depictions, and Definitions

For the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), holistic and effective counters to dehumanizing practices must be grounded in comprehensive policy. Beginning in 2006, the denomination responded to the call to address trafficking by taking action, first against the sex trafficking of children, and then expanding that action in 2008 to include a call to respond to the issue of adults, especially women, who have been trafficked. While these actions provide the starting point for a Christian response, there is a need for broader policy grounded both in strong, biblically based theological affirmations and in evidence-based research about the myriad of forms in which virtual modern slavery manifests itself, as well as proven practices and strategies for eradication.

As we will see in the section following this one, it is not enough to address forced sexual exploitation alone, nor to limit the focus to apprehending and prosecuting perpetrators, nor only to meet the needs of the victimized. The larger dynamics need to be understood, for trafficking emerges in the complex economic realities of a globalized economy, from which a relative few are able to reap vast benefits at the expense of many.

Since the first national and international statutes were adopted addressing human trafficking, it has been identified with several names, each one of which reveals not only its changing manifestations, but also our expanding understanding of what it entails. Each way of naming shows a different face of human trafficking, and also has its limitations.

A. *Human Trafficking, Disposable People, Modern Slavery: Forced Labor as the Most Pragmatic and Comprehensive Definition*

Trafficking, the label commonly used in federal and international law, is a term applied to profits made from certain commodities, the most common being drugs and arms, the sales of which garner huge profits. Human trafficking is also about selling a commodity. Using the term trafficking is descriptive, but it can function to further objectify those who are victimized and exploited, relegating them to the status of commodity rather than personhood. A point of confusion sometimes arises when it is assumed that trafficking implies that person must be transported from one place to another, either across borders or within a country's boundaries. Movement is not an essential element of human trafficking; some are trafficked within their own communities.

We have mentioned the term coined by Dr. Kevin Bales of the organization Free the Slaves: “disposable people.” He also uses the term, “slaves,” to denote the abundance of workers who are devalued by the combination of demographic growth and market inequality that creates mass unemployment and renders individual workers powerless. Economic globalization effectively allows whole groups of people to be used until their value is depleted and they are discarded. Like other commodities, a person can become a consumable.¹⁸ Slavery may be a powerful word, but it is in this reading an insufficient description of newer market relationships.

B. *Forced Labor*

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the term, “forced labor,” as work that is performed involuntarily and under coercion.¹⁹ Forced labor can be found in any industry, such as agriculture, fishing, construction, manufacturing, and mining, as well as in the informal economy, such as domestic work in private residences.²⁰ It is distinguished from exploitative labor, where persons may work in very difficult work situations or be vastly underpaid, yet are not enslaved in terms of outright ownership.

Forced labor manifests itself at the extreme end of a continuum of labor practices—what noted advocate, Florrie Burke, calls “the place where need meets greed.” In industries where workers are denied collective bargaining or the right to unionize, persons living in poverty who are desperate for paid work may be vulnerable to the most extreme exploitation. For this reason, the term modern slavery has been used, and we must take this usage into account.

C. *The Concept of Modern Slavery*

While slavery has existed for thousands of years, it was first defined in international statutes in the *U.N. 1926 Slavery Convention* (Art. 1) as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.”²¹ “In 1956, *The United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery* built on the definition of slavery to include debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage, and situations where parents or guardians give over a child to others for the purpose of exploitative labor. Some International Labor Organization statements argue that the umbrella term, “modern slavery,” best encompasses all practices whose intent is to enslave and exploit human beings.²²

In the late nineteenth century, with slavery rendered illegal, some abolitionists shifted their attention to social purity. The Mann Act (White Slave Act) of 1910 marked a new perception of forced prostitution as a social problem.²³ Most historians agree that white slavery—the idea of defenseless white women forced into prostitution by evil men—more accurately portrayed white, middle class fears than it did an actual reality. An underlying racist narrative emphasized the value of the morality of white women above that of the black women who had been sexually exploited for generations in chattel slavery.²⁴ Uses of the term, “modern slavery,” then, may carry an echo of the term, “white slavery,” as well as reference to the prior race-based legal disenfranchisement.

Modern slavery seen as powerlessness results from the same dynamics of force, fraud, or coercion understood to apply to trafficking in the predominant analysis of this report. Force ranges from actual physical violence and imprisonment, to threats of physical harm for the victim or family members, to more subtle forms of intimidation or control. Fraud can take place at many points, from the false promises made in the recruitment of persons, to deceptive or fraudulent contracts (sometimes in a different language), to hidden fees that force a person into ever-increasing debt to his or her trafficker. Contrary to popular belief, the key factor in trafficking is not race nor gender nor country of origin, but rather the vulnerability those factors help create.

Each term delineates different facets of an issue that may seem to defy full description. Beate Andres of the ILO’s Special Programme to Combat Forced Labor, argues that in order to effect change, we must have a clear understanding of what we want to change.²⁵ Defining the problem determines how we will solve it. Presently, however, nations apply even internationally agreed-upon definitions in different ways, and a lack of common statistical indicators makes it difficult to compare data globally. Thus a pragmatic approach seems needed, leading to the inclusive definitions below.²⁶

D. *International Law*

International law defines human trafficking broadly and highlights its non-consensual nature in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol):

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs (United Nations 2006:7).

The Freedom Network USA, a network of organizations and individuals who collectively represent decades of experience in addressing trafficking, have developed a similar but shorter definition for use in training and education.²⁷

E. *Forced Labor within the Global Economy*

1. *The Role of Global Supply Chains*

In order to produce goods and services with lower and lower production and labor costs, globalization has given rise to complex supply chains. A global supply chain is a system of organizations, people, activities, information, and resources involved in moving a product or service from supplier to customer. Vulnerable workers can be exploited all along a supply chain, from the mining of raw materials, to the production of parts, to the assembly and packaging in a factory.²⁸

In a report on federal supply chain issues, Verite International identified a number of factors related to globalization that contribute to a higher risk of trafficking. Key risk factors identified included hazardous, dirty, or undesirable work; a vulnerable, low-skilled, easily replaced workforce, or a workforce comprised of migrants; and a long, complex, and/or non-transparent product supply chain.²⁹

2. *Labor Brokers*

Because complex supply chains often span many countries and employ workers from many places, companies have come to rely on labor brokers—variously called intermediaries, middlemen, recruiters, recruitment agents—for hiring and managing workers. Labor brokers often promise high salaries and good working conditions, and frequently charge recruitment fees, sometimes legal, sometimes not. Migrant workers may incur exorbitant fees, leading in many cases to large debts that may make persons vulnerable to debt bondage. Once on site a worker may be subjected to contract substitution, where the wages and working conditions are substantially different than what was originally promised. The need to repay the debt may make a worker vulnerable to accepting a lower wage than that promised. As Verite International reports, “The combination of debt, deception in recruitment and coercion on the worksite can create conditions of trafficking.”³⁰

3. *Global Forced Labor*

The very nature of trafficking of forced labor is that it exists off the radar. In a landmark research report of 2012,³¹ the International Labour Organisation revised earlier estimates upward to some 20.9 million persons. It represents a conservative estimate, given the strict methodology used to obtain it.³² This number captures the full range of enslavement for labor and sexual exploitation during the period of 2002–2011 in the categories of forced labor imposed by the state and in the private economy for sexual or labor exploitation.³³

- Excluding a small number in state-imposed forms of labor, the majority of persons are victims of various forms of forced labor in work such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction, commercial fishing, and domestic work. A smaller number are victims of exploitation for sex work.
- While a majority are women and girls, a significant percentage are men and boys.
- Slightly more than a quarter of those exploited are children under the age of eighteen.
- In terms of absolute numbers, the majority are in Asia and the Pacific, while the highest rate per thousand persons occurs in Central and Southeastern Europe and Africa.
- A majority were subjected to forced labor in their place of residence, while a smaller number were moved either internally or to another country.
- Cross-border movement was found to be strongly associated with forced sexual exploitation. The majority of those who were enslaved in other forced labor and almost all enslaved in state imposed forced labor were not moved from their area of residence.
- The time persons spent in forced labor was found to be approximately eighteen months (with significant variation across regions and across forms of forced labor);
- The proportion of children enslaved was found to be smaller than an earlier estimate.

4. *Global Child Forced Labor*

In many places around the world children are engaged in work. According to UNICEF, children's or adolescents' participation in economic activity that does not negatively affect their health or interfere with their education, is often positive. Under the ILO Convention No.138, light work that does not interfere with education is permitted for children from the age of twelve years.³⁴

Child labor is much more narrowly defined. According to the ILO standards, child labor refers to children working in contravention of these standards—all children below twelve years old working in any economic activities, those between twelve and fourteen years old engaged in more than light work, and all children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.

The ILO Conventions define the worst forms of child labor as comprising:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.³⁵

Of the 168 million children UNICEF estimates are engaged in child labor, 120 million are below the age of fourteen. An additional estimated 30 million children in this age group—mostly girls—perform unpaid household chores within their own families. In addition, millions of children suffer in the other worst forms of child labor, including slavery and slavery-like practices such as forced and bonded labor and child soldiering, sexual exploitation, or are used by adults in illicit activities, including drug trafficking.³⁶

5. *Children in Armed Conflicts*

The recruitment of children to serve as soldiers for a country's military or for rebel militias is a particularly heinous practice with profound long-term implications for vulnerable children. Children are used as combatants, but also as messengers, porters, and cooks, and for forced sexual services. Some children are abducted or forcibly recruited. Others who join are motivated by poverty, abuse, and discrimination. Some seek revenge for violence enacted against them or their families.

In some cases, children may join armed groups for food and survival. Factors that contribute to the likelihood of a child becoming a child soldier include separation from their families, displacement from their homes, living in combat zones or having limited access to education. In some situations, children may “voluntarily” take part in warfare, not realizing the dangers and abuses to which they will be subjected.³⁷

6. *Forced Labor in the United States*

Until very recently, little data had been collected on labor trafficking in the United States. A landmark study by the Urban Institute is a significant and helpful beginning to understanding this key piece of the picture of forced labor. While the

study focused on the U.S., many key findings also shed light on the experiences of persons globally. Unless otherwise noted, all of the findings in this section come from that report.³⁸

Labor trafficking thrives where workers' vulnerabilities—such as having a disabling condition, limited ability to speak or understand English, or limited access to social networks in the U.S.—intersect with those who seek to exploit their labor.³⁹ Immigrants—particularly those without documents—are among the most vulnerable because they do not understand their rights or are unable to exercise them. Even in states with labor trafficking laws, loopholes or weak provisions, such as exemptions from protections for certain industries, increase vulnerability.

The nature of their work makes domestic workers more vulnerable. Extreme isolation, with no legal oversight and where persons, predominantly women, live and work in one household, create environments ripe for exploitation.⁴⁰ Limited English skills present an additional challenge.

While U.S. citizens, especially populations who are vulnerable, are trafficked for forced labor, all persons in this study were immigrant men, women, and children, both authorized and unauthorized. They were trafficked for domestic servitude, agriculture, hospitality (hotels, etc.), restaurants, and construction.⁴¹ Most traveled to the United States on flights, or by car or on foot if crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

Persons indicated that the desire to make a better life for themselves and their families, along with experiencing poverty and a lack of employment opportunities in their countries of origin, motivated them to seek opportunity elsewhere. These factors, with the addition of force, fraud, or coercion in the recruitment and movement for a job, created a recipe for labor trafficking.⁴²

7. *Authorized Immigrants*

Most persons arrived in the U.S. on a valid temporary visa—most commonly an H-2A visa for agriculture work or an H-2B visa for work in hospitality, construction, or restaurants. Some came on tourist visas, business visas (B1/B2), or diplomat domestic servant visas (G-5). Often they have taken out high-interest loans or mortgaged family property to pay recruitment fees, making them vulnerable to debt bondage. There were often additional recruitment fees or bills for housing and food. To obtain a visa, persons were required to meet with embassy officials in their home countries. But information about workers' rights in the U.S. and emergency numbers were not provided by embassy staff. In some cases, the applicant was interviewed by the embassy official in the presence of the trafficker.

Traffickers often utilized immigration status as a tool to keep people in forced labor, sometimes telling workers that their visas would be extended if they stayed, or that they would be unauthorized if they tried to leave. Because it was often weeks or months after escape before persons received services, the majority were unauthorized, usually as a result of the expiration of their visa after they were enslaved.

8. *Unauthorized Immigrants*

About a third of those victimized were unauthorized at the time they entered the U.S. Forced labor occurred both where the employer may not have been aware the labor was being forced by a trafficker and where companies were fully complicit, and in private businesses such as carwashes, farms, and massage parlors. Unauthorized persons who were smuggled experienced a higher degree of violence, extortion, abuse, and exploitation during movement.

A distinction needs to be made between the smuggling of unauthorized persons and trafficking. Those who are smuggled willingly pay a fee, usually to a smuggler called a coyote, who transports them across the U.S. border. Once in the U.S., smuggled persons may then be trafficked, perhaps by the coyote exacting exorbitant fees that force the person into debt bondage, sometimes by being delivered to a forced labor situation.

Many undocumented children in the United States are subject to peonage and debt bondage. These children, forced to work to pay off smuggling debts levied by coyotes, are often not identified as victims of child labor, but merely identified as smuggled children or unaccompanied minors.⁴³

9. *Obtaining Freedom; New Challenges*

According to the Urban Institute study, many trafficked persons escape by running away. While they are keenly aware they have been abused and exploited, they frequently do not understand that they had been victims of labor trafficking and thus entitled to legal protection and services. Regardless of legal status, their overriding fear was of being unauthorized. There were sometimes witnesses, but they rarely acted—out of fear, but more often because of a lack of awareness about labor trafficking.

A common misconception is that persons who have been freed from modern slavery are finally able to move on with their lives and leave their experiences behind them. But those who have been trafficked often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, psychosis, thoughts of and attempts at suicide, ongoing fear, and difficulty forming relationships. One might term this a post-trafficking stress disorder.

10. *Post-Trafficking Immigration Options: “T” and “U” Visas, “Continuing Presence” Designation*

The most immediate needs and the greatest challenges for formerly trafficked persons were access to secure emergency shelter and long-term transitional housing. Yet these challenges were only the beginning. Because many were unauthorized, persons were sometimes threatened with deportation and placed in deportation centers. When a person who had escaped made contact with service providers, staff had good success in obtaining T visas—a special category of visa mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). In order to qualify for a T visa, one must be present in the U.S. as a result of human trafficking. Applicants for the other special visa, the U visa, may have visited the United States on vacation (or for another purpose) and then been subjected to human trafficking or another qualifying crime.

The Urban Institute study found that granting of “continued presence” (CP), a temporary immigration status provided to individuals identified by law enforcement as victims of human trafficking, was extremely rare. This status allows victims of human trafficking to remain in the U.S. temporarily during the ongoing investigation into the human trafficking-related crimes committed against them. CP is initially granted for one year and may be renewed in one-year increments.⁴⁴

Since obtaining a T visa often took months or years, persons were often forced to remain unauthorized for lengthy periods, making it extremely difficult to obtain permanent housing. Many had incurred heavy debt to recruiters, and the fact that back wages are rarely awarded meant there was a desperate need to get paying work quickly. Persons often resorted to taking low-wage work similar to that from which they had been freed, even though many had a high school diploma or higher.

Since existing anti-trafficking task forces in local law enforcement generally focus on, and are trained to identify and pursue, cases of sex trafficking, local officials found it hard to distinguish labor trafficking from exploitative labor, increasing the difficulty of making a case that could be prosecuted. The Department of Labor, which investigates civil matters related to labor violations, was not a player in these cases. The lack of awareness about forced labor among the general public also means that potential tips and vital information is not reported to the agencies equipped to respond. This is another area for better and more comprehensive training about the shape of trafficking as forced labor.

F. *Challenges in Addressing Sex Trafficking*1. *Child Sex Trafficking*

While Christians may disagree as to whether adult “sex work” is ever truly voluntary, child sex trafficking is universally viewed with disgust and horror. The use of children in the commercial sex trade is prohibited under U.S. law and by statute in most countries around the world. Sex trafficking has devastating consequences for children, including long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease (including HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, unwanted pregnancy, malnutrition, social ostracism, and even death.

In cases where a person is under eighteen years of age, proving force, fraud, or coercion is not necessary for the offense to be characterized as human trafficking. There are no exceptions to this rule: no cultural or socioeconomic rationalizations alter the fact that children who are prostituted are trafficking victims.

In addition to children trafficked explicitly for sexual exploitation, many children who are trafficked for other forms of forced labor—in the textile industry, in mines, in fishing, or in a multitude of other forms of work—suffer sexual assault as a means of intimidating and coercing them to remain in the forced labor situation. In all these cases, sexual exploitation of a child is a profound violation of the rights of the child to protection.

2. *Sex Trafficking of Adults*

Like other forms of forced labor, sex trafficking of adults exists at the extreme end of a continuum comprised of those who claim to voluntarily engage in commercial sex work, or prostitution, to those exploited by pimps, to those enslaved for sexual exploitation. Globally and in the U.S., sex trafficking takes place in many settings: from brothels to hotels, from nail salons to fake massage parlors, from sex tourism destinations to agricultural labor camps. While predominantly victimizing women, young men are also trafficked for prostitution. As is true of children, sexual exploitation of adults can also be used by traffickers as one way of forcing, intimidating, and coercing both men and women who are trafficked for labor.

While Christians across the theological spectrum have been able to partner around the issue of addressing sex trafficking, there inevitably come points where people of faith disagree. Often these points of contention are tied to philosophical, theological, and ideological differences in their broader viewpoints about gender and sexuality.

3. *Prostitution or Sex Work?*

Christians have passionately held opinions about what some term sex work. Some view all commercial sex work as an evil to be eradicated. They believe it exploits people with limited options, degrades the men and women whose bodies are sold, erodes family life, and harms gender and sexual identities. Others believe that there are persons who choose commercial sex work voluntarily, if only because it represents the one viable option for feeding their families.

Among feminists one finds a range of views about prostitution. Abolitionist feminists argue that the sex industry should be entirely eliminated because it objectifies and oppresses women.⁴⁵ Other feminist groups express opposition to the anti-prostitution campaign. While doing research on trafficking and providing assistance to sex workers, these groups focus on harm reduction (provision of condoms, counseling, and other services) and empowerment of workers. As the later section discussing kinds of decriminalization will show, this report both opposes prostitution and favors harm reduction alternatives to the primarily criminal justice approach.

In evaluating these two disparate ways of viewing prostitution—as a manifestation of a patriarchal society that objectifies women or as a matter of choosing among limited options—Karen Peterson-Iyer observes that:

... sex-industry work (including prostitution) is neither an act of complete freedom nor one of complete slavery. Rather, in prostitution, genuine personal agency confronts social limitation, and prostitutes must make difficult choices that most people will never face or understand.⁴⁶

In her grim, searing portrayal of the realities of prostitution, Rachel Moran takes this observation further, though, in arguing that it reduces personal agency. After noting how rarely prostitutes can choose or screen their clients and how frequently they are degraded by johns, she says

[A] popular pro-prostitution fantasy is that prostituted women ought to be able to use their bodies as they so choose, the problem with that theory is that it is *others* who use the bodies of prostituted woman as *they* so chose. It is the intention and the purpose and the *function* of prostitution, and there isn't a whit of bodily autonomy within it.⁴⁷

One persistent claim made by contemporary abolitionists is that prostitution and sex trafficking are inextricably linked. The policy paper produced by the Bush administration in the early days of Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA, 2000, reauthorized 2005), “The Link Between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking,” brought this theory to the forefront and influenced the law’s implementation. Activists who espouse this position claim that prostitution must be targeted because it is the root cause of sex trafficking. Further, they claim that most sex workers started out as women or girls who had been trafficked. Though anecdotal reports from members of law enforcement often affirm that many women arrested for prostitution began their lives as teenagers trafficked for sex work,⁴⁸ the research data does not support this claim.⁴⁹

4. *Rescue or Walk Alongside?*

Our first reaction to reports of persons trafficked for sexual exploitation may be horror and pity, followed by a desire to rescue victims. Many Christians base their desire to rescue in scriptures that call for liberating oppressed people. Major Christian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate in some developing nations to break women out of brothels in ways that recall the work of Donaldina Cameron in 19th Century San Francisco, a Presbyterian woman who fought to save young Chinese immigrant women from prostitution.⁵⁰

Yet rescue, while liberating individuals who have been enslaved from a dehumanizing and destructive existence, cannot in and of itself bring an end to trafficking for sexual exploitation. First, reliance on this paradigm ignores the global context in which sex trafficking is situated, reducing it to a narrowly defined moral issue of sexual purity, where innocent (mostly) women and girls are exploited by evil traffickers and the johns who pay for sexual services. Unless we address the larger context the effects are likely minimal, especially if insufficient assistance is given to those rescued to recover and be restored to productive life.

The rescue model also sets up a hierarchical divide between the rescuers who swoop in to become the saviors and those who are enslaved, potentially negating the humanity and agency of those being rescued. When those “rescued” are women, the rescue model also tends to perpetuate the perception of women as powerless and vulnerable, simply on the basis of their gender.⁵¹

Christians will continue to differ in their views on sex work and prostitution.⁵² There will continue to be a range of approaches to addressing the trafficking of persons for sexual exploitation. Karen Peterson-Iyer suggests that in approaches to addressing sex trafficking from a Christian perspective, the lenses of mutuality and solidarity lead us away from a posture of one-way rescue and toward an approach of both accompaniment with, and empowerment of, trafficked, prostituted persons.⁵³

IV. Analysis of Existing Policies and Course Correction

Since the UN anti-trafficking protocol in 2000 there has been widespread and growing recognition of the deeper complexity of human trafficking than seen in prior analyses and more specifically in policy approaches. In retrospect, these approaches failed at many points by aligning trafficking with prostitution, by gendering and establishing iconic “victims,” by employing a compelling but over-simple analogy with slavery, by extending cultural ideologies, and by missing the substantive complexities of the nature of human trafficking. According to many scholars and activists, trafficking is at a “crucial crossroads.”⁵⁴ A fundamental shift is needed in order to change how policymakers characterize and address the problem. Recent legal, sociological, and critical theories on trafficking explore the “moral panic” surrounding trafficking and have begun to problematize the current and widely held anti-trafficking paradigm, the stakeholders, assumptions, and definitions of trafficking that propel and misdirect interventions.

At stake is the way trafficking has been and now should be framed. This section is analytical and critical, even self-critical, of the ways trafficking has been over-personalized and separated from the ways labor has been weakened under economic globalization. By focusing on the “discourse” of trafficking, scholars consider how problems are constructed, who is invested in their construction, and this limits the way we think about an issue and the way in which that construction circumscribes the formulation of approaches and policies. Janie Chuang characterizes the two basic frameworks as “a problem resulting from individual deviant behavior, best addressed by post hoc penalization and rescue strategies, or is it a systemic problem best addressed by targeting its structural contributors such as weak migration and labor frameworks.”⁵⁵ Discourses that emphasize imprisonment and rescue give rise to one set of approaches and policies while discourses that emphasize social-structural inadequacies or injustices give rise to another set of approaches and policies.

A. *Shift from Sexual Trafficking to Broader Categories of Forced Labor*

The anti-trafficking movement emerged in the United States as an unusual coalition with a focus on sex trafficking, uniting both Christians concerned to free people (especially women) from degradation and secular feminists focused on sex trafficking as a means for introducing women’s sexual and reproductive rights into the human rights dialogue. Quoted above, the Palermo Protocol’s focus on “exploitation” was often applied primarily in relation to sex trafficking.⁵⁶ Other forms of exploitation of women (for example, factory labor, domestic work, and agricultural labor), or of the exploitation of men, were not part of early discussions about or of responses to trafficking, despite being included in the UN Protocol. They are only now being raised as related issues.

In addition, both scholars and activists have drawn attention to current interventional approaches to trafficking and the conceptualizations on which they are based. In particular, the UN Palermo framework (adopted by most nations) states that trafficking policies have been criticized as focusing “... too narrowly on sexual exploitation in a way that both genders ‘victims’ and diverts attention away from other forms of trafficking.”⁵⁷

Prior to the 1990s concern for human trafficking centered on labor trafficking and the social conditions that lead to the exploitation of labor. Whereas among the Clinton Administration’s final actions was inclusion of sex trafficking along with forced labor in the law, the Bush administration’s implementation of that law migrated to focus on sex trafficking, particularly of women and girls, as the predominant form of human trafficking. According to the landmark Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), “severe forms of trafficking” are defined as:

- a. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.⁵⁸

Zimmerman and others⁵⁹ observe that when the Bush administration re-conceptualized trafficking as sex trafficking, it moved from the obscure concern of a few labor activists to a high-profile human rights issue that aligned human trafficking with female sexual slavery. During the Bush administration, “[s]ex was so central to the understanding of human trafficking endorsed by the Bush administration that it was often treated as the de facto constituent element of trafficking crimes; as if human trafficking involved exploitative sex by definition.”⁶⁰

Because the TVPA reauthorization of 2005 funded state and local law enforcement to prosecute customers of commercial sex, some law enforcement agencies do not distinguish between prostitution and sex trafficking. This reconceptualization of trafficking as female sexual slavery served to limit national concern for other aspects of gender policy, neglected issues of trafficking in males, and undermined labor anti-trafficking efforts. Chung notes that it wasn’t until 2005 “when the ILO [International Labor Organization] staked a visible role in the global anti-trafficking arena with the release of its quadrennial Forced Labor Report—that the issue of human trafficking began to be framed as a labor issue.”⁶¹

A shift took place under the Obama administration to reconceive (or re-re-conceptualize) human trafficking to include nonsexual labor trafficking, restoring, in part, what had been lost in concept and policy under the Bush administration. However, in Chung’s view, the Obama administration

... promoted a problematic ... series of discursive and doctrinal moves to recast (1) forced labor as trafficking, and (2) trafficking (and forced labor) as slavery. Deeming forced labor practices a subset of trafficking made the link between trafficking and labor explicit, thus laying the groundwork for policymakers and advocates to draw long-overdue attention to nonsexual labor trafficking. Moreover, recasting forced labor and trafficking as slavery had the strategic benefit of marshaling outrage and political will to support initiatives targeting nonsexual forced labor practices. Such practices had typically attracted less public opprobrium than sex trafficking, having arguably become normalized in our globalized economy.⁶²

Aligning trafficking with slavery or “modern slavery” is problematic for a number of reasons. It not so subtly invokes our own unjust U.S. history of slavery, without recognizing key differences in migration today. Slaves in the U.S. were ripped from their African homes, manacled, and brought to the U.S. unwillingly, sold and made the legal property of another and forced to labor for that person. By contrast, most people who wind up in forced labor start out migrating to find better economic circumstances, to escape governmental oppression or persecution, or to flee civil conflict. What may begin as vol-

untary migration culminates in exploitation. Also, while these persons may be captives, they are not owned. They are not property. By definition, labor trafficking is forced labor but not technically slavery.⁶³

Slavery of a de facto kind has occurred in U.S. agricultural settings, as the Immokalee Workers have helped expose in rural Florida, but the language of slavery when used powerfully, as by Noelle Damico, is used to illuminate the power dynamics in the contemporary global economy.⁶⁴

Supra-governmental bodies (e.g. UN, WHO, ILO) and governments are not the only parties engaged in anti-trafficking activities. There are many actors on the anti-trafficking stage including supra-governmental bodies, governments, religious organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and philanthropists. We draw on a particular analysis of the role of “Evangelical Christian” efforts, but in fact many Presbyterians were also part of this broadly evangelical Christian concern. Under the Bush administration’s Office of Faith Based Initiatives, Evangelical Christian groups were able to secure funding for both domestic and international anti-trafficking programs, funds that increased over the eight years of that administration.⁶⁵ Their programs demonstrated a commitment to penalty—rescue conceptualization where “social justice equates directly with criminal justice.” Further, these programs used market-based rescue-restore strategies where “...to the extent that economic issues are considered causal factors in human suffering, the solutions that new evangelicals forged are imagined in neoliberal, consumer-friendly terms.”⁶⁶

As Campbell and Zimmerman argue, most U.S.-based anti-trafficking activism is organized around promoting neoliberal (antiregulatory) capitalist institutions as the best and most promising anti-trafficking response.⁶⁷ This limits the role of governments and regulations in correcting market failures and the inequalities they reinforce. As Christian feminist ethicist Gloria Albrecht argues, neoliberalism as a political, economic theory within capitalism aims at economic growth and efficiency as primary social and political goals but has invariably led to or reinforced gendered economic and social inequality.⁶⁸ Campbell and Zimmerman note that in so many cases, “freedom from trafficking [is] articulated as participation in the capitalist marketplace as worker and consumer ... virtually every US-based anti-trafficking organization supports a role for the state in anti-trafficking activism that is fully consistent with neoliberalism’s limited conception of the state, namely, as an agent of punitive or carceral (prison) redress.”⁶⁹

Evangelical groups promoting market-based approaches encourage believers to purchase goods from faith-based anti-trafficking organizations or from women’s collectives of those freed from prostitution who then produce consumer-oriented goods. For parts of the Christian community, then, the purchase of consumer goods in the name of fighting trafficking serves a dual purpose in solidifying the distinction between freedom and slavery: on the one hand, “freedom” resides in Western consumers’ ability to purchase the craft items that “trafficking victims” produce; on the other hand, it pertains to the practice that self-described “evangelical” organizations call “business as mission,” in which former “slaves” are brought into “free” labor by producing commodities for Western consumers. Ultimately, business as mission can be seen as a global-capitalist refashioning of the nineteenth-century evangelical practice of “rescuing” women from prostitution by bringing them into domestic labor or teaching them to sew.⁷⁰

Such “rescue projects” must not be confused with projects that, though also market-based and often Christ-inspired, create self-governing and economically self-sustaining artisan or craft communities designed to reduce community and family poverty.

Indeed, in an ambiguous trend, some anti-trafficking activities are sponsored by wealthy donors, persons that Chuang terms “philanthrocapitalists.” She raises the concern that philanthrocapitalists “refashion ‘trafficking’ as ‘modern-day slavery’—an umbrella concept intended to encompass all forced labor, trafficking, and slavery practices. Using their deep resources and elite networks to engage directly in global anti-trafficking policymaking, philanthrocapitalists can significantly influence the substantive approach to this complex problem, and even reconfigure the roles of other international actors in the field.”⁷¹

Chuang notes that philanthrocapitalists employ their business skills to “fix” social problems. Guided by personal visions and often well-meaning intentions, they may be inadequately informed by scholars, activists, or those who are trafficked. Often they play out their own neoliberal ideologies on the global stage apart from governmental accountability or constraint. The downside comes if they do not target systemic causes of exploitation or if they reinforce paternalism, or if they undermine the longstanding work of effective NGOs. Chuang and others are concerned that a deep ideological commitment to market-based solutions that created their wealth is now directed at “philanthro-policymaking.”⁷² To a certain degree this is a classic “charity vs. justice” analysis, but it is also a testimony to the limits of intergovernmental anti-trafficking capacity.

The current shift to a larger understanding of trafficking that includes forced labor and emphasizes human rights is a course correction back to before the mid-1990s, when sex trafficking and the penalty-rescue paradigm were not the primary lens.

B. *Reframing the Victim: Multiple Faces of Trafficking and “Exploitation Creep”*

As the paradigm of trafficking broadens to include a wider array of abuses, there are concerns about conceptual clarity.⁷³ The U.S. State Department ranks governments in the annual “Trafficking in Persons Report” according to perceived efforts to combat human trafficking. However, there is still a lack of international consensus of the types of abuses that constitute trafficking. For example, while the U.S. State Department and Interpol concur on forced labor, sex trafficking, and child sex traf-

ficking as key types of trafficking, Interpol also includes trafficking for tissue, cells, and organs, and people smuggling.⁷⁴ The U.S. State Department, on the other hand, includes bonded labor or debt bondage, domestic servitude, forced child labor, and child soldiers.⁷⁵ In addition to these legal categories, other types of trafficking have been included as well: forced marriage and adoption are two that modify the forced labor emphasis of this report.

This conceptual profusion, if not confusion, is a challenge to a comprehensive approach like this one. At one level, the proliferation of types of trafficking challenges a consensus on definitions and measurements, if larger economic inequalities are not taken into account. For example, how does one measure and compare organ sales and forced adoption? As O’Connell Davidson wryly notes, “attempting to use the concept of ‘trafficking’ as an analytical tool in relation to the many and varied rights violations that can be associated with all these different markets, institutions and practices is rather like attempting to sharpen a pencil with jelly.”⁷⁶

At another level, the comprehensive approach can be a catch-all that prevents prioritizing. Ann Jordan has argued that categories such as forced labor, bonded labor, and trafficking—not to mention slavery—only partly overlap. They have different definitions under international law based on different cultural as well as economic causation. In her account, the trend to sweep the worst forms of exploited labor under the term trafficking—as the U.S. and International Labour Organization (ILO) have done—has deleterious effects.⁷⁷ This report seeks to avoid the dangers she identifies, but we note how pervasive some of the tendencies are.

Jordan indicates that a decade ago ILO carefully calculated 12.3 million people as affected by debt bondage, forced labor, slavery, and trafficking, but global outrage was

focused almost exclusively on 20% of the 12.3 million—on the 2.45 people who the ILO estimates are *trafficked* into forced labor, debt bondage and perhaps slavery² (ILO 2005, 14). The horrors endured by the other 80%—who were not trafficked—are rarely mentioned in public debates or political discourse and, surprisingly, not even in discussions about trafficking despite the fact that trafficking always involves some form of forced labor, debt bondage and/or slavery.⁷⁸

The ILO defines the term “forced labor” as work that is performed involuntarily and under coercion.⁷⁹ But not all forced labor is forbidden. The ILO Convention permits certain forms of forced labor such as military service, prison labor, required labor in “cases of emergency,” and “minor communal services” by members of the community for the community.⁸⁰ Exploitative labor, then, may be defined international statute but in fact differs by national context, and the persons involved in the labor flows across borders may accept different standards for themselves and their families. Those terribly paid immigrant workers, for example, may still be sending crucial remittances to families living in much worse poverty.

There is thus a danger that might be called, “exploitation creep,” which affects advocacy and policy. Let us consider child labor as an example.

Debt bondage is similar to slavery because it involves a debt that cannot be paid off in a reasonable time. Many undocumented children in the United States are subject to peonage and debt bondage. But these children, forced to work to pay off smuggling debts levied by coyotes, are often not identified as victims of child labor, but as smuggled children or unaccompanied minors.⁸¹

Children trafficked for forced labor face many challenges. Unlike children trafficked for sex, who under the TVPA are considered victims of a severe form of trafficking simply because they are involved in sex work, those trafficked for labor are held to a more rigorous legal standard and must show evidence of force, fraud, or coercion. The fact they often appear to have been a victim of another crime, such as child employment violations, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, child pornography, or abuse or neglect, distracts from their status as trafficked persons. Because children are not identified in a timely fashion, they often suffer abuse longer. It may also be difficult to distinguish children who have been trafficked from those who have been smuggled. Because children may have complex relationships with different adults, they often become dependent upon the very adults who have exploited them. It is not always clear whether the adults accompanying are trustworthy guardians or complicit in children’s enslavement. Planning for the welfare of victimized children is generally more complex than simple restoration to family of origin.

The cluster of issues surrounding child trafficking also suggests why the paradigm of sex trafficking (at its most egregious, non-citizen women who are chained to their beds) does not do justice to the multiple ways migrants traffic across borders, or why or at what point they should be considered “trafficked” instead of “smuggled.” When trafficking is dealt with as a migration issue, the question of consent versus coercion determines an irregular immigration status. O’Connell Davidson observes that the experience of coercion and exploitation during migration spans a continuum, and there is no consensus “when poor but tolerable working conditions slip over into forced labor (or at what point tolerable conditions for wives or adopted children and so on slip into ‘modern slavery’).”⁸²

There are thus, she argues, multiple confusions around irregular migration. How does one distinguish between smuggling and trafficking? Legally and in the public imagination, migrants who are smuggled are willing consenters in criminal activity, but those who are trafficked are “duped” and therefore considered victims or survivors. Sadly, this oversimplifies the ways migration often occurs in the real world, and does not acknowledge multiple relations between migrants and those who

benefit directly or indirectly from their exploitation. On a very broad economic basis, Steinfeld argues that the opposition between forced and voluntary migration itself is false. Given how extreme poverty may well “force” migration, the convention in liberal democratic societies to consider that “what kinds of coercive pressures are legitimate and illegitimate in labor relations” may be more imagined than real.⁸³

There is thus growing pressure to focus more effectively on the global political economy that contributes to massive migrations and vulnerable labor as “it is no coincidence that the growth in trafficking has taken place during a period in which there has been an increasing international demand for migrant workers.”⁸⁴ Irregular migration and trafficking rely on the fact that traffickers and smugglers service a market in which there are buyers and sellers. The growth in trafficking and smuggling reflects not just an increase in “push” factors (war, grinding poverty, etc.) from countries south of our U.S. border, but also the strong pull of unmet labor demands, disposable income, and drug demands, particularly in the informal and recreational sectors. While cracking down on illegal migration, the U.S. has done little to address the insatiable demand for cheap labor and cheap sex and cheap drugs here in the U.S. that makes trafficking and smuggling so profitable in the first place. For U.S. organizations to ignore these demand factors would be hypocritical.

V: The Human Rights Approach and Free, as Opposed to Forced, Labor

All persons are infinitely valuable and deserving of respect. That modern tenet of human rights mirrors our Christian belief in the “*imago dei*,” and in some ways was derived from it, as churches played a strong role in establishing human rights law. A year after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, the General Assembly of the PCUSA began issuing a long (and continuing) series of policies and studies on evolving human rights principles. This report could be considered a continuation of that practice.

The current emphasis in forced labor policy, that of the “human rights approach,” promotes policies that protect and enfranchise the worker. This shift is already evident in the International Labour Organization’s (ILO’s) adoption in 2014 of the Forced Labor Protocol, and the 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report that focuses on corporate labor chains.

James Pope argues for the strategic effectiveness of the human rights approach as it increases the freedom and hence power of the laboring person. Trafficking is wrong, in stripping a person of their power and using their work or contribution primarily to benefit another, but overall the criminal justice-based effort is not large enough, in his view. The prohibitionist approach may also leave out the moral grey areas where some people are both victims and perpetrators. His “free labor” strategy refers to a worker’s right to withhold labor, or to quit. The right to change employers gives workers the “power below” necessary to give employers the “incentive above” to avoid labor practices of slavery and servitude.⁸⁵ It does not focus on policing and convicting morally blameworthy individuals, but on workers seeking rights to secure their economic independence. This is to give a “power below” to press employers to effect an “incentive above” to change labor practices. It encourages worker self-empowerment in uncorrupt systems. Such an approach promotes policies that protect and enfranchise the worker.

Most anti-trafficking interventions have disproportionately focused on a criminal justice response in an effort to prosecute traffickers. As the UN protocols emphasized trafficking prevention, so law enforcement and immigration personnel were trained in detecting irregular activities (such as the fraudulent use of documents or smuggling techniques). Although the protocols emphasized protecting the rights of those who suffer from being trafficked, sometimes the zeal of law enforcement to prosecute traffickers led to the neglect of workers’ labor rights.

For Pope, this prohibition model has three limitations. First, it directs focus on low-level operators (pimps, coyotes) instead of higher-level beneficiaries of trafficking rackets who have the power to end the practice. Second, prosecution is costly. Third, this approach does not ensure that survivors of trafficking have access to non-servile (or non-menial) jobs, and so many slip back into oppressive labor.

Other scholars turn to the tendency of the state to focus primarily on border and immigration controls, often linking the protection of victims to their willingness to testify against their perpetrators.⁸⁶ This is problematic on many accounts—it authorizes restrictive state prosecution of irregular migration, penalizes the victim, and fails to address root causes such as poverty, discrimination, unemployment, or gender-based violence.⁸⁷ Furthermore, most laws have had little impact on traffickers or persons trafficked and are rarely enforced. The Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University found that, as of 2013, 182 countries had policies to prohibit trafficking, but a 2014 U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report found that there were only 9,460 prosecutions worldwide in 2013, with only 5,776 convictions.⁸⁸ Finally, the criminal justice approach and its attachment to managing borders emphasizes the national aspects of a growing international problem.

Consequently, an international consensus has developed around the need for a “rights-based” approach to human trafficking. In practice this means starting by trying to restore the rights of the persons trafficked. In 2002, the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Mary Robinson, published the *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, which provides practical, rights-based policy guidance on the prevention of trafficking and the protection of trafficked persons around four pillars: “(1) The primacy of human rights, (2) the prevention of trafficking by addressing root

causes, (3) the extension of protection and assistance to all victims (instead of criminalization), and (4) the punishment of perpetrators and redress of victims.”⁸⁹

Organizations and individual service providers who work out of a human rights-based model offer non-judgmental assistance with an emphasis on self-determination to best meet a person’s needs, both short- and long-term. Such a model means allowing the person who has survived trafficking to choose to accept—or decline—assistance and to decide whether or not to report the crime to law enforcement. A person also has the right to receive culturally appropriate assistance in a language he or she understands, to have access to necessary reproductive health care, and to exercise victim witness rights. A person who has been victimized has the right to sue the trafficker and to participate in anti-trafficking leadership training.

Those served by such an approach, reports Freedom Network USA,

... tend to regain trust, safety and self-sufficiency, and to more fully recover from their crime than those who do not. In contrast, those who are treated like criminals instead of victims, who feel their needs are not being considered, that their stories are not believed, or that their decisions and actions are being judged, are more likely to abandon services and the criminal justice process altogether. This leads to poorer justice outcomes and increases the risk that the individual will return to the trafficker or will face other challenges to safety and well-being.⁹⁰

Pope illustrates the effectiveness of “free labor” as a worker-driven organizing approach by how it affected the actual work conditions of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a case Presbyterians know well. Instead of relying primarily on government enforcement, the CIW brings workers together, develops rights consciousness through education and action, and creates space for workers to develop strategies for improving their conditions. After unsuccessful efforts at changing conditions and wages with individual tomato operations in their part of Florida, they appealed to the large corporate tomato purchasers, eventually launching a successful campaign to boycott the Taco Bell subsidiary of Yum Brands.⁹¹

A. *Application of the Rights-Based and Free (or Empowered) Labor Approaches to Particular Issues in the Recommendations*

The Worker-Driven Social Responsibility model of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers suggests one solution that, in the absence of unionization, allows a largely immigrant workforce to gain better wages, working conditions, and de facto rights. Campaigns to make supply chains more transparent allow workers and consumers more leverage in pushing for accountability from powerful economic actors. Many consumers want to make sure they are not buying products made by mistreated workers, even if there is some additional cost. President Obama issued an Executive Order prohibiting human trafficking in the supply chains of federal “prime” contractors and their subcontractors and employees, and California has also taken steps toward requiring transparency of retailers and manufacturers doing business there. There may well be more support for “labor” in relation to trade in the broader U.S. political system.

To the extent that employers desire immigrant workers, particularly in agriculture, guest worker programs are a legal way that non-citizens can be authorized to be in the United States. But in many programs, including the guest-worker visa program of the U.S., there are unintended consequences that render migrant workers vulnerable to trafficking. Persons working in the U.S. on H-2A or H-2B temporary work visas are made more vulnerable due to a lack of visa portability—i.e., a person’s lawful immigration status is tied to one employer. This has overtones of the kind of bonded labor or even debt peonage more common in other countries, and sometimes even passed down the generations. A guest worker should be temporary but not simply disposable.

In forced labor, an employer may use control over a person’s living conditions or movement to and from work as a way of controlling him or her and compelling their labor. A lack of oversight and protection once the worker is in the work situation exacerbates the situation. Regulations that allow employers to house their employees, which on the surface may seem to be an advantage to employees, have been found to contribute to isolation and possible exploitation and enslavement.

Some expensive guest-worker programs do not require employers to cover the cost of recruitment, transportation, or obtaining the visa. Some programs restrict the areas where migrant workers may live, work, or travel. A 2010 study of U.S. agriculture workers found that authorized workers were even more vulnerable to trafficking than unauthorized workers due in part to high fees and even higher interest rates that lead to indebtedness, and also because those workers were tied to one employer. The fact that H-2-B visas (for unskilled temporary work outside of agriculture) have less oversight than H-2-A visas has led to various abuses including the enslavement of workers.⁹² For these reasons, this report includes a recommendation for better structuring and accountability in any guest-worker programs.

B. *Sex Work, Prostitution, and Individual Rights*

Based on the human rights and free labor approach, and in light of the earlier critique of “moral panic” as an inadequate guide to policy, this report argues “cautiously” for testing new approaches to sex trafficking where the forced labor involved is usually prostitution. Earlier we cited the recent grim testimony of a woman who has described being prostituted, and one member of the study team has extensive experience working with women getting out of that life. During the time of this report’s preparation, there has been much attention given to the current “Swedish” or “Nordic” approach of decriminalizing the selling of sex by individuals, while continuing to punish the purchasing and procuring of sex, as well as sex trafficking.⁹³

This report endorses no particular model of regulation or harm reduction as, in fact, its authors oppose sexual exploitation in all its forms and favor a range of strategies to end or reduce it.⁹⁴ As a reference group, several members know through mission experience the enormous tragedy of sex trafficking both at home and abroad. In light of the limits of the criminalization approach, this study (of secondary sources) found it reasonable to test changes in the status of women involved in prostitution that could reduce sex trafficking and increase the freedom of those involved in sex work, as claimed for the Nordic countries.

Also during this report's preparation, the human rights organization, Amnesty International, adopted "a policy that seeks attainment of the highest possible protection of the human rights of sex workers, through measures that include the decriminalization of sex work," based on thirteen considerations developed over two years of study.⁹⁵ Their statement was met by a storm of opposition, including a critical review by Rachel Moran, whose memoir of being prostituted we cited earlier.⁹⁶ The case for decriminalization (as opposed to legalization) is that it would, as intended by the Swedish approach, increase prostitutes' immediate freedom and well-being. It would improve the balance of power with those who most directly exploit prostitutes (pimps, abusive Johns, and, unfortunately, sometimes police). The argument is that it would allow prostitutes to build personal relationships without fear of endangering their family and friends. When coupled with improved working conditions, offers of food and daytime shelter, and legal aid, decriminalization offers the potential for improving the lives of prostitutes, including their personal safety and sense of self-direction.⁹⁷

Decriminalization could be an important step towards valuing the rights and safety of everyone in the sex trade, including trafficking victims, without detracting from the importance of anti-trafficking efforts and the ability to punish traffickers. Advocates for a human rights based approach to addressing sex trafficking note:

Sex work and sex trafficking are not synonymous. Sex work involves people making choices that best fit their circumstances. Sex trafficking involves the absence of choice, with people compelled to work in the sex industry through force, fraud, or coercion.⁹⁸

Amnesty International is clearly opposed to trafficking but argues that the Nordic model still leaves those involved in sex work vulnerable by putting them in-between pimps and johns still under legal penalty. The counterargument is that if a jurisdiction goes beyond decriminalizing the transactions of individual women, a position like Amnesty's unleashes increasingly larger market forces of the sex industry generally. The predators are always trying to be present and to thwart their being named. Thus tests of decriminalization, from the victim-centered approach of this report, might track the Nordic approach even if it seems an intentionally inconsistent half-measure from the Amnesty International perspective or reports from Australia and New Zealand.

In practical terms, an arrest for prostitution can injure a person's ability to find a job, rent an apartment, or get an education. The end result can be further marginalization, vulnerability, and lack of options—three key factors that lead to trafficking. At the same time, an arrest can also be an entry point for social service intervention and perhaps leverage for changes toward greater health or well-being. The New York City court prototype that allows for avoidance of a criminal record for those who accept counseling and other services still depends upon that arrest leverage, although it is termed a "trafficking court" and is reportedly perceived as non-coercive by the primarily immigrant population involved.⁹⁹

In the view of many who view sex work as inherently harmful, decriminalization must be accompanied by other actions designed to bring about an end to prostitution. There is a need for strategies such as more (and better) economic options for women, including better educational opportunities and job training, as well as social supports necessary for people to parent well and non-abusively. This includes raising public awareness about child abuse and molestation, both of which contribute to the choice to engage in a life of prostitution. More effective and available social services and social protections are also key, especially for children and youth.

C. *Expanding Legal Protections for Children and Youth (Safe Harbor Laws)*

In the U.S., there are some inconsistencies between the TVPA definition that categorizes all children and youth under the age of eighteen as victims of sex trafficking and common practices in the states. Many states still prosecute minors for prostitution, despite state laws and the contradiction of charging children with an act for which they are too young to consent.¹⁰⁰ In addition, working definitions of sex trafficking may differ for child welfare and law enforcement professionals.

Many states have also established their own definitions that impact whether children are treated as victims of exploitation or as delinquents. These definitions also affect the ways in which child welfare is involved, and whether children are eligible for services.¹⁰¹ Although this is gradually changing, many state courts and law enforcement officials continue to treat children, and particularly youth, as criminals. By turning child victims over to the juvenile justice system, states perpetrate an endless cycle of arrest, detention, and abuse. Effective legislation can correct the conflicts between federal and state law by exempting children from prosecution for prostitution; requiring training for law enforcement and other first responders on how to identify and assist victims; increasing the penalties for traffickers and purchasers of sex; and prompting the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team to develop a statewide system of care.¹⁰²

D. *Issues Around LGBTQ Youth and Sex Trafficking*

On any given night, there are thousands of unaccompanied homeless youth across the nation, most of whom are runaways. ECPAT-USA reports that about 25 percent of the youth in a random sample who were surveyed at Covenant House (a shelter for street youth) in New York experienced some form of trafficking victimization or had traded sex for food, shelter, or other basics (“survival sex.”)¹⁰³

Although LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer) persons may account for only three to five percent of the population in the U.S., they account for up to 40 percent of the runaway and homeless youth population. An estimated 26 percent of LGBTQ young people are rejected by their families and put out of their homes for no other reason than being open about who they are. On the streets, they are vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking for sex work. Once trafficked, these young people may be subjected to beating, mutilation, branding, and rape.¹⁰⁴ Recruitment approaches to these young people vary. Most are recruited by friends or peers and do not usually have pimps.¹⁰⁵ The experiences of transgendered youth are often unique from the rest of this population, and approaches to service provision needs to reflect their situation.

E. *Forced Marriage*

Marriage induced through force, coercion, or deceit is a global phenomenon that arises out of cultural and societal norms about the institution of marriage and the roles of spouses. In a forced marriage, the person (in most cases a woman) has no right to choose a partner or ability to say no. Not all forced marriages result in trafficking. Trafficking and forced marriage intersect when marriage is used both in conjunction with force, fraud, coercion, or abuse of power and as a means to subject wives to conditions of slavery, often in the form of domestic or sexual servitude.¹⁰⁶

The practice of child forced marriage increases a girl’s vulnerability to health risks, domestic violence, and poverty. Even though child marriage is prohibited under article 16(2) of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, it is widely practiced around the world. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, child marriage is a forced marriage because children can neither exercise the right of refusal nor consent. Child marriage “violates fundamental human rights standards and must therefore be strictly prohibited.”¹⁰⁷

Forced Adoption: There is disagreement between national and international law as to whether forced adoption constitutes human trafficking. UNICEF considers illegal adoption as child trafficking.¹⁰⁸ And, while international law does not specifically label illegal adoption as human trafficking, the UNODC observes that it falls under the definition of trafficking.¹⁰⁹

According to the U.S. State Department, if a child is not exploited post-adoption, the adoption act might be illegal, but it is not considered trafficking. The 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report notes: “The kidnapping or unlawful buying/selling of an infant or child for the purpose of offering that child for adoption represents a serious criminal offense, but it is not a form of human trafficking, as it does not necessarily involve the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel services from a person.”

Two other aspects of trafficking that do not fall primarily under the rubric of forced labor are *begging* and the *commission of crime* (usually petty crime/street crime), which accounted for 6 percent of the total number of detected cases in 2010.¹¹⁰

Child soldiers: Child soldiering is a unique and severe form of trafficking. Perpetrators may be government forces, paramilitary organizations, or rebel groups. While the majority of child soldiers are between the ages of 15 and 18, others are as young as 7 or 8. Many are abducted to be used as combatants. Others are made unlawfully to work as porters, guards, servants, messengers, or spies. Young girls are forced to marry or have sex with male soldiers. Some children have been forced to commit atrocities against their families and communities. They are often killed or wounded, and survivors suffer multiple traumas and psychological scarring.

Trafficking for tissue, cells, and organs: This happens in three ways. First, traffickers may force or deceive victims into giving up an organ. Second, victims formally or informally agree to sell an organ and are cheated by being paid less than promised or not at all. Third, vulnerable persons are operated on for an ailment, which may or may not exist, and organs are removed without their knowledge. There are laws in the United States against the sale of body parts designed to prevent desperate people from selling more than their blood. Organ trafficking is a particularly literal violation of the image of God in persons, and a commodification of human being. Whether persons have a right to sell, as opposed to donate, body parts is a legal question answered in the negative in most human rights discourse.

VI. Conclusion: Recommendations, Relationships, and Responsibilities

The 217th General Assembly (2006) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved the resolution, *Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership, and Accountability*, a comprehensive policy report on globalization. The report states, “As Christians, we understand that what happens to people in the process of being ‘integrated’ is a key criterion by which globalization must be measured. We seek a kind of globalization that reflects justice, community, and the sustainability of creation.”¹¹¹

With a broader and more comprehensive policy base that grounds our responses not only to specific aspects of human trafficking, but also to the complex context out of which it has emerged, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will have better tools for making a faithful witness. In practical terms, the Human Trafficking Roundtable, the denominational initiative that has been in place for nearly a decade, has provided one model for doing effective work together. [See Appendix B.] Individual Christians, congregations, and larger governing bodies can explore ways to respond together along with law enforcement and social service agencies addressing these concerns, always seeking better ways to allow the voices of persons who have been trafficked to shape our combined responses.

Currently, all fifty states in the United States have laws criminalizing human trafficking. However, the anti-trafficking laws in many states address only sex trafficking, and still others recognize only sex trafficking of children and youth. As this report states clearly, God’s children are not for sale. But this report also speaks to ways the market and migration need to be changed to put trafficking out of business.

Our faith calls us to confront and confess our own complicity in the global forces that have given rise to and perpetuate human trafficking. We must be vigilant and continually evaluate our roles in global contexts. We can learn from earlier PC(USA) social witness studies and policies that address institutional racism, gender issues, and discrimination against women and people with disabilities in a self-critical way. We can discern, even in our own lifestyles, where the drive for more and cheaper consumer goods and services contributes to the problem of human trafficking. This study has sought to show the interrelatedness of a larger range of powers and principalities at play in our world. As God’s children our role is to bring the love of God to each other without judgment and yet without fail. There is still much work to be done.

APPENDIX A

Related Presbyterian Policies; Gender Justice, Labor, Children, Human Rights, Immigration, Trafficking, Prostitution, Child Sex Trafficking

Presbyterian Policies on Gender Justice

While the actions of 2006 and 2008 are the only policies that address sex trafficking, the church has a long history of speaking out on issues of sexual exploitation and gender justice. Since the 1970s, both predecessor bodies (PCUS and UPCUSA) have included studies of aspects of human sexuality. A 1974 study, “Dignity and Exploitation: Christian Reflections on Images of Sex in the 1970s” refers to the commercialization of sex. In 1986, the assembly commended *Violations Against the Image of God: Exploitation of Women* to the church for study, which examined both women trafficked for prostitution and women forced into sex work by systemic societal pressures, with a focus on exploitative labor. It also addressed sex tourism in Southeast Asia and prostitution on military bases. While there was some discussion of the U.S. context and prostitution, the focus was primarily on developing countries.

The 1988 PC(USA) study paper, *All the Live Long Day: Women and Work*, addressed forced prostitution and the vulnerability of mail-order brides, among other issues. The 1988 General Assembly also adopted a major report, *Pornography: Far From the Song of Songs*, which (though written before the internet explosion) identified the psychic, spiritual, and commercial impacts of images of sex and violence, often involving trafficked women and children.

Presbyterian Policies on Labor

Past assemblies in both the northern and southern streams have affirmed worker rights, such as free collective bargaining, and active participation in labor unions and in management—labor organizations as an expression of Christian vocation, as well as encouraging business and labor leaders to recognize responsibility in working to support minimum wage laws based on income adequacy. The 2008 Social Creed for the 21st Century, also adopted by the National Council of Churches, provides a concise statement of the church’s social stands, including clear support for labor rights: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/acswp/social-creed/>.

Farm and Migratory Workers

Assemblies in the 1970s and 80s acted in support of justice for the United Farm Workers’ struggles and for migrant farm workers. *All the Live Long Day* addressed briefly the issue of the exploitation of immigrant workers. The 1995 report, *God’s Work in Our Hands*, includes “Principles of Vocation and Work.” These reaffirmed the right of everyone to participate in economic decisions that affect them and the right of all workers—including those undocumented—to collective bargaining. The statement expressed concern for how domestic economic policies affected the most vulnerable people and urged attention to international economic policies that could raise the standard of living.

Actions on farm worker justice, specifically addressing the justice issues raised by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, ensued; in 2002 urging prayer and support for the national boycott of Taco Bell Restaurants, in 2006 reaffirming the use of consumer action in the struggle for economic justice, and recognizing that such action may be called for in the ongoing Campaign for Fair Food supported by the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Recent assembly action on immigration acknowledges the vulnerability of immigrants in the workplace that can tip over into forced labor. Among the recommendations of the 220th General Assembly (2012) in “On Advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” was to urge education and protection of all workers from exploitation, abuse, and affronts to their dignity by enforcing labor and employment laws.

Presbyterian Policies on Children

Historically, General Assemblies have expressed concern for the rights of children, calling upon the president in 1992 to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The 1993 General Assembly approved a “Vision for Children and the Church,” articulating the status of children both in the world and in the church, and setting forth a vision for the church’s response. The “Resolution on Children” highlighted previous policy issues, including child labor. From the 1990s through 2014, the Presbyterian Mission Agency included a Child Advocacy program that provided education and support.

Human Rights

The rights of human beings have been the subject of many statements by Presbyterian General Assemblies. Assemblies have spoken in both general policy statements and resolutions and specific statements about the rights of persons in particular situations.

When the 1949 General Assembly of the PCUSA voted its support of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, it marked the beginning of post-war policy declarations by the assemblies in the area of human rights principles. In subsequent years, General Assemblies would support ratification of the anti-genocide treaty (PCUSA, 1950), support political freedom even in the midst of “McCarthyism” (PCUSA, 1952), and oppose experimentation with human beings (PCUSA, 1956).

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the church continued to speak authoritatively. The Confession of 1967 (UPCUSA) contributed a theological undergirding of human rights in terms of God’s creation of a universal family. In the 1970s, statements and resolutions in 1973, 1976, and 1977 led to a major statement on human rights, adopted by the 1978 PCUS assembly.

The 1977 PCUS assembly noted the tendency of western nations to emphasize individual rights, while socialist nations tend to emphasize social and economic rights, and catalogued human rights abuses around the world by governments of every type. It applauded both the urging of President Carter that the U.S. ratify all eleven covenants and conventions of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (most of which the U.S. government has not yet ratified) and the adoption of legislation that allows the Congress to reduce or cut off U.S. aid if recipient governments “... engage in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized, human rights “including”... torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges or trial, and other flagrant denial of rights of life, liberty, or security ...” (PCUS, 1977).

In 1978, the PCUS General Assembly adopted a Declaration of Human Rights affirming that human beings are created in the image of God and that every person is of intrinsic worth before God, and declared that human rights derived from God include the right to exist, the right to basic subsistence, the right to participation in community, and the right to meaningful existence (PCUS, 1978).

The principles offered by the assemblies of both churches in the 1970s were the foundation of the action taken by the 1982 PCUS assembly in support of the U.N. Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief. The reunited church’s first General Assembly in 1983 continued the tradition of human rights advocacy by passing “Human Rights in Focus,” containing the strongest statement to date on the United States’ role in perpetuating global human rights violations.

The 204th General Assembly (1992) called upon the president to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the U.S. Senate to ratify four other rights covenants [PC(USA), 1992]. Unfortunately, for reasons of congressional dysfunction or ideological gridlock, many treaties since the 1990s, including a number patterned on U.S. laws, have not been advanced, weakening the U.S. role at the United Nations.

The 214th General Assembly (2002) approved the report, Ecumenical Partnership: Human Rights and Religious Freedom Abroad.

“The Human Rights Update” is an annual report done by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) from 1990 to 2005 as a study of human rights practice around the world, with few policy recommendations. The Presbyterian UN representative played a key role as editor, and regional World Mission coordinators contributed information not readily available. This study shifted to every other year, following the shift in General Assembly meetings. With the worldwide internet availability of the latest information from specialized human rights bodies, including information on religious rights, ACSWP redesigned the Human Rights Update to focus thematically on particular human rights matters (such as torture or surveillance).

Immigration

The Presbyterian General Assemblies first began to speak out on immigration and refugee issues when the aftermath of World War II displaced millions of people. Presbyterians bid their government to allow immigration above and beyond the normal quotas [UPCNA, PCUS, PCUSA, 1947.]. The assemblies reaffirmed their call for “opening up immigration” in 1948. The 1953 PCUSA assembly called for a comprehensive review of the nation’s immigration policies.

The continuing 20th century phenomena of refugees seeking security and safety from political and economic oppression moved the 1980 UPCUSA and 1982 PCUS assemblies to issue general statements on the world refugee situation. An enduring challenge for Christians in the U.S. is posed by Mexican migration to the United States. The UPCUSA and PCUS assemblies jointly adopted the policy statement “Mexican Migration to the United States: Challenge to Christian Witness and National Policy” in response to the problem and urged specific action to make real the “love for neighbor” that Christians are called to express in relations with all people. Two sentences from that policy statement characterize the best in Presbyterian thinking: “Political and geographical boundaries are in and of themselves part of the human social existence. ... However, the only boundaries Christians recognize ultimately are those established by justice and love” (UPCUSA; PCUS, 1981).

In the 1980s, the General Assemblies expressed support for their actions in what was called the “sanctuary movement.” The assembly also addressed continuing problems with refugees from Cuba and Haiti. Likewise, the assemblies continually called for compassionate, lenient policies toward Asian American and South East Asian refugees. In light of a growing concern about limiting access to public social services to authorized immigrants, the 206th General Assembly (1994) approved the “Call to Presbyterians to Recommit to Work and Pray for a Just and Compassionate U.S. Immigration Policy” adding: “mindful that myths are strong and form the basis of much of the current

immigration debate, we call upon the church to seek to learn more about the basic differences between refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and undocumented persons. We... support efforts to advocate for more federal resources to return to those communities and states most impacted by immigration recognizing that, although immigration as a whole is a benefit to the nation, there are short-term costs that should be borne more equitably” (PC(USA), 1994).

The 211th General Assembly (1999) approved a resolution on the “Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors.” The resolution pointed out grave issues raised by new immigration laws (1996) and other policies, such as the sweeping welfare reform in 1995. Among its recommendations were “to educate and advocate in partnership with religious, business, community, and law enforcement leaders for reform and action by “offering legal assistance to immigrants applying for lawful permanent resident status or other immigration status; focusing law enforcement on the maintenance of community safety and fostering the growth of positive relationships and confidence between law enforcement and immigrant populations; and encouraging all church councils to meet with their state’s Access to Justice Commission (or equivalent) and to encourage their work in honoring principles and values that respect and value immigrants” [Social Witness Policy Compilation].

Recent assembly action on immigration acknowledges the vulnerability of immigrants in the workplace that can tip over into forced labor. Among the recommendations of the 220th General Assembly (2012) in “On Advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” was to urge education and advocating for comprehensive reform, including the following: “Protecting all workers from exploitation, abuse, and affronts to their dignity by enforcing labor and employment laws that provide fair wages, the right to organize and to seek redress for grievances.

Policies on Trafficking and Prostitution

Since the 1970s, both predecessor bodies (PCUS and UPUS) have included studies of human sexuality, including pornography, as noted in the policies on gender justice.

The 1988 PC(USA) study paper, *All the Live Long Day: Women and Work*, addressed forced prostitution and the vulnerability of mail-order brides, among other issues of work.

In 1997, *Resolution on the Plight of Women and Children Forced into International Prostitution*, while not labelling it as trafficking, addressed child trafficking for sexual exploitation as well as women coerced into prostitution under false pretenses. It also examined some factors that contribute to trafficking, and included at its conclusion a brief review of PC(USA) statements regarding sex trafficking.

Resolution on the Military and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women (1998) primarily examined prostitution around military bases. Sex trafficking in Southeast Asia was specifically cited, although no definition of trafficking is given, nor is there any distinction made between sex trafficking and sex work. The paper addressed the international sex trade and some discussion of the factors that may drive a woman into the sex trade. A 1999 report followed on *Prostitution in the U.S.* It addresses prostitution and sex work and its detrimental effects on women in society, but does not address sex trafficking.

In response to the call from the 2008 “Resolution to Expand the Church’s Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking” for the inclusion of human trafficking in ACSWP’s Human Rights Updates, the 2010 Human Rights Update included human trafficking as the subject of one of three surveys. As noted earlier, this report on human trafficking may be considered an extension and expansion of the Human Rights Update approach.

Policy on Child Sex Trafficking

The 217th General Assembly (2006) affirmed *On Condemning International Trafficking In and Sexual Exploitation of Children*, an overture from the Synod of the Northeast. This action was the first of only two General Assembly policy actions to address specifically an aspect of human trafficking. Among its recommendations were proving educational and awareness raising resources about the issue, again urging the ratification by the U.S. Senate of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It affirmed ECPAT-USA’s “Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Commercial Exploitation in Travel and Tourism” and urged continued funding for ECPAT’s work, providing a policy base for partnership between the Trafficking Roundtable and ECPAT.

APPENDIX B

The PC(USA) Trafficking Roundtable and Anti-Trafficking Work Across the Church; Note on Reference Group for this Study

Given greater economies at the denomination’s national level, the Human Trafficking Roundtable has been able to be remarkably effective in bringing the issue to the forefront of the church, raising awareness and educating about modern slavery. It has relied on a partnership model, both in bringing together ministries at the national level, each of whose work touches on the issue in some way, and in partnering with secular agencies whose goals are complementary to the church’s mission. There has been good witness in the collaboration and coordination of many Presbyterian Mission Agency offices, as well as staff from the Office of the General Assembly and staff and volunteers from Presbyterian Women. [Note: at its inception, a member of the leadership team of Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network, PADV—a network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA)—was also on the roundtable].

At the same time, there have been challenges. While each participant’s work touches the issue in particular ways, few members of the roundtable bring specific expertise in human trafficking. Those who do also carry a full portfolio of other, more primary job responsibilities. Changes in staffing and in job assignments have also meant turnover in membership on the roundtable. Working collaboratively on trafficking requires careful planning and follow-through that stretches staff persons already carrying heavy workloads. Hence, while the recommendations are directed to the staff roundtable as the existing responsible agent, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is also asked to review this staff team model in light of the new policy statement and the need for continuity in strategy and implementation.

Anti-Slavery Work in Governing Bodies, Congregations, and Other Groups

In many places across the church, Presbyterians are engaged in work to address modern slavery/trafficking/forced labor. For example, Street Grace, a faith-based organization leading faith communities, organizations, and individual volunteers on a comprehensive path to end Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) in Metro Atlanta and throughout the United States, counts North Avenue Presbyterian Church as a partner. Other work is taking place in partnership with Presbyterian Women.

Several congregations have partnered with the Freedom Network, USA, to provide training opportunities for law enforcement, service providers, and advocates. These trainings, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, meet the critical need for all secular stakeholders in an area to receive the same training. At the same time, the trainings help people of faith to identify and connect with those professionals in their city or town.

By its very nature, the work of several congregations to provide emergency shelter for persons who have been trafficked must remain confidential for the sake of the individuals involved. On the other hand, solidarity work against the exploitation of labor with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers may require as much publicity as possible. The challenge is to help concerned Presbyterians raise awareness, educate, and address trafficking in the most effective way, and to connect with others who seek to live out their faith on similar ways.

The Trafficking Roundtable worked with the persons selected to help develop the comprehensive study requested, who served primarily as a reference group due to cost limitations. The group consisted of the following persons: Kathryn Poethig, professor of global studies, California State University, Monterey Bay, Calif., co-chair and ACSWP representative; the Reverend Ann Hayman, director of the Mary Magdalene Project, ret., Santa Monica, Calif., co-chair; Raj Nadella, professor of New Testament, Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga.; the Reverend Libby Shannon, chaplain, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Fla.; and Martha Bettis Gee, LaGrange, Ky., a former member of the Trafficking Roundtable and retired Child Advocacy staff person, serving as consultant. Louise Davidson, Dublin, Ohio, represented the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, and also brought prior leadership experience from chairing the Peacemaking Program Advisory Committee and being the churchwide vice moderator of Presbyterian Women for justice and peace concerns, including pioneering work on trafficking. The Reverend Karen Peterson-Iyer, a Presbyterian ethicist at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, Calif., submitted articles to the team. Ryan Smith, associate at the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations and convener of the Trafficking Roundtable, provided notable assistance. Staff services were provided by the Reverend Christian Iosso, coordinator of ACSWP.

Endnotes

1. The Accra Confession was the culmination of a prayer and study process organized by the international Reformed movement, though it is technically not a confession adopted by the internal process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/accra-confession-covenant-justice-economy-and-eart/>.
2. For a free download of the Presbyterian Church's policy: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/resolution-just-globalization-justice-ownership-an/>.
3. http://www.americanbar.org/publications/judges_journal/2013/winter/human_rightsbased_approach_to_trafficking_the_work_of_the_united_nations_office_of_the_high_commissioner_for_human_rights.html.
4. For Department of Labor guidance: http://www.dol.gov/whd/FieldBulletins/fab2011_2.htm From an advocacy perspective: <https://fairlaborrecruitment.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/flr-one-pager-revised-sept-5-2012-final.pdf>.
5. For a U.S. example of judicial discretion in the prosecution of prostitution, a New York City court adopts a model similar to drug courts: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/23/nyregion/in-a-queens-court-women-arrested-for-prostitution-are-seen-as-victims.html?emc=edit_ur_20141123&nl=nyregion&nlid=26025810 Note that the court is designated for "trafficking" and works with a high proportion of Asian and Latin American women, some of whom are in debt bondage. The primary alternative to conviction is a six session counseling program with options for other services. Drug courts generally differ in dealing not only with addiction treatment issues but with other alleged illegal activity, such as theft.
6. See National Conference of State Legislatures, Human Trafficking Overview (5/9/2014): <http://www.ncsl.org/research/civild-criminal-justice/human-trafficking-overview.aspx>.
7. See Section 5 of the study. For an example of a government seeking to make amends for adoption abuses, see: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/forced-adoption-practices>.
8. See Section 5 of the study; this is not to discourage deeply gracious gifts of organs or tissue that match the needs of persons in extremis. For some US legislative issues, see: <https://www.change.org/p/u-s-house-of-representatives-help-sotn-convince-congress-to-save-lives-and-money-by-amending-the-national-organ-transplant-act-to-remove-the-financial-disincentives-that-hinder-living-donation>.
9. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Report 2014, ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labor: Research and Methodology. The ILO says forced labor generates annual profits of US\$ 150 billion, May 2014 http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang--en/index.htm.
10. Global population was 6 billion at the time of publication of Kevin Bales' *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*, University of California Press, 2004, p.12.
11. PC(USA), *Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership and Responsibility*, 47.
12. Gen. 1:26–28, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989. Print.
13. The Brief Statement of Faith, PC(USA) Mission Agency, Presbyterian 101, <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/brief-statement-faith/>.

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

14. Youngblood, R.F. "Peace," in Bromily, G. (ed.) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Rev. Ed. Vol. 3. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1986, p. 732.
15. Bruce Metzger and Roland Murphy (eds.), *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1994).
16. The Brief Statement of Faith, PC(USA) Mission Agency, Presbyterian 101, <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/brief-statement-faith/>.
17. Nadella, Raj *Dialogue Not Dogma: Many Voices in the Gospel of Luke* (London/NY: T&T Clark, 2011), pp. 103ff Dr. Nadella also served as a member of the study team.
18. Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People*, p. 14.
19. International Labor Organization Convention No. 29: <https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Presentation-Plant.pdf>
20. Gee, Martha Bettis and Ryan D Smith. "Moral Imperatives: Faith-Based Approaches to Human Trafficking," in *The Changing World Religion Map; Sacred Spaces, Identities, Practices and Politics*. Stanley D. Brunn, ed. Springer, 2015, 3623.
21. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/SlaveryConvention.aspx>.
22. *ILO Data Initiative on Modern Slavery: Better data for better policies*. Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour, April 2015. For a good discussion of human trafficking, forced labor, and economics that introduces many of the key thinkers drawn upon in this report, see this summary of a roundtable discussion at MIT: http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Forced_Labor.pdf.
23. Zimmerman, Y.C. *Christianity and human trafficking* 2011:570. Retrieved September 25, 2012, at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2011.00309.x/abstract/>.
24. Doezema, 2000; Irwin, 1996; Roberts, 1993, as cited in Zimmerman, 2011: 571.
25. "Why definitions matter," by Beate Andrees, at http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/comment-analysis/WCMS_234854/lang.
26. Roger Plant, longtime chief of the ILO's Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labor, emphasizes a pragmatic approach to the questions of how the concepts of modern slavery, forced labor, institutions and practices similar to slavery and human trafficking relate and how they should be translated into domestic law. He argues that rather than seeking an exact consensus over definitions, the focus should be on identifying the most appropriate ways to respond, taking into account the differences. See page 4 of this talk: http://oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/statement/wcms_096992.pdf.
27. Freedom Network (USA) uses this definition in trainings for FBI, law enforcement, and social service agencies doing anti-trafficking work: ". . . the recruitment, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining, by any means, any person for forced labor, slavery or servitude in any industry or site such as construction, prostitution, manufacturing, begging, domestic service or marriage."
28. *2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report*, 13.
29. *Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal and Corporate Supply Chains*. Verite, 2015, 8–9.
30. *Ibid.*, 10.
31. *ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labor: Research and Methodology*. International Labour Office (ILO) Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour, 2012.
32. The methodology used by the ILO is the capture/recapture method, in which the idea is to sample cases of forced labour from the universe of all reported cases of forced labour and then to resample the same universe, so as to find the fraction of cases in the second sample that was also identified in the first sample. For more information, see section 4.3 of the ILO's Global Estimate report.
33. Although considered within the broader trafficking definitions and part of a comprehensive understanding, this report addresses forced marriage, illegal adoption and organ trafficking in a limited way; none are "forced labor," our primary focus, though forced marriage is on the spectrum of women's labor and may bring to mind "mail-order brides" and the gender inequalities in that market.
34. http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58005.html.
35. ILO Convention 182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) *Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Entry into force: 19 Nov 2000)*.
36. http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_child_labour.html.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Urban Institute, *Understanding the Organization, Operation and Victimization Process of labor trafficking in the United States*, 2014 <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/413249-Understanding-the-Organization-Operation-and-Victimization-Process-of-Labor-Trafficking-in-the-United-States.PDF> Because this is a 300 page, multi-researcher study done in cooperation with Northwestern University, there is also a shorter summary publication, "Hidden in Plain Sight:" <http://apps.urban.org/features/us-labor-trafficking/>.
39. ILO Convention 182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) *Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Entry into force: 19 Nov 2000)*.

40. Foreign embassy officials found with underpaid household workers sometimes argue that traditional customs allow this mistreatment, but international law rejects caste-based practices.
41. Some instances of modern slavery were uncovered in fairs and carnivals, nursing homes, strip clubs, and massage parlors.
42. Urban Institute, op. cit., 198.
43. Freedom Network USA “Child Trafficking for Labor in the United States, updated April 2015.
44. Continuing Presence is authorized under provisions of section 107(c)(3) of the TVPA, which has since been reauthorized, and is codified at 22 U.S.C. § 7105(c)(3). *Continued Presence Temporary Immigration Status for Victims of Human Trafficking*.
45. For the positions described in this paragraph: Weitzer, R. (2007). *The social construction of sex trafficking: Ideology and institutionalization of a moral crusade*. Politics and Society. Sage Publications. <http://pas.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/35/3/447>.
46. Peterson-Iyer, Karen. “Prostitution: A Feminist Ethical Analysis,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. 14:9 (Fall 1998).
47. Rachel Moran, *Paid For: My Journey Through Prostitution*, (Norton: New York, 2013), p. 175.
48. As an example, Martha Bettis Gee, then of the PCUSA Child Advocacy office, heard this from members of two anti-trafficking task forces at an Amber Alert Conference with a focus on child sex trafficking (Salt Lake City, Utah conference).
49. Weitzer, R. op. cit., p. 455.
50. See <http://cameronhouse.org/about-us/history/>.
51. Zimmerman, *Other Dreams of Freedom*, p. 28. As cited in Peterson-Iyer, op. cit., p. 12].
52. The Appendices to this report refer to studies of prostitution, both in the US and internationally. The General Assembly has also debated more holistic studies of sexuality, though a disproportionate amount of attention has been given to homosexuality in recent years.
53. Peterson-Iyer, Karen, *From Rescue to Solidarity: A Feminist Christian Response to Human Sex Trafficking*.” Paper presented to the Society of Christian Ethics, Chicago, January 2014, p. 25.
54. Neil Howard and Mumtaz Lalani, “Introduction, The Politics of Human Trafficking,” *St. Anthony’s International Review* 4, no 1, (April 2008): 5.
55. Janie A. Chuang, “Giving as Governance? Philanthrocapitalism and Modern-Day Slavery Abolitionism” *UCLA Law Review* 62 (2015): 1516.
56. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime art. 3, Nov. 15, 2000, 2237 U.N.T.S. 319 [hereinafter U.N. Trafficking Protocol].
57. Howard and Lalani, “Politics of Human Trafficking,” 5.
58. Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). Pub. L. 106-386, 106th Cong., October 28, 2000. www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-106publ386/pdf/.
59. Yvonne C. Zimmerman, “Christianity and Human Trafficking,” *Religion Compass* 5 (2011): 572. See also Elizabeth Bernstein, “Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns,” *Signs* 36 (2010): 45–71; Elizabeth Bernstein and Janet R. Jakobsen, “Sex, Secularism and Religious Influence in US Politics,” *Third World Quarterly* 31 (2010): 1027–28.
60. Ibid.
61. Janie Chuang, “Giving as Governance? Philanthrocapitalism and Modern-Day Slavery Abolitionism,” *UCLA Law Review* 62 (2015): 1523.
62. Ibid, 1524.
63. Ann Jordan, “Forced Labor, Debt Bondage, and Human Trafficking: From Conceptual Confusion to Targeted Solutions,” Program on Human Trafficking and Forced Labor, Issue Paper 2, February 2011.
64. A resource list on trafficking assembled by Rev. Noelle Damico, plus adult discussion aids: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8AMHn2zxY6oUG56cWxFZERoZzQ/edit?usp=sharing>.
Keynote presentation by Damico to the Presbytery of Mid-South, Memphis: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8AMHn2zxY6oWHVkemtBUIVReUU/edit?usp=sharing>.
Memphis Keynote Slides: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8AMHn2zxY6obC11YVpYd2xxLW8/edit?usp=sharing>.
10 Commandments for Faith-Based Organizations working against Human Trafficking Slides: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8AMHn2zxY6obnVDDFNHR1ZRRZA/edit?usp=sharing>.
65. Bernstein, “Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism” 61.
66. Ibid.
67. Letitia M. Campbell and Yvonne C. Zimmerman, “Christian Ethics and Human Trafficking Activism: Progressive Christianity and Social Critique,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 34, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014,) 145–72.
68. Gloria Albrecht, *Hitting Home: Feminist Ethics, Women’s Work and the Betrayal of “Family Values”* (New York: Continuum Press, 2002), 13.

69. Campbell and Zimmerman, "Christian Ethics and Human Trafficking," 158.
70. Ibid, 63–64.
71. Chuang, "Giving as Governance?" 1518.
72. Ibid 1529, citing Robin Rogers, "Why Philanthro-Policymaking Matters," *Society* 38 no. 5 (2011): 376. See also Kavita N. Ramdas, "Philanthrocapitalism: Reflections on Politics and Policy Making," *Society* 38, no. 5 (2011), 393–95.
73. Lauren A. McCarthy, Human Trafficking and the New Slavery, *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, Vol. 10:221–42.
74. Interpol, Types of Trafficking <http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Trafficking-in-human-beings/Types-of-human-trafficking>.
75. U.S. State Department, "Trafficking in Persons Report," July 2015. Print.
76. Julia O'Connell Davidson, Guest Editorial, "Trafficking, Modern Slavery, and the Human Security Agenda," *Human Security Journal* no. 6, (Spring 2008): 12.
77. Jordan, "Slavery, forced labor, debt bondage, and human trafficking", 2.
78. Ibid.
79. International Labour Organization (ILO), *Forced Labour Convention, C29*, 28 June 1930, C29, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ddb621f2a.html>.
80. ILO Convention No. 29, art. 2.2.
81. Freedom Network USA "Child Trafficking for Labor in the United States," updated April 2015.
82. O'Connell Davidson, "Trafficking, Modern Slavery, and the Human Security Agenda," 12.
83. Robert Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 16.
84. Christien van den Anker, "Making Human Rights Accessible: The Role of Governments in Trafficking and Migrant Labor Exploitation," in *From Human Trafficking to Human Rights: Reframing Contemporary Slavery*, Eds Alison Brysk and Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 161.
85. James Gray Pope, "A Free Labor Approach to Human Trafficking" *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 158, (2010): 1849-1875, see also Rutgers School of Law-Newark Research Paper No. 089.
86. Dina Haynes, "Used, Abused, Arrested and Deported: Extending Immigration Benefits to Protect the Victims of Trafficking and to Secure the Prosecution of Traffickers," *Human Rights Quarterly* 26, no.2, (2004): 239. Janie Chuang, "Beyond a Snapshot: Preventing Human Trafficking in the Global Economy," *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 13, no. 1, (2006): 138.
87. U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2014.
88. Human trafficking and the "new slavery": Definitions, enforcement, understanding, Journalist's Resources, Accessed January 6, 2016, <http://journalistsresource.org/studies/international/human-rights/human-trafficking-new-slavery-problems-definitions-enforcement-understanding#sthash.4KDuOkBb.dpuf>.
89. UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, 20 May 2002, E/2002/68/Add.1, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f1fc60f4.html>.
90. Freedom Network, USA, A Rights-Based Approach to Combatting Human Trafficking, Accessed January 6, 2016 <http://freedomnetworkusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Freedom-Network-A-Rights-Based-Approach-September-2010.pdf>.
91. Pope, James Gray, "A Free Labor Approach to Human Trafficking."
92. We present two contrasting cases for revision. From a farmworker protection perspective: <https://www.farmworkerjustice.org/sites/default/files/documents/7.2.a.6%20No%20Way%20To%20Treat%20A%20Guest%20H-2A%20Report.pdf> For an extensive discussion of H2-B visa issues from a critical standpoint: <http://www.cis.org/h-2b-guestworkers>.
93. The results of decriminalization generally (Germany, Australia, New Zealand) and of decriminalizing only prostitution itself (Sweden) are much debated, although Sweden's experience was seen as enough of an improvement for Norway and Iceland to follow, hence the "Nordic" category. For a summary of impacts: <http://mic.com/articles/112814/here-s-what-s-happened-in-sweden-16-years-since-decriminalizing-prostitution#r2lgNxyIG> Not all anti-trafficking organizations support decriminalizing "sex work," but a significant number do, as do organizations of women involved in that labor. In the US, Rhode Island effectively decriminalized indoor prostitution from 2003-09; a study of reduced rape and sexually-transmitted diseases is summarized here: <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/decriminalizing-prostitution-linked-to-fewer-stds-and-rapes> For a paper summarizing international decriminalization experience done for New Zealand in 2007, see: <http://www.procon.org/sourcefiles/newzealandreport.pdf>.
94. The persistence of prostitution raises questions about the values of compassion (appeals to Jesus' forgiveness of adultery in John 8), consistent principles (the influence of absolute standards, prohibition), and realism about temptation (provide alternatives, reduce harm). Just as prostitution has existed throughout history, so public morals, religious influences, and economic conditions have shaped the extent and rationales for its practice. Most Christians today take pride in the increasing equality of women and the influence of love-based, monogamous marriage as a contributor to that more equal valuation, slow as this progress toward mutuality has been. Will even partial decriminalization of prostitution, perhaps combined with other forces commercializing sexuality, contribute to a regres-

sion to greater inequality, less healthy relations between men and women, and less tolerance of those who do not fit traditional “binary” expectations? This is some background for the report’s caution.

95. See Amnesty International’s posted position: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/policy-on-state-obligations-to-respect-protect-and-fulfil-the-human-rights-of-sex-workers/>.
96. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/29/opinion/buying-sex-should-not-be-legal.html?_r=0.
97. The earlier Peterson-Iyer article, Prostitution: An Ethical Analysis, outlines this argument more fully.
98. “Freedom Network Statement in Support of Amnesty International Vote”, Freedom Network USA.
99. Op. cit. at 3.
100. Broughton, G. M. (2012). *Prosecuting innocence: An analysis of statutory efforts to stop the justice system’s re-victimization of exploited youth in America’s sex trade*. National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse Update, 23(8). http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/Update%20Vol23_No8.pdf.
101. Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2015). Child welfare and human trafficking. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/trafficking.pdf>.
102. <http://www.ecpatusa.org/2015/10/14/ecpat-usa-releases-first-ever-guide-to-states-to-stop/>.
103. “Homelessness, Survival Sex and Human Trafficking: As Experienced by the Youth of Covenant House New York”, Covenant House, May 2013.
104. <http://freedomnetworkusa.org/fn-member-org-safe-horizon-contributes-huff-post/>.
105. *And Boys Too*: An ECPAT-USA discussion paper about the lack of recognition of the commercial sexual exploitation of boys in the United States.
106. See the State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, 2010.
107. Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Aspects of the Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, at [21] U.N. Doc. A/HRC/4/23 (January 24, 2007) (prepared by Sigma Huda).
108. *Child Trafficking in East and South-East Asia: Reversing the Trend* (2009, 84)].
109. *Global Report on the Trafficking of Persons* (2012, 12)].
110. Ibid.
111. Just Globalization, op. cit. at 2.

Item 11-22

[The assembly approved Item 11-22 with amendment. See pp. 46, 57.]

Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team, recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the revisions to the Churchwide Antiracism Policy and approve the following recommendations:

1. Direct the Stated Clerk to challenge the church through a direct communication to do a personal self-examination of its [participation] [implicit bias] in structures that support and maintain racism regardless of the good intentions of individual Presbyterians.

2. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to make the revised policy and accompanying study guides available to congregations for study and discussion.

3. Urge mid councils to provide an annual one-day event dedicated to [implicit bias and] antiracism, similar to sexual harassment, abuse prevention, and officer trainings.

4. Direct the Office of Mid Council Ministries to identify best practices for antiracism or cultural humility trainings for committees on ministry and committees on preparation for ministry (or their local equivalents) and disseminate resources.

5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Communications to collect and disseminate stories of congregations and mid councils and other organizations dismantling racism.

6. **Direct the national church agencies to jointly formulate a communications plan to share [implicit bias and] antiracism resources, and create an electronic campaign to send information on [implicit bias and] antiracism resources and trainings to mid councils, congregations, and Presbyterian-affiliated institutions.**
7. **Encourage existing leadership development initiatives of the six agencies to include antiracism training.**
8. **Commend the principles and objectives of the Report on Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and encourage the agencies to adhere to the employment practices and hiring objectives sought by the Climate for Change report.**
9. **Commend the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns for its ongoing commitment to holding up antiracism to the church and holding us accountable for our deficiencies.**
10. **Urge the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities to encourage its member institutions to provide regular [implicit bias and] antiracism trainings for students, faculty, and staff, to integrate racially and culturally diverse voices in the curriculum, and to revisit hiring policies to ensure the faculty and staff are racially diverse.**
11. **Urge the Committee on Theological Education to encourage its affiliated seminaries to provide regular [implicit bias and] antiracism trainings for students, faculty, and staff, to integrate racially and culturally diverse voices in the curriculum, and to revisit hiring policies to ensure the faculty and staff are racially diverse.**
12. **Encourage congregations to offer at least one annual adult education series on an article or book written by a person of color (suggestions are in the accompanying study guide).**
13. **Commend the various mission program areas that made antiracism a consistent part of their programming and encourage them to continue their efforts as a model to the church.**

FACING RACISM: A VISION OF THE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

The Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team began its work by carefully reviewing the 1999 antiracism policy. While some of its references are dated, it is lamentably current in its content and analysis, as the realities of racism in the United States have not improved significantly since 1999. However, in the intervening years, there has been opportunity to observe what was and was not effective in the policy statement and recommendations. The team agreed that the most useful form of updating and revising the policy itself would be to make the ideas more accessible to the whole church. A short vision statement, in simple and compelling language, conserves the analysis and commitment of this policy (see VISION STATEMENT below). This vision statement can be used alone when brevity and clarity are needed, yet it also summarizes, introduces, and invites readers into the policy.

The team also aspired to boldness. This is not a time for timidity. The current struggles over racial justice in the United States mark a kairos moment. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long held strong convictions regarding the sinfulness of racism and the need to struggle against it. Speaking our own convictions now, with clarity and power, could make a tangible difference in the current struggle. Furthermore, it is required of us, as the church is called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Neglecting to speak powerfully in this moment would also be regrettable.

In keeping with the desire to make this policy accessible to the whole church, the team created a series of six study guides. Each guide is appropriate for an hour-long conversation among adults or teens. Together, they provide a pedagogical tool for empowering church communities to have important conversations about race and racism in relation to Christian faith.

The study guides are based on topics and concepts covered in the policy. They are also integral to language and ideas from the new vision statement. The topics of the six guides are: Biblical Imperatives to Antiracism, Envisioning a New Way of Life Together, PC(USA) and Racial Reconciliation, Racism 101, Enduring Legacy of Racism in the U.S., and Responding as a Community of Faith. This training tool includes a list of antiracism resources for congregations or presbyteries desiring further information. The study guides are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice> (Presbyterian Mission Agency's Racial Justice web site).

Finally, the team has developed new policy recommendations. The PC(USA) has undergone many changes in the past sixteen years. New strategies are needed to be faithful to our antiracist commitments in new circumstances. Therefore, the team puts forth a number of recommendations to put our theological convictions into practice in the denomination as a whole.

VISION STATEMENT

The Bible insistently reveals that God loves diversity and justice. This is seen in the wide variety of creation in which God delights. It is heard in the words of the prophets, who reject oppression and commend justice as true worship. It is embodied in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who resists the power of empire and values all persons, regardless of status, as children of God. Jesus gathered a community of people around him that crossed over every social and cultural boundary. Those who had been set apart were brought together: poor and rich, male and female, gentile and Jew, centurion and tax collector, Canaanite, Galilean, and Syrophenician. Jesus called this community together in anticipation of, and participation in, the coming of the new creation.

Presbyterian theologian Letty Russell says that in Jesus we see what God intends for all humanity. The compassion, hospitality, justice, and love of others that we see in Jesus indicate what God wills for us. Russell says that Jesus is “a memory of the future” (Russell, 1979, 157). While redemption and salvation are the work of God, we are invited to participate in moving toward this eschatological vision of a new creation. As our Brief Statement of Faith proclaims, “In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’” (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4, Lines 72–76). We are blessed to be drawn into the very movement of God. Therefore, discipleship requires our efforts to act in accordance with God’s love of justice and diversity.

Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is a form of idolatry that elevates human-made hierarchies of value over divinely-given free grace. Through colonization and slavery, the United States of America helped to create and embrace a system of valuing and devaluing people based on skin color and ethnic identity. The name for this system is white supremacy. This system deliberately subjugated groups of people for the purpose of material, political, and social advantage. Racism is the continuing legacy of white supremacy. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation.

Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Since the invasion of the Americas by Europeans, indigenous peoples have borne the brutal consequences of white supremacy. Racism against Native Americans has led to lower health, income, and education indicators, as well as higher rates of suicide and other forms of violence. Although they are the most legislated racial group in the U.S., Native Americans are often rendered invisible in national conversations about race, erasing their struggles, perseverance, and contributions.

Anti-black racism has been a structural component of the United States from the beginning. The Constitution defined an African American as three-fifths of a person, denying their full humanity. The economic foundations of the United States were built on slave labor. The legal system of the United States has consistently perpetuated the subjugation of African Americans throughout the history of the nation.

Hispanics/Latinos-as have been a vital part of the fabric of the United States, particularly since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, when a large part of Mexico became what is now the southwestern United States and when the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico in 1898. Yet Hispanics/Latinos-as are often presumed to be undocumented and difficult to assimilate.

Asian Pacific Americans experience racism as perpetual foreigners, whether they and their ancestors have been in the United States for seven generations or one generation. Vastly different Asian American populations, such as Chinese Americans and Cambodian Americans, are grouped together, erasing cultural differences and unique contributions. Immigrants from all over the world continue to experience oppression, exploitation, and inequality due to racism in America. Furthermore, a persistent focus on race as a black-white binary has been used as a tool of white supremacy to prevent coalition-building among different groups. For example, the representation of Asian Americans as model minorities has relegated them to a “wedge” position between white and black, in service of white supremacy.

While recognizing that racism victimizes many different racial ethnic groups, we acknowledge its unique impact on the African American community. Given the particular forms that anti-black racism has taken in the United States of America both historically (including slavery and Jim Crow) and today (including mass incarceration, disproportionate policing, economic inequality, and continuing acts of racially oriented violence and hate), we state clearly: GOD LOVES BLACKNESS. Too many have denied this basic truth for too long. Our choice to align ourselves with love and not hate requires both a rejection of racism and a positive proclamation that God delights in black lives.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we stand against racism in all its myriad forms. As Presbyterians, we have specific resources in our tradition that can be useful in turning away from racism and towards the diversity and justice that God desires. In particular, we have received wisdom regarding sin, confession, and repentance.

Reformed theology offers a nuanced understanding of sin. Calvin did not understand sin to be simply an individual belief, action, or moral failing (Calvin, 1960). Rather, he viewed sin as the corporate state of all humanity. It is an infection that taints each of us and all of us. No part of us—not our perception, intelligence, nor conscience—is unclouded by sin. This

does not mean that human beings are awful. Rather, it means that we must have humility about our own righteousness, and that we must cling to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Nineteenth century theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher reiterates the corporate and communal nature of sin. He writes that sin is “in each the work of all and in all the work of each” (Schleiermacher, 288). He uses the terms “original sin” and “actual sin” to explain. The sinful actions and beliefs of each person (actual sin) contribute to communal ways of being that are in opposition to God (original sin). As people are born and raised in the context of original sin, they begin to commit actual sin, and the cycle continues. These old-fashioned terms can be helpful in understanding contemporary problems, including racism. Bigoted beliefs, hate crimes, prejudice, and intentional discrimination are all actual sin. They stem from, and contribute to, the original sin of systemic racism that permeates our culture and society. The actual sins of past generations—such as slavery, the Indian Removal Act, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the colonization of Hawaii and Guam, the Immigration Act of 1924, and so on—become the original sin in which we live.

This is manifested in severe inequality in education, wealth, income, and opportunity. For example, consider a white man returning from Army service in 1945. The G.I. Bill offered him college tuition and a low-interest mortgage, potentially on land taken from Native Americans by force or coercion. A black man returning from an equal length of Army service did not receive the same benefits due to racism in the administration of the G.I. Bill and widespread discrimination in housing. In 2015, the white man’s descendants have the benefits of inherited wealth (home equity) and increased education, while the black man’s grandchildren do not. No one today needs to commit an actual sin for this inequality to continue. Original sin does not need our intentional consent to thrive. Silence and inaction are enough.

This nuanced concept of sin can be particularly useful in understanding how people of goodwill who do not harbor prejudice or intend bigotry are still participants in original sin. White people in the United States of America continue collectively to reap the benefits of white supremacy, even when they individually believe in the equality of all people. Our theological heritage regarding sin makes it possible for Presbyterians to acknowledge the complex realities of racism instead of moving to defend an illusion of individual innocence.

The second valuable resource from our tradition is the importance of confession and repentance. Acknowledging our sinfulness ought not to produce self-hatred or paralyzing guilt. Rather, the appropriate response is to confess our sin before God and one another, confident in the grace and love of God. The grace that enables us to confess also empowers us to repent, that is, to turn and walk the other way, towards the eschatological vision of God’s new creation. By grace we are forgiven, and we respond to this grace with gratitude, humility, and renewed zeal for the Gospel.

Finally, as Presbyterians we know something about work. While aspects of the Protestant work ethic may be problematic, to the degree that it signifies our determination, persistence, and stubborn strength, we embrace it in this regard: we commit ourselves to DO THE WORK of countering racism in our witness to the Gospel. In our affirmation that God loves difference, we will honor diversity as a good in which God delights. In our conviction that God desires justice, we will learn from others to broaden our understanding of equality. In our humility as sinful people, we will listen openly to diverse voices regarding how racism functions in our society. In our gratitude for God’s grace, we will turn again and again towards the vision of whole community found in the Word of God. In our joyous response to God’s love, we will love one another.

References

- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, edited by John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1960.
- The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part 1: *Book of Confessions*. Louisville, Ky.: The Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2014.
- Russell, Letty M. *The Future of Partnership*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1979.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*, edited by H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, year unknown.

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

God’s Purpose for Us: The Intercultural Community

The Christian response to the contemporary problem of racism must be developed in light of a clear biblical and theological understanding of what it means to be human. The Reformed perspective on the meaning of humanness is informed by John Calvin’s assertion that proper knowledge of ourselves as humans is achievable only through a knowledge of God and God’s will for human community.¹ Calvin’s reading of the biblical events of Genesis 1 and 2 provides demonstrable evidence that God, at creation, endowed humans with qualities and characteristics that originate from God’s own divine being: imagination, intellectual capacity, spirit, emotions, a will with which to engage in acts of deliberation and decision-making, and a moral conscience with which to discern or distinguish between right and wrong and good and evil.

Calvin used the notion of the image of God to capture the essence of the biblical understanding of what it means to be human: human beings were made by God, in the image of God. For the Reformers, this understanding serves not only to

highlight God's positive estimation of humanity, but also to establish God's purpose for human community. As beings who bear the indelible stamp of God's nature, humans are to be accorded special, sacred status in the creation as God's crowning achievement. Thus, in Scripture God is portrayed as one who recognizes the value and worth of human life, and affirms the inherent dignity of human beings.²

Understanding the image of God is crucial. God's original purpose for human community is a basis for making important assertions about human relationships. In consonance with God's perspective, humans must appreciate the sacredness and sanctity of all human life; establish relationships based on the rule of love, respect, and dignity; assume moral responsibility for nurturing the bonds of mutual affection; render supportive aid to those in need; avoid hurtful attitudes and harmful actions; and make justice the basis of one's treatment of others.³ Thus, Calvin and other Reformers established a critical linkage between the image of God in humans and the divine mandate to make justice, love, and peace the fundamental basis of human relationships. The biblical narrative offers incontestable proof that God not only requires and expects love, justice, and peace to guide human relationships, it also demonstrates that God acts decisively in history to establish human community based on these moral precepts. In the Old Testament, God's deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt is illustrative of the importance God places on justice in human community. God works to establish justice and peace in community through laws that establish right relationships in the human family.⁴ God's restorative activity in the exodus is followed by the giving of covenantal law, which is aimed at establishing the rule of love and justice in the community. The essence of law is commitment to a covenantal relationship that establishes the proper relationship with God, and that derivatively establishes right relationships between and among humans. The covenant was established as a bond of fidelity between God and God's people; and as such involves moral responsibility on the part of corporate society and its individual members to deal fairly with one another; and provide for the basic needs of all as an expression of faithfulness to God.⁵ When relationships in the community wander off the path of love and justice, God sends prophets to point out the fracturing elements in the community, announces divine judgment, calls the people back to a proper sense of God, and pleads for a return to right relationality.⁶

The New Testament embraces and expands the viewpoint of God's commitment to love and justice. The divine reinforcement of moral law undergirding right relationships is proclaimed and witnessed through the person, work, and gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus stands firmly in the tradition of Amos, Isaiah, and Hosea when he chastises those who neglect the weightier matters of justice and mercy, and when he announces that nations will be judged by the way they treat those who are less fortunate. Jesus' explanation of the essence of the law as covenantal integrity between neighbors who express relationships marked by love and justice reveals that love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. In Jesus' discussion of the kingdom of God and in his injunctions in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus unequivocally proclaims that God's will for the human community is to live as a family of mutually supportive, caring siblings (Mt. 5:1–12, NRSV).

The early church of the New Testament further advances the notion of Divine commitment to justice in its explication of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In Acts the workings of the Holy Spirit to create community among the faithful reveal the celebration of diversity and inclusiveness as God's purpose for the human family as mediated through the church. Moreover, it is the Holy Spirit that empowers and inspires Peter's proclamation of the priesthood of all believers—accentuating the egalitarian nature of the Christian community and its implications for all creation (Acts 2; 1 Pet. 2:9–10, NRSV).

Martin Luther King Jr.'s understanding of "The Beloved Community" provides an example of an antiracism vision that is rooted in the biblical vision of God's will for human relationships. This vision is grounded in our common origin as children of God from which we derive our inalienable worth, dignity, and sanctity. The vision affirms that every person's right to be free, to be treated as persons not things, and to be valued as full members of the human community are gifts from God. The solidarity of the human family and the social character of all human life indicate that no person can develop fully apart from interaction with others. All persons are mutually linked and meant to live and grow in relationship with each other as we share a common destiny. Therefore, differences of ethnicity and culture are to be viewed as God-given gifts to be celebrated, rather than obstacles to be overcome.⁷ The Beloved Community or more contemporarily, the Intercultural Community, symbolizes that network of human relationships where diversity is embraced; where the content of one's character is more important than skin color; where love, justice, and peace emerge as the preeminent norms for all relationships; and where institutional power is humanized by moral values so that it serves the interest of justice.⁸

What We Are: The Broken Community

The church affirms the pervasive, intransigent, and virulent nature of sin as an operative reality. The biblical narrative of the Fall in Genesis illuminates the radical consequences of human disobedience relative to God's mandate for relationships in the created order.⁹ Human action decisively ruptures the covenant established by God with humankind and the whole of creation. The Fall points to the nature and reality of sin. Sin is understood as estrangement or separation from God. This estranged state results in the defacement of the image of God in humanity. Consequently, the capacity to properly value ourselves and others as persons of worth and dignity is corrupted. The results of sin are empirically verifiable in human relationships.¹⁰

Hence, the capacity of the human will, intellect, and emotions to build and maintain a community of loving, just, and peaceable relationships is also greatly diminished. While we each bear the indelible stamp of God's image, we recognize ourselves as fallen creatures who relate to others personally, socially, and institutionally in ways that deny that image in each other, and thereby violate the sacred bonds of community established by God. Sin and its effects continue to have conse-

quences for relationships in the in the human community. The Reformed Tradition affirms that sin, resulting in distorted relationships and broken covenantal agreements, operates in corporate structures as well as interpersonal relationships.¹¹ The empirical validation of the broken communal covenant in church and society is subsequently witnessed as racism, personal prejudice, xenophobia, as well as the creation and maintenance of institutional structures that perpetuate racism and other forms of injustice. Further, the misdistribution of economic, social, and political goods essential for survival; discriminatory employment and housing practices; and the persistence of segregated churches represent other concrete, visible manifestations of sinful communal brokenness.

The concept of covenant was especially important to the early Reformers as they worked to reestablish right order and governance in church and society. The Reformers affirmed that the defaced image of God in fallen humanity remained in seed form, capable of being resurrected and restored by God through the redemptive power and presence of Jesus Christ.¹² In light of this, Reformed doctrine throughout history has affirmed that in Jesus Christ and through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, the possibility now exists to establish newly constructed relationships marked by love, justice, and peace through responsible human action in the world.¹³ As a community of faith, it is imperative that the PC(USA) take responsible action against the forces that distort, fracture, and destroy just and right relationships in church and society. One such force is racism.

Challenge to the Church:

What Is God Calling Us to Be and Do?

What is the moral-ethical imperative for the PC(USA)? As a covenant community seeking to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst, is there a word from God that speaks loudly in and to the present sinful conditions of racism and racial violence? Are there grounds for hope that can inform us about what can and ought to be done despite the serious levels of brokenness? While we each bear the indelible stamp of God's image, we recognize ourselves as fallen creatures who relate to others personally, socially, and institutionally in ways that deny that image in experience in both church and society.¹⁴

We are reminded that it is the corporate church that must strain to hear God's word and discern how to respond to individual and institutional judgments and behaviors that operate at cross-purposes with God's will for the human family.¹⁵ The corporate church exists in a covenantal relationship with God: a covenant offered by God, sealed in Jesus Christ and mediated through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our call to a covenantal relationship with God is both descriptive and prescriptive. The call is descriptive in that it defines who we are and whose we are. It is prescriptive in that it informs what we must do. Our call to stand against racism and for justice emerges out of our identity as faithful servants of God. Our identity compels us to oppose the forces of injustice. Antiracism, therefore, is prescriptive for what a faithful community must do in the quest to let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. The church must actively oppose the forces of racism in concrete and strategic ways. Justice cannot be determined or achieved in the abstract. If racism is to be eliminated, it must be defined contextually and concretely so that its personal, institutional expressions and structures can be seen, understood, and countered. An anti-racism church is one whose institutional behavior and commitment are informed by God's covenant to establish justice, love, and peace in relationships, and whose identity is visibly expressed in the context of active, antiracism engagement.

The PC(USA), operating today in a culture of brokenness, must speak clearly about what it means to embrace antiracism as a major part of its corporate identity. A word from the Lord about racism and racial violence may come to us as an entirely new prophetic utterance. It may also be heard anew through a historic voice. The Confession of 1967, forged in the midst of the trauma and tragedy of racial strife in the 1950s and 1960s, is a clear and unequivocal mandate for the church to take decisive action against all forms of individual prejudice, xenophobia, institutional, systematic, and structural racism.¹⁶ The *Kairos Document*, offered in the 1980s, spoke prophetic words of judgment and hope in the context of South African apartheid. It may prove to be relevant to the antiracism agenda of the United States. Indeed, the Year of Jubilee narrative explicated in Old Testament Israel might be heard anew with its themes of messianic deliverance, radical transformation of relationships of wealth and power, debt forgiveness, peace, and nonviolence. It may provide important clues on how to empower the church to covenant together for an uncompromising assault on racism and racial violence.¹⁷

Finally, the confessional standards of the church, *Minutes of the General Assembly*, policy documents, and theological statements may all speak a fresh new word to the church about our responsibility to be corporate resisters of racism and racial violence in church and society.¹⁸

The possibility now exists for the PC(USA), in light of its tradition, heritage, theology, ethics, and spiritual commitment, to become open to self-critical analysis with regard to racism both within its midst and in our society. The PC(USA) can challenge public policy, actions, and structures that promote and perpetuate racism. We can honor the divine will for human relationships by demonstrating a serious commitment to God's covenant of love, justice, and peace in human community and undertake radical transformation of its identity and behavior as it becomes an antiracism church in its thinking, judgments, and actions.

CONTINUING PROBLEM OF RACISM

Dr. W. E. B. DuBois observed that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of race.¹⁹ As we face the dawn of a new century, it is quite apparent that racism will be a continuing legacy. Civil rights are increasingly at risk as hate and intolerance become a part of both public and political discourse. As the nation backs away from the goal of eliminating segregation in public schools, court-ordered desegregation plans are being successfully challenged; and federal courts are dismissing record numbers of cases of racial discrimination.²⁰ Affirmative action, which has been the cornerstone of progress in the past, is under attack nationwide.²¹ An alarming number of churches, primarily African American, have been burned. The number of hate groups has increased; and web sites advocating hate and violence are proliferating on the Internet. Several professional sports teams still use caricatures of Native Americans as mascots. The Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, and Washington Redskins are cases in point. The judiciary, which provided the leverage for dismantling legal segregation in the fifties and sixties, is paradoxically providing the legal mortar that is reinforcing racial injustice as we enter the next century.

Historic Summary

In January 1963, national leaders representing Catholics, Protestants, and Jews met in Chicago and called upon the nation to put an end to racism. Later, the National Council of Churches organized a commission on religion and race and joined the civil rights struggle led by Martin Luther King Jr. and urged its members to do the same. In May 1963, Edler Hawkins persuaded the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America "... to create a Commission on Religion and Race with unusual power to act in behalf of the denomination." He was a consummate church politician and this was his greatest achievement, although one must concede that it could not have been done without the agreement and strong support of Eugene Carson Blake, Ken Neigh, Bill Morrison, and John Coventry Smith, the most powerful men in the church.²² The assembly appropriated \$500,000 for the commission. Renamed the Council on Church and Race, it gave birth to most of the racial justice programs now existing in the PC (USA).²³

Racism is deeply embedded in the life and history of the nation. All people of color have suffered the consequences. From the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, The Chinese Exclusion Act, and the mass imprisonment of Japanese Americans to discrimination against Hispanic Americans runs a common thread of historic oppression. There is also a long history of resistance to oppression by people of color. However, it was black resistance in the 60s that pushed the issue of racism on the agenda of mainline churches. Eventually, the heroic struggle of African Americans, combined with the strong advocacy of mainline churches, brought an end to legal segregation. Mainline churches pursued a vision of eradicating the color line from the church and nation by extending civil rights to all people under the rubric of integration. The fundamental principle that informed the churches' advocacy was the belief that racism was a consequence of personal prejudice and ethnic pride. Therefore, the programmatic thrust of churches focused on changing personal attitudes and overcoming bigotry.

During the 1960s, the National Council of Churches functioned as an organizing center for mainline denominations, especially for their public policy advocacy and, to a significant degree, for activism in support of civil rights marches and protest activities. Mainline churches made significant contribution to the passage of civil-rights legislation in the 1960s, bringing a greater sense of fairness to a broader segment of society. However, the pronouncements of mainline churches on the issue of race have been stronger than their social action. This is due to the difficulty of the struggle and to a lack of understanding of the depth and nature of racism.

The brutal resistance to the civil-rights struggle engendered a new level of awareness among mainline Christians. Many became aware of the depth, source, and pervasiveness of racism. There emerged the realization that racism was deeply rooted in our culture and maintained in patterns of domination. This awareness led to a growing emphasis on brotherhood, sisterhood, reconciliation and equal opportunity.²⁴ The emergence of the Black Power Movement and cogent Black Theologies of Liberation, such as that of James Cone, raised significant questions about the assumptions of mainline churches who claimed readiness to confront racism in church and society.²⁵ The emphasis on nonviolence preached by Martin Luther King Jr., which resonated with the views of mainline churches, was challenged by a black militancy that emphasized liberation, freedom, and justice as values to be achieved by any means necessary. The militant critique of nonviolence was disturbing to mainline churches. Few white people understood the driving force behind it. On the other hand, people of color who were exposed to and experienced the brutality of racism appreciated the practical value of using nonviolence as a way of effecting change; but they also understood that the problem of racism was far more complex and pervasive than whites were willing or able to admit, and, therefore, were open to considering other more militant tactics.

As changing housing patterns led to white flight and re-segregation, questions were raised about the efficacy of integration as a solution to the race problem. Laws were changed and institutions opened to allow the presence and participation of people of color. However, the control and power remained in the hands of white people, demonstrating that integration and racism are quite compatible.²⁶

During the 1970s and 1980s, affirmative action and equal opportunity became central themes of mainline churches in the search for racial justice. Their social policy statements provided support for these ideas. However, there remained a certain level of naiveté about the fundamental character of racism. The 193rd General Assembly (1981) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America said:

In many ways the church's failures have been due to a lack of understanding, or perhaps naiveté, as to the nature and depth of racism. Whereas it was once assumed that racial justice was merely a function of overcoming individual attitudes and bigotry, it is now clear that racism also exists in complex and subtle institutional ways. Despite the well-intentioned and nonracist attitudes of individuals, our religious and social institutions, structures, and systems can and do perpetuate racial injustice.²⁷

Patterns of segregation continue in many aspects of American life.²⁸ Ironically it is a pattern from which churches have not managed to emerge. Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, the time when many churches gather to engage in the sacred act of worship, remains the most segregated hour of the week in our nation.

There is a growing awareness among Presbyterians and others that the problem of racism must be faced. The Moderator of the 208th General Assembly (1996) of the PC(USA), John Buchanan, made racial healing and reconciliation an emphasis. The Moderator of the 209th General Assembly (1997), Patricia Brown, continued this theme with an emphasis on easing racial tensions. In 2012, the Moderator of the 220th General Assembly (2012), Neal Presa, appointed a National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force. Among the issues the task force addressed is the pressing need for language access and culture-specific conversations, including translating PC(USA) documents into Spanish and Korean, and expanding resources into other languages. The Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), Heath Rada, appointed a team to plan a Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity. Among their recommendations is expanding anti-bias and anti-racism trainings throughout the church.

The Clinton Administration emphasized racial reconciliation and appointed a commission to study race relations in the nation. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights recommended that a world conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances be held.²⁹ President Obama has said that organizers of the "Black Lives Matter" social media movement value life and that concerns about policing and profiling in communities of people of color are real and valid.

The PC(USA), and indeed the Christian community, must recommit to the struggle for racial justice. Churches must provide a moral compass for the nation by getting involved in shaping public policies that will move the nation towards justice, peace, and reconciliation.

As we stand on the verge of a new century, racism remains resilient and resurgent. While the social policies and pronouncements of denominations continue to emphasize inclusiveness and justice, these do not translate in the hearts and minds of Christians who participate in the electoral and political process. Christians are passive in the face of attacks on affirmative action and the adoption of regressive social policies at the local, state, and national levels. There is a growing awareness that a new understanding of racism is needed that takes into consideration the centrality of power in the institutionalization and perpetuation of racism. There is also an awareness that the methodologies that brought us to where we are will not take us where we need to go in the next century. If we are to build on past accomplishments, we must do a new analysis of racism within the current context of the nation. This will inform the direction we must take in the next century and provide guidance as to how we might get there.

Understanding Contemporary Racism

A starting point for understanding racism is clarifying the distinction between racism and prejudice, a common and costly point of misunderstanding two distinct phenomena. This will help the church better understand what action steps are necessary to eliminate racism. Prejudice is understood to be judgments made in the absence of due examination and consideration of facts; and these judgments are held even when contradicted by facts. In the absence of a factual basis, prejudices are driven primarily by emotional responses such as fear. When prejudice is based on racial consideration it is race prejudice. However, race prejudice alone is not racism. When prejudice is combined with power it becomes racism. Power is the capacity to command, control, and dominate social reality for the purpose of achieving a desired outcome. Those who control power have the capacity to transform prejudice into racism by establishing and maintaining institutions and structures that embody group biases. Thus, it is the combination of power and prejudice that is so destructive. Racism is, therefore, the marriage of power and prejudice. Simply stated, racial prejudice plus power equals racism. Power transforms prejudice into racism. Racism gives direction to the use of power.

An understanding of racism must include these facts: no one is born a racist; no one is born oppressed. Racism is a consequence of learned values and behaviors. It is possible, therefore, to learn values and behaviors that do not result in racism. Some people benefit from racism while others are victimized by it. As we learn different values, we must unlearn and undo existing racist values and structures. That process is twofold and involves legally dismantling racism as well as rooting racism out of our personal lives and communities. It is a long-term struggle that is achievable through commitment, prayer, and persistence.

With a clearer understanding of the depth and complexity of racism, the church can be empowered to lead the nation beyond the legal process of dismantling racism to the interpersonal process of rooting it out of our personal lives and communities. In the process of engagement the church itself will be transformed as it becomes an effective model and catalyst for change by living out a vision of a church that is truly one in Christ.

Systemic Racism

Racism is nurtured and sustained by systemic power. Power must be understood in social not individual terms. “There are, for example, no solitary racists of consequence. For racism to flourish with the vigor it enjoys in America, there must be an extensive climate of acceptance and participation by large numbers of people who constitute its power base. For all his [or her] ugliness and bombast, the isolated racist is a toothless tiger, for, to be effective, racism must have responsible approval and reliable nurture. The power of racism is the power conceded by those respectable citizens who by their action or inaction communicate the consensus that directs and empowers the overt bigot to act on their behalf.”³⁰

An institution is an organized way of meeting basic needs or social desires such as education, health care, and food distribution. Institutions do not function as isolated entities. They are integrally related and interconnected. A group of related institutions constitutes a system such as an educational, health care, transportation, or economic system. Social power resides in the institutions and systems we create.

Societies establish and structure their common lives by exercising power to create and perpetuate institutions that reflect common values to meet their basic needs as well as determine their goals and aspirations. The power to access and participate in the institutional life of a community is essential to affirming our humanity. Those who control power have the capacity to limit the rights of others to participate. To deny others such rights is to deny their humanity.

Historically, institutions have tended to be preferential to some group or groups in comparison to others.³¹ Racist institutions are not accidents of history. They are created and maintained by intentional human actions.³² For the most part, they serve the needs of those who control power and access. In the context of the United States, racist institutions preserve power and privilege for white society. Rewards are based on group membership, not personal attitude. Consequently, all whites benefit from racism “whether or not they have ever committed a racist act, uttered a racist word, or had a racist thought (as unlikely as that is).”³³ While people of color bear the burden of racism, it is a problem created by white people that diminishes both victims and victimizers, though in radically different ways. This is a painful reality that we must name and claim as people of goodwill before we can heal our communities and nation.

Racism as a Spiritual Problem

Perhaps the most visible achievement of the civil rights movement was that of dismantling the legal apparatus of segregation. Many people of goodwill believed that such an achievement would be the end of racism, although that was not the case. Thus, the question of why racism persists in our society despite sincere efforts to eliminate it remains unanswered. It is clear that we failed to understand the true nature of racism and, in our efforts to dismantle legal segregation, we also failed to see that racism is far more complex than its institutional or systemic expressions. *Sojourners Magazine* suggests that:

Racism is a spiritual issue. Neither its causes nor solutions will be found [solely] through government programs, social ministries, or our own best intentions. ... The forces that perpetuate racism through our society are rooted in spiritual realities that require us to call out to God for spiritual solutions.³⁴

This does not mean that there is no role for government and social programs. However, it does require us to recognize that there is a spiritual dimension to institutional structures that must be taken seriously. Martin Luther King Jr. sought to illuminate this dimension in his distinction between enforceable and unenforceable obligations. Enforceable obligations are regulated by the legal codes of society. Unenforceable demands are beyond the reach of legal codes. Such obligations are expressed in terms of our commitment to an inner spiritual law that is written on the heart: the law of God’s love from which our moral obligations derive.³⁵ The spiritual dimension of racism requires a spiritual solution.

Internalized Oppression

Part of the spiritual dimension of racism is expressed as internalized oppression. Oppressed people inevitably participate in their own oppression. Even as the oppressed struggle against oppression, they must also struggle against the oppressor within. People survive oppression by accommodating themselves to it even as they resist it. What must be done to achieve liberation is opposed by the necessity to accommodate. As Paulo Freire sees it, oppressed people must choose:

between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting and having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and recreate, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account.³⁶

One of the tragic consequences of internalized oppression is that it inhibits the ability to perceive contradictions in personal and social reality. The distinction between what people do to oppress themselves and what others do to oppress them is blurred; it becomes easy to blame others for one’s own problems and woes.³⁷ Overcoming internalized oppression is one of the most critical and challenging spiritual undertakings for oppressed people. Christians of goodwill must understand that it is

as painful for oppressed people to name and claim internalized oppression as it is for oppressors to name and claim racism. While internalized oppression is engendered, nurtured, and reinforced by racism, once established, it can survive on its own.³⁸ Thus, healing will require mutual understanding and support.

Addiction and Privilege

A spiritual dimension of racism that we are just beginning to understand is the degree to which power and privilege becomes addictive. Addiction means to be gripped by a compulsion, a craving, or a dependency that is strong and deeply embedded in the subconscious; and it is difficult to stop doing even though you realize that what you are doing is wrong. Addiction to power and privilege is a problem for oppressors, the most difficult spiritual challenge they will face. It is expressed on two levels: intellectual and emotional. It is possible to know intellectually that racism is morally wrong, but emotionally hang on to the power and privileges that derive from it. This causes oppressors to rationalize and psychologically manipulate the benefits they derive from racism in ways that make the benefits seem to outweigh the negative impact of racism on the oppressed. Denial is one of the more common expressions. Hence, the negative consequences of racism tend not to be perceived by whites and people of color with the same sense of urgency.

Dealing with the addiction to privilege and power will be a difficult spiritual journey for white Christians. Contrary to popular opinion, this addiction is more of a barrier to building a racially diverse community than are racial and cultural differences. Catherine Meeks makes this point in talking about the relationship between blacks and whites in the church:

... The inability of whites and blacks to come together as a unified worshiping community has far less to do with diversity in worship styles than has been accepted in the past. The problem lies in the unwillingness of blacks to be treated as children and whites to share their power.³⁹

Reliance upon God is key to recovery from an addiction to power and privilege. This is why prayer and worship are central to the task of overcoming racism. Hence, Christians must understand both the challenge and the opportunity this presents. The church is the central venue where issues of race can be addressed in ways that lead to healing and reconciliation rather than polarization.

DISMANTLING RACISM

Racism negatively impacts everybody, oppressors and the oppressed. White people are not born racist; nor do they choose to be racists; institutional racism does that for them long before they are old enough to discern right from wrong for themselves. People of color do not choose to be oppressed; institutional racism imposes this on them by predetermined categories of social valuation that narrowly define and limit their prospects in life based on racial differences. Though racism impacts oppressors and the oppressed differently, recognizing the negative impact of racism upon all of us is a common starting point for building mutuality in the struggle to live into a new future.⁴⁰

There is hope despite the persistence and legacy of racism. The truth will make us free if we have the courage to face it. Both oppressors and the oppressed can choose to change their current realities and can be taught to dismantle racism. We must be clear and truthful about the centrality of power in perpetuating and sustaining systemic racism. If we are to build a future with justice for all, and it can be done, both personal intervention and institutional transformation are essential for the mission of the church. The Racial Ethnic Church Growth Strategy Report approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) stated the following:

Given the well-documented racial problems that dominate our culture, it is difficult for us to truly serve the interests of a multicultural society without some form of social intervention. Enhanced efforts to achieve racial ethnic church growth must employ intervention methods such as antiracism training to effect necessary reform of institutional behavior that historically has prevented the church from including people of color. Systemic racism, discrimination, prejudice, disempowerment, and cultural depreciation all serve to inhibit racial ethnic church growth. Racial ethnic church growth is inextricably linked to the struggle for racial justice. Thus, as the church invests resources in racial ethnic church growth strategies, it must also invest in the struggle against racism and other social injustice. To do one without the other is a prescription for failure.⁴¹

Since the impact of racism is pervasive, learning how to dismantle it will be challenging for the church. Antiracism training will play a key role as the church seeks to develop an antiracism identity.⁴² Those trained in antiracism can change the systemic influences that negatively impact people. They can teach future generations how to dismantle systemic racism and build institutions that heal not hurt, that include not exclude.

The Holy Spirit is moving in and among Presbyterians on both a personal and institutional level. We are witnessing a growing commitment among Presbyterians to address the issue of racism. Presbyteries and congregations in increasing numbers are seeking help in dealing with racism. Several synods and presbyteries have established antiracism teams. Some have done initial antiracism training and have teams working. Some are organizing teams and preparing for training. Some are in the initial planning stage. Some congregations are planning introductory antiracism events.

In 1997, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program sponsored two conferences on racism. Approximately 1,500 people attended. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has been confronting racism as an ongoing part of its ministry. Presbyterian Women made combating racism a priority for the 1997–2000 triennium and offered its 300,000 member constituency tools for working with local congregations.⁴³ Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) has offered

workshops and seminars on racism at its conferences. If the church accepts the challenge, and indeed it must, the course of our history will be changed and the jangling discords of this nation will be transformed into a symphony of brotherhood, sisterhood, and freedom for all.

SEVENFOLD STRATEGY

The proposed churchwide strategy is sevenfold and involves: The General Assembly; synods; presbyteries; congregations; educational institutions; related agencies; ecumenical partners.

The task of dismantling racism must be a partnership effort that involves all levels of the church. Since institutions vary in their social reality, it follows that the approach to dismantling racism must be flexible and adaptable to changing situations. Nevertheless, there can and must be continuity in the general approach so that resources can be developed to support antiracism work across the church and in ecumenical relationships.

The process must begin with dialogue in congregations and other venues around the church. For dialogue to be effective, it must begin in the context in which we find ourselves, in all of our brokenness. Therefore, dialogue must be designed for use in places where people ordinarily gather for work and worship. There must be ground rules that preserve the integrity of people engaging in dialogue. The dialogue must move beyond the dynamics of interaction to grapple with and clarify the foundations of the learned behavior of racism and its structural manifestations that have polarized our society. Merely working on issues of prejudice and bigotry without addressing root causes is to miss the point. We must move to where the discussion itself does not result in further polarization. Thus, we must first be honest with ourselves and then with each other. We must name the problem so we can claim it and then change it. Our journey begins with confession, forgiveness, redemption, and then transformation. This kind of engagement will help prevent extraneous conversation that masquerades as dialogue.

While dialogue is a necessary starting point, we must move beyond that to a common assessment of the problem. We must articulate a common vision of what can and ought to be. The shared vision will engender strategies for engagement that result in the transformation of personal lives, institutions, structures, and practices. Dialogue must lead to the identification of measurable goals that can be benchmarks of progress. Once benchmarks are established, the more challenging task of identifying obstacles that stand in the way of realizing the vision can begin. Only then can specific strategies be designed that will help us overcome racism. Finally, the process of dialogue involves returning to the vision and assessing our progress on a regular basis, perhaps annually.

People of goodwill have long recognized that eradicating the sin of racism from church and society is a high priority. It cannot be done without sacrifice. Experience has taught us that people cannot leap from centuries of racial polarization into a new vision. It is a long journey that will require discernment, prayer, and worship based action. Therefore, an antiracism manual that sets forth procedures, models for dialogue, plans for Bible study and worship, methods for visioning, strategizing, and engaging was developed, new modules have been added, and it has been made available to the church. Study guides have also been created and are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice> (Presbyterian Mission Agency's Racial Justice web site).

POINTS OF ENGAGEMENT

The proposed churchwide strategy is multifaceted and involves the General Assembly, mid council, congregations, educational institutions, related agencies, and ecumenical partners.

General Assembly

Training and education is integral to the task of equipping the church to engage in the struggle for racial justice in the next century. To this end the Presbyterian Mission Agency continues to:

- Provide for antiracism and cultural humility training of staff at the Presbyterian Center in accordance with the action of the February 1997 meeting of the General Assembly Council (now the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), which mandated antiracism training for all national staff. This was initially undertaken in partnership with the PC(USA) Foundation, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., and the Board of Pensions. More recently, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board held Cultural Humility training at its September 2015 meeting.

- Recruit, train, and commission a core team of people capable of training teams of facilitators in mid councils.
- Support and work in partnership with presbyteries and synods in their antiracism ministries.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency must also do the following:

- Initiate a forum for visioning, developing, and promoting a supplemental church school curriculum that supports antiracism ministry in congregations. The curriculum supplement should be designed to cover an extended period of time and

involve all grade levels. The adult and young adult curriculum should be designed so that persons completing advanced classes will be prepared for further training as facilitators should they choose to become more engaged in the antiracism ministry of the congregation.

- Design a preschool curriculum so that participants advance to upper levels with age and maturity. This accomplishes two fundamental goals: (a) it counters negative influences and values in the culture by orienting children differently at an early age and provides ongoing support and nurture; and (b) it begins preparing the next generation of leaders who can nurture and sustain the values upon which our vision of the Intercultural Community can be built. A curriculum of this nature will require some field testing and refinement. Pilot projects can be conducted in local congregations situated in a variety of settings both rural and urban.

Synods

- Synods need to play a key role as a coordinating point for regional training events and other activities that can be effectively done on a regional basis.
- Synods need to provide for antiracism training for their staff.
- Synods need to support presbyteries in their antiracism ministries.

Presbyteries

- The *Book of Order*, Section G-3.0103, provides for councils of the church, including presbyteries, to address issues of racism. In partnership with General Assembly agencies, presbyteries need to recruit, train, and commission presbytery-based antiracism teams that will work with congregations in establishing and supporting antiracism programs and ministries.
- Presbyteries need to provide for antiracism training for their staff and committees.

Congregations

The centerpiece of an antiracism ministry is the congregation. This is a place where moral values can be taught and nurtured. It is also a place where families can receive support in nurturing values essential for living in an intercultural society. It is a place where worship and nurture come together in ways that can transform lives and perpetuate values that will change both church and society. Congregations are also strategically placed to effect change in the community by building bridges of communication across racial and cultural lines, as they worship together and learn how to live into a vision of one church in Jesus Christ. Thus, those working with local congregations, including staff, need to be trained in both antiracism work and community organizing.

Educational Institutions

- Seminaries are places where future pastors, Christian educators, and other church leaders are trained for ministry. They are also places for research and development as the church seeks to prepare leaders to respond to God's call to ministry in a complex and changing society. Seminaries need to play a vital role in developing a biblically grounded antiracism theology and ethic that will better prepare ministers and educators for effective leadership in an intercultural and multiracial society.
- Seminaries need to initiate dialogue about developing course offerings that support an antiracism ministry. Provisions can be made for all seminarians to undergo antiracism training as a part of their field experience. Seminary-based training institutes can be places for developing and testing models of antiracism ministry as well as providing continuing education experiences for pastors and lay leaders.
- Colleges and universities need to play a key role in preparing future leaders for antiracism work in both church and society. They should provide educational opportunities for persons disadvantaged by racism. If we are to achieve our goals in racial ethnic church growth, colleges and universities are essential places for educating, training and recruiting future church leaders of all races.

Related Agencies

The PC(USA) works with a variety of agencies. Dialogue can be initiated to explore opportunities for working in partnership on the issue of racism.

Ecumenical Partners

Systemic racism does not persist just because of the action of people of ill will. A contributing factor is the inaction of people of goodwill.⁴⁴ The Formula of Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the PC(USA) presents an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of racial justice work through mutual support, planning, resource development, and coordination. The cooperative work of

churches helped move the nation forward in the sixties and seventies. The struggle against racism in this new era will require churches to work in more coordinated and effective ways. Appropriate staff members of the above denominations have held several meetings. This work must continue with renewed vigor. The goal is to find ways of developing a more unified and coordinated approach to the struggle for racial justice and move toward the development of joint resources and mutually compatible training for antiracism ministry.

FUNDING AND STAFFING

Adequate staffing to support the church's antiracism ministry is essential. As the nation becomes more racially diverse the need for work on race relations will increase significantly. If the church responds to the rising demand for help with anti-racism programs across the denomination, additional staff will be needed. Not only is this necessary for the church's antiracism ministry, it is absolutely essential for the Racial Ethnic Church Growth Strategy, which cannot be achieved without breaking the barriers of racial injustice that have kept the church from including the people of color.⁴⁵ The church cannot achieve its goals in racial ethnic church growth without strengthening its racial ethnic ministry.

A crucial element in implementing any ministry is funding. Funding stability is necessary for the church to sustain an effective antiracism ministry in the next century. One source of funding is the Hawkins Buchanan Fund for Racial Justice. The fund, established by several staff members at the Presbyterian Center and John Buchanan, Moderator of the 208th General Assembly (1996), was designed to provide support for racial justice and antiracism ministries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A Study of The Belhar Confession and Its Accompanying Letter*, Eunice T. McGarrahan, Office of Theology and Worship, PC(USA), <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/belhar-confession-study-guide>.
- Ansell, Amy, *New Right New Racism*, New York: New York University Press, 1997.
- Barkun, Michael, *Religion and the Racist Right*, revised edition, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Batstone, David, Editor, *New Vision for the Americas: Religious Engagement and Social Transformation*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Bjorgo, Tore and Jeffrey Kaplan, eds., *Nation and Race*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998.
- Bardt, Joseph, *Dismantling Racism*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1991.
- Brown, Dee, *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*, New York: Bantam Books, 1970.
- Building an Inclusive, Caring Community through Dialogue*. Produced by Presbyterian Women, Inc., this printed resource takes the group facilitator through the process of creating community through dialogue, step-by-step, PDS #PWR03121.
- Civil Rights Issues Facing Asian Americans in the 1990's*: A Report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, February 1992.
- Confession of Belhar. www.pcusa.org/resource/belhar-confession/.
- Demott, Benjamin, *The Trouble with Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995.
- Derman-Sparks, Louise & Phillips, Carol Brunson, *Teaching/Learning Anti-racism*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes*: Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Gossett, Thomas F., *Race*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Gregory, Steven, and Roger Sanjek, eds., *Race*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996.
- Gunning Francis, Leah, Ferguson and Faith: *Sparkling Leadership and Awakening Community*, Danvers: Chalice Press, 2015.
- Hadjor, Kofi Buenor, *Another America: The Politics of Race and Blame*, Boston: South End Press, 1999.
- Harvey, Jennifer, *Dear White Christians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies. Report of the Women of Color Consultation Task Force To the 218th General Assembly (2008)* www.pcusa.org/resource/hearing-and-singing-new-songs-god-shunning-old-dis/.
- Jencks, Christopher, *Rethinking Social Policy*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Kivel, Paul, *Uprooting Racism*, Gabriola Islands, B.C., New Society Publishers, 1996.
- Lee, Jung Young, *Marginality*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Patterson, Orlando, *The Ordeal of Integration*, Washington, D.C.: Civitas, 1997.
- Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation*, Chapter 8 on Race and the Rights of Minorities in America, access at www.pcusa.org/acswp.
- Race in a Post-Obama America: The Church Responds*. Multi-author. Westminster John Knox Press, forthcoming 2016.

The Racism Study Pack, The Thoughtful Christian, the studies may be purchased individually or as a set, www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/Products/TC0385/the-racism-study-pack.aspx.

Rendon, Armando B., *Chicano Manifesto*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1941.

Rutstein, Nathan, *Healing Racism in America*, Springfield, Mass.: Whitcomb Publishing, 1993.

Takaki, Ronald, *Iron Cages*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979.

Wellman, David T., *Portraits of White Racism*, Second Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

West, Cornel, *Race Matters*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.

Wilmore, Gayraud S., *Black and Presbyterian*, Louisville: Witherspoon Press, 1998.

Endnotes

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John T. McNeill, ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), Book I, Chapter I, pp. 35–39.
2. “What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:4–5); “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8), NRSV.
3. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, pp. 375–76; 404–5.
4. John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, John T. McNeill, ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), Book III, pp. 348–423.
5. “Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream” (Amos 5:22–24, NRSV).
6. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, Volumes I & II, (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1961–62).
7. See James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986), pp. 117–25.
8. James M. Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, pp. 43–53; 217–20.
9. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book Two, Chapter I, pp. 39–241.
10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book Two, Chapter I–III, pp. 239–309.
11. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Volume I*, (New York: Scribners, 1964), pp. 178–264.
12. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book Two, Chapter XV, pp. 189–92.
13. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Book IV, Doctrine of Reconciliation*; Hughes Old, *Reformed Worship*.
14. Stephen Carter, in a recent book, *Integrity*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), p. 7, offers a threefold criteria for assessing the integrity of individuals: discerning what is right or wrong; acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong. Carter’s trilogy is applicable and highly relevant on the corporate-institutional level as well. Corporate integrity may then be applied to any community that consistently demonstrates the capacity to meet the threefold criteria.
15. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Book IV, The Doctrine of Reconciliation (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1958).
16. *Book of Confessions*, PC(USA), Section 9.44.
17. Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shaloom* (N.Y.: United Church Press, 1982); James DeOtis Roberts, *Reconciliation and Liberation: A Black Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971; Revised Edition, Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1984).
18. See the *Book of Confessions*; *Book of Order*; Hughes Old, *Reformed Worship* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984); John Leith, *Creeds of the Church*, Third Edition (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982).
19. W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1961), p. ix.
20. Herbert Hill & James E. Jones Jr., eds., *Race in America* (Madison Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), pp. 83–96.
21. For a discussion of affirmative action see: Barbara R. Bergmann, *In Defense of Affirmative Action* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996); George Curry, ed., *Affirmative Action Debate* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997), pp. 241–58; Orlando Patterson, *The Ordeal of Integration* (Washington, D.C. Civitas, 1997), pp. 147–69.
22. See Gayraud S. Wilmore, “COCAR: The First Five Years,” *Church & Society*, (New York: PC(USA), November/December, 1987), p. 61.
23. See Gayraud S. Wilmore, “COCAR: The First Five Years,” *Church & Society*, (New York: PC(USA), November/December, 1987), pp. 60–67.
24. Ester Stine and Gaspar Langella, “Social Teachings of the Presbyterian Church,” *Church & Society* (New York: PC(USA), 1984, Volume LXXV, No. 2), p. 28.

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

25. For a discussion of Black Power and Black Liberation Theologies see: Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, 1967); James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1970); Gayraud S. Wilmore and James Cone, *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966–1979*, (New York: Orbis, 1979).
26. For a discussion of racism and integration see: Otis Turner, “The Web of Institutional Racism,” *Church & Society*, (Louisville, Ky.: PC(USA), September/October, 1991), pp. 22–23.
27. *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1981, Part I, p. 201.
28. See Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992); *The Kerner Report: The 1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).
29. *UN Chronicle*, No. 2, 1997, p. 58.
30. C. Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), pp. 11–12.
31. Max L. Stackhouse, “Institutions/Institutionalization,” *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 304.
32. Max L. Stackhouse, “Institutions/Institutionalization,” *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 304.
33. Jim Wallis, “The Legacy of White Racism,” *Sojourner’s Magazine* (1988), p. 9.
34. *Sojourners*, “Crossing the Racial Divide: America’s Struggle for Justice and Reconciliation,” 1998, p. 5. 37
35. See James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986), pp. 123–24.
36. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1985), pp. 32–33.
37. For a discussion of internalized oppression see: Otis Turner, “The Web of Institutional Racism,” *Church & Society*, (Louisville: PC(USA), September/October, 1991), pp. 20–22; Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1985), Chapter I; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro* (Trenton, N.J., Africa World Press, Inc., 1990), Chapters I–VI.
38. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp. 32–33.
39. Catherine Meeks, “At the Door of the Church,” in *America’s Original Sin: A Study Guide on White Racism*, *Sojourners Magazine* (Washington, D.C.: 1988), p. 15.
40. This does not imply parity in the psychosocial impact of racism upon oppressors and the oppressed. The destructive consequences for oppressors pale in comparison to those for the oppressed. The point of commonality stems from the fact that racism establishes fixed patterns of relationships that cannot be changed unless it is dismantled. In this sense, racism controls both oppressors and the oppressed.
41. Racial Ethnic Church Growth Strategy Report, *Minutes*, 1998, Part I, pp. 89; 406–17, esp. 414.
42. Antiracism is an intentional stance that opposes the sin of racism while affirming the dignity and humanity of those who may hold racist views or benefit from it. It opposes sin not the sinner.
43. This was communicated to Otis Turner, associate for racial justice, in a letter dated September 25, 1998.
44. James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, p. 296.
45. Racial Ethnic Church Growth Strategy Report, *Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 414.

Rationale

These recommendations and revised Churchwide Antiracism Policy are a final response to the 2014 Referral: Item 08-06. *A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Using Existing Racial Ethnic Ministries, Consultation with the Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force, the Advocacy Committee for Racial-Ethnic Concerns, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and Engagement with Experienced Practitioners as Appropriate, to Update and Revise Churchwide Antiracism Policies and Develop Implementing Procedures Similar to the Existing Antidiscrimination Policies and Procedures—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns* (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp.14, 41, 491–95; pp. 221–22 of the print copy).

A team to revise the churchwide antiracism policy was formed by Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries and met several times in 2015. The team consulted with members of the Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, antiracism trainers, and with those who have knowledge in the field of racial justice in order to update and revise the policy.

The introduction has been revised, and a vision statement has been added. The new vision statement can be used alone when brevity and clarity is needed. Other revisions to the content of the policy to update information such as general assembly agency names, *Book of Order* references, and other minor edits were made. The policy has not been substantially

changed, as the Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team believes that the content and analysis of the 1999 policy is still current today, as racism in the United States has not significantly improved since the policy was developed.

The Churchwide Antiracism Policy Team includes: the Reverend Victor Aloyo Jr.; the Reverend Shannon Craigo-Snell; the Reverend Laura Cheifetz; Dr. Christine Darden; the Reverend Curtis A. Kearns Jr., and the Reverend Samson Tso. The Reverend Shannon Craigo-Snell is the writer of the 2016 introduction, vision statement, and accompanying study guides. Dr. Otis Turner is the writer of the 1999 policy. Dr. Mark Lewis Taylor was a consultant who worked with the team. Dr. Virstan Choy was a consultant for the 1999 Churchwide Antiracism Initiative Team. In the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Staff Associate Sera Chung provided support to the team, and Dr. Rhashell Hunter and Alejandra Sherman provided editing and formatting support for the revised policy.

Another action of the 221st General Assembly (2014) asked the Presbyterian Mission Agency to develop tools, assessment instruments, and training materials for the presbyteries and congregations in order to develop a clear and effective understanding of systemic racism, including white privilege, power, and prejudice in relation to race.

Responding to both referrals, and in keeping with the desire to make this policy accessible to the whole church, the team created a series of six, hour-long study guides for adults or teens. These are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice> (Presbyterian Mission Agency's Racial Justice web site).

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-22

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-22—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-22.

As part of the 221st General Assembly (2014) directives from Item 08-06, ACREC was invited to participate along with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to update and revise the existing (1999) churchwide antiracism policy. This country, as well as the PC(USA), has experienced many changes since 1999, yet we continue to find ourselves struggling with the issue of racism and stereotypes and prejudice imposed upon individuals from various cultures.

The ACREC recognizes that racism continues to be a divisive and painful reminder to our church communities of how far we have come and how much further we still have to go. Our ongoing struggle also unites us and affirms our stance towards reviving an intercultural community founded in God's love. We find the directives and recommendations made in this report to be honest and stemming out of deep concerns of our church and society today.

A systemic problem requires a systemic solution. The recommendations that are being made here confront the roots and the lingering scars of the systemic issue of racism head on. The ACREC fully supports the multilayered recommendations, as well as its relevant study guide that would equip and enlighten the church on this issue. We affirm our commitment to supporting the church and its various agencies in achieving such goals in the effort to combat racism and to renew our relationships in our society and in our church.

Item 11-23

[The assembly approved Item 11-23. See pp. 53, 57.]

On Therapies Purporting to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to

- **express its disapproval of sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, sometimes called “conversion” or “reparative therapy”;**
- **direct all agencies of the General Assembly to refrain from supporting, sponsoring, or implementing therapies or ministries that attempt to alter a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity; and strongly discourage congregations, presbyteries, synods, and affiliated educational institutions from sponsoring or supporting such programs;**
- **direct the Stated Clerk and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to support national, federal, state, and local legislation to prohibit licensed mental health practitioners from subjecting minors to “conversion therapy” practices that attempt to change their sexual orientation or gender identity;**
- **encourage congregations to equip themselves to provide support and accurate information about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression to families that have lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning**

members, with attention to biblically and culturally competent resources, including professional association and federal agency resolutions and guidelines on affirmative approaches to LGBTQ children, youth, and adults.

Rationale

Christians are called to appreciate the diversity of all God’s children.

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:16–17).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3: 28).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (Jn. 3:16–17).

In 1999 the General Assembly addressed the issue of “reparative” or “conversion” therapy with this resolution:

The 211th General Assembly (1999) affirms that the existing policy of inclusiveness welcomes all into membership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as we confess our sin and our need for repentance and God’s grace. In order to be consistent with this policy, no church should insist that gay and lesbian people need therapy to change to a heterosexual orientation, nor should it inhibit or discourage those individuals who are unhappy with or confused about their sexual orientation from seeking therapy they believe would be helpful. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that medical treatment, psychological therapy, and pastoral counseling should be in conformity with recognized professional standards. (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 80)

All mainstream professional organizations hold positions against sexual orientation change efforts; over the years since, that consensus has only been strengthened. It is time for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be more clear and vigorous in protecting LGBTQ individuals and their families from the harm inflicted by these discredited programs, and to take positive steps to minister compassionately to families by providing them with accurate information.

As a matter of public safety, several states and local governments have already adopted legislation banning “therapy” designed to change sexual orientation or gender identity when performed on minors; these include California, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, the District of Columbia, and Cincinnati, Ohio. [See http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy.] Because minors are particularly vulnerable, the PC(USA) should voice its support for this type of legislation in more states and localities.

In 2013 Exodus International, perhaps the best known “ex-gay ministry,” shut down—with apologies for the harm it had done.

In 2015, one “conversion therapy” provider was found by a jury to have violated New Jersey’s consumer fraud protections and ordered to shut down and pay damages. [See <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2015/12/18/splc-suit-forces-new-jersey-group-cease-bogus-%E2%80%98conversion-therapy%E2%80%99-program-pay-damages>.]

Most medical and other professionals operate under the principle “First, do no harm.”

The Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office of the World Health Organization, has affirmed that “Services that purport to ‘cure’ people with non-heterosexual sexual orientation lack medical justification and represent a serious threat to the health and well-being of affected people.” [See the full statement at http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=17703.]

... The document notes that no rigorous scientific studies demonstrate any efficacy of efforts to change sexual orientation. However, there are many testimonies about the severe harm to mental and physical health that such “services” can cause. Repression of sexual orientation has been associated with feelings of guilt and shame, depression, anxiety, and even suicide.

As an aggravating factor, there have been a growing number of reports about degrading treatments, and physical and sexual harassment under the guise of such “therapies,” which are often provided illicitly. In some cases, adolescents have been subjected to such interventions involuntarily and even deprived of their liberty, sometimes kept in isolation for several months.

“These practices are unjustifiable and should be denounced and subject to sanctions and penalties under national legislation,” said Dr. Roses. “These supposed conversion therapies constitute a violation of the ethical principles of health care and violate human rights that are protected by international and regional agreements.”

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has published an October 2015 report, *Ending Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth* [<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA15-4928/SMA15-4928.pdf>]. Excerpts:

SAMHSA is committed to eliminating health disparities facing vulnerable communities, including sexual and gender minority communities. One key factor to preventing these adverse outcomes is positive family (including guardians and caregivers) and community engagement and appropriate interventions by medical and behavioral health care providers. Supporting optimal development of children and adolescents with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is vital to ensuring their health and well-being.

... The conclusions in this report are based on professional consensus statements arrived at by experts in the field. Specifically, conversion therapy—efforts to change an individual’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression—is a practice that is not supported by credible evidence and has been disavowed by behavioral health experts and associations. Conversion therapy perpetuates outdated views of gender roles and identities as well as the negative stereotype that being a sexual or gender minority or identifying as LGBTQ is an abnormal aspect of human development. Most importantly, it may put young people at risk of serious harm.

... When providing services to children, adolescents, and families, appropriate therapeutic approaches include: providing accurate information on the development of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression; increasing family and school support; and reducing family, community, and social rejection of sexual and gender minority children and adolescents. Approaches should be client-centered and developmentally-appropriate with the goal of treatment being the best possible level of psychological functioning, rather than any specific gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation...

Given that conversion therapy is not an appropriate therapeutic intervention; efforts should be taken to end the practice of conversion therapy. Efforts to end the practice have included policy efforts to reduce the negative attitudes and discrimination directed at LGBTQ individuals and families; affirmative public information about LGBTQ individuals, particularly directed at families and youth; resolutions and guidelines by professional associations to inform providers that conversion efforts are inappropriate and to provide guidance on appropriate interventions; and, state and federal legislation and legal action to end the practice of conversion therapy. Future efforts may include improved provider training, federal regulatory action, advancement of legislation at the state and federal level, and additional activities by the Administration, which issued a public statement supporting efforts to ban the use of conversion therapy for minors in the spring of 2015.

... Experts have suggested that the use of conversion therapy to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of clients may be inconsistent with the aspirational principles of behavioral health professions. For example, conversion therapy might violate the principle of “Do No Harm” through techniques that are deleterious rather than beneficial to mental health. Additionally, conversion therapy may be inconsistent with professional standards that treatment be based on the best scientific knowledge and standards of professional competence, in its use of treatments that cannot be justified by established scientific and clinical knowledge in the field, and which imply that variations in sexual orientation and gender identity are not normative. Experts have also suggested that conversion therapy is inconsistent with principles of non-discrimination and justice that guarantee all clients, including sexual and gender minorities, equal access to the benefits of psychology and to equal quality of services. Finally, by denying the inherent worth of LGBTQ individuals and engaging in an intervention based on negative social or cultural attitudes, practitioners of conversion therapy could potentially violate principles that dictate respect for people’s dignity.

A compilation of positions by other government and professional groups is available here: <http://www.nclrights.org/bornperfect-Toolkit-resources-statement/>.

American Psychological Association [See <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/sexual-orientation.aspx> and <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf>]:

... the American Psychological Association concludes that there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation; ... encourages mental health professionals to avoid misrepresenting the efficacy of sexual orientation change efforts by promoting or promising change in sexual orientation when providing assistance to individuals distressed by their own or others’ sexual orientation; ... concludes that the benefits reported by participants in sexual orientation change efforts can be gained through approaches that do not attempt to change sexual orientation; ... concludes that the emerging knowledge on affirmative multiculturally competent treatment provides a foundation for an appropriate evidence-based practice with children, adolescents and adults who are distressed by or seek to change their sexual orientation ... advises parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth; ... encourages practitioners to consider the ethical concerns outlined in the 1997 APA Resolution on Appropriate Therapeutic Response to Sexual Orientation (APA, 1998), in particular the following standards and principles: scientific bases for professional judgments, benefit and harm, justice, and respect for people’s rights and dignity;

American Psychoanalytic Association: Position Statement on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression

The American Psychoanalytic Association affirms the right of all people to their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression without interference or coercive interventions attempting to change sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

As with any societal prejudice, bias against individuals based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression negatively affects mental health, contributing to an enduring sense of stigma and pervasive self-criticism through the internalization of such prejudice.

Psychoanalytic technique does not encompass purposeful attempts to “convert,” “repair,” change or shift an individual’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such directed efforts are against fundamental principles of psychoanalytic treatment and often result in substantial psychological pain by reinforcing damaging internalized attitudes. (*Adopted June 2012. This position statement replaces APsA’s December 1999 position statement on reparative therapy.*)

The American Bar Association adopted this resolution [<https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2015annualresolutions/112.pdf>]:

That the American Bar Association recognizes that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people have the right to be free from attempts to change their sexual orientation or gender identity; That the American Bar Association urges all federal, state, local, territorial and tribal governments to enact laws that prohibit state-licensed professionals from using conversion therapy on minors; and, That the American Bar Association urges all federal, state, local, territorial and tribal governments to protect minors, particularly minors in their care, from being subjected to conversion therapy by state-licensed professionals.

Item 11-24

Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism¹ and Ethnocentricity Report—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, on behalf of the Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Team, recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 1.a.–e. See pp. 46, 57.]

1. Establish a Season of Jubilee from 2016 to 2018, ending at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), and:

- a. **Direct the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to create a study guide telling the history of Presbyterian participation in and resistance to patterns of racism and structural inequality in the U.S., which includes an order of worship for a service of repentance and remembrance.**
- b. **Direct the six agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to complete organizational reviews of their practices and policies as they impact people of color and racial diversity (known as a “race audit”), and to evaluate the potential impacts of future initiatives on people of color and racial diversity.**
- c. **Direct the Office of the General Assembly to assist mid councils and congregations in engaging organizational reviews of their practices and policies as they impact people of color and racial diversity (known as a “race audit”), and to evaluate the potential impacts of future initiatives on people of color and racial diversity.**
- d. **Direct the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Board of Pensions to host a series of regional conversations on race utilizing the study guide “Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity” (Appendix 1). Conversations are to be held in cooperation with other regularly scheduled events such as Polity Conference, Moderator’s Conference, Big Tent, or other gatherings and conferences, and included in other church trainings and events for church leaders.**
- e. **Direct the Office of General Assembly to study different models and best practices for church governance, including resources on various decision-making processes that provide space for participation by people of differing backgrounds.**

[The assembly referred Item 11-24, Recommendations 1.f. to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with comment. See pp. 46, 58.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) requests that the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board explore how translations can be produced utilizing volunteers from around the church.]

- f. Urge translation of written, oral, and live communications including, but not limited to, Presbyterian News Service articles, *Presbyterians Today*, newsletters, and resources in order to connect and encourage engagement at all levels of the denomination. Broaden translations from English, Korean, and Spanish to include other languages (included, but not limited to, Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Twi) used by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Rationale for Recommendation 1

The PC(USA) has made efforts toward and resolutions regarding antiracism commitments and conversations regarding race and racial injustice. Despite good intentions, existing policy statements and recommendations, and efforts made by the national agencies of the PC(USA), mid councils, and congregations, the ongoing protests by communities against police violence, racially disproportionate sentencing, eroding protections for voting rights among disadvantaged people of color, immigrant detention and deportation, persistent racial inequality, hate crimes based on race and perceived race and religion, to name just a few recent examples, it is clear racism persists despite the unique positioning of the church within countless communities across the United States. In 1999, the General Assembly Council “asked that ... all governing bodies and local congregations of the ... PC(USA) be urged to assume an antiracism identity.”²

The time for this type of action has come again. In order to respond to multiple calls for measures meant to end racism in General Assembly-approved policies throughout the years, establishing a renewed emphasis on understanding racism, equipping the church to talk about and work to end structural racism, and allowing the time necessary for the church to more fully participate in this work would be a significant step at this time. Many other communions are engaging in these types of conversations in meaningful ways, and the long history of engagement in fighting racism by the PC(USA) nationally and locally provide multiple models for a Season of Jubilee.

Models for conversation are provided in the document “Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity” (Appendix 1), which is the response to the following referral: *2014 Referral: Item 09-14. National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force Report. Recommendation 1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to Hold a National Consultation on Developing Regional Racial Ethnic Ministries in 2015 for Twenty-Five Participants Over a Two-Day Period. This Consultation Will Have a Planning Team of Ten People and Shall Include Developing a Vision and Structure so Each Ministry May Create Its Own Unique Way of Doing Ministry—From the Task Force on National Racial Ethnic Ministries (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 655–59; p. 243; p. 243 of the print copy).* It is also in response to conversation models offered by other U.S. communions, such as the “Glocal” conferences of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ “Conversations on Race.” These models are most effective when they include a mechanism for collecting feedback from the gatherings and outcomes that feed back into the work of the church.

Increased participation from a diversity of church members by experience, socioeconomic status, age, employment status, and race is encouraged. Those bodies electing session members, delegates to presbytery, synod, and general assemblies

should be encouraged to be mindful of any structural obstacles to making diversity of participation difficult, including employment and life circumstances creating differential access to vacation days and ease of transportation. Additionally, assemblies should continue their work to make the venue and format accessible by diverse participants.

Race audits, similar to environmental audits, are often facilitated or coordinated by outside parties, and the process frequently includes the creation of an implementation team, assessments in all six agencies, and a reporting of the results from the audit. Race audits look at how current policies and practices impact various racial groups. After the audit, adjustments can then be made that would further racial justice. When considering new initiatives, programs, and policies going forward in regards to their impact on various racial groups and racial diversity, agencies can use a tool such as the Racial Impact Equity Assessment developed by Facing Racism.

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 2. See pp. 46, 58.]

2. Direct the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) to work with the Office of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to determine more appropriate terminology than “racial ethnic” within official documents, parlance, and programs of the PC(USA).

Rationale for Recommendation 2

All people in the U.S. have a race and an ethnicity, including white people. A shift in language from “racial ethnic” to a mutually agreed upon term between the two entities most impacted by terminology changes has the potential to better reflect contemporary U.S. parlance and to be more accurate. Terms used by other churches include “racialized peoples” or “people of color.”

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 3. See pp. 46, 58.]

3. Direct the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) to engage the members of the committee in discussions regarding the formation of emerging ministry leaders who will address, name, and dismantle structural and cultural racism, learning from and sharing the best practices of Presbyterian seminaries and non-Presbyterian seminaries that are addressing issues of race and ministry in diverse contexts,³ so that students have as many opportunities as possible to do the following:

- a. Participate in anti-bias or antiracism trainings regarding race and racism.
- b. Study and learn from diverse readings and topics in seminary curriculum about the lived realities of people of color in the U.S. and the life experiences of immigrants to the U.S.
- c. Gain experience preaching or teaching about racial justice.
- d. Engage in a field education experience in a setting different than the student’s own context, for degrees requiring field education.

Rationale for Recommendation 3

The persistence of racial injustice as measured by social equality indicators, continued individual experiences of racism, and the desire of many white allies to work in partnership to end racism has demonstrated the need for formation of all Presbyterians to have the capacity to talk about race, ethnicity, and racism, and to know what steps may be taken to repair relationships among communities in the context of the church. By and large, Presbyterians lack the vocabulary, the tools for difficult conversations about race, a robust biblical and theological framework for ending racism, and the abilities to bring about change in the lived realities of racial inequality.

Many Presbyterian-related institutions of theological education and institutions of theological education that educate significant numbers of Presbyterians seeking ordination are already engaged in conversation about and work regarding race, racism, ethnocentricity, and diversity, but these institutions are not solely responsible for providing this formation for all leaders in the PC(USA).

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 4. with amendment. See pp. 46, 58.]

4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly[, in coordination with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries,] to work with committees on ministry and committees on the preparation for ministry or their equivalents so that those overseeing preparation for ministry, congregations, pastoral relationships, and approval of calls shall:

- a. Promote training to be more effective in cross-cultural relations.

- b. Include members of diverse racial backgrounds in the oversight of candidates and those in ministry where possible.**
- c. Regularly address issues of racism on ordination exam questions, ensuring that ordination exam questions are culturally sensitive to the racial- and language-diversity of candidates.**
- d. Offer retreats or trainings at the mid council level for those in the ordination discernment process to dialogue about race and racism.**
- e. Request presbyteries to explore a standard of practice for psychological exam providers that are applicable for broader racial and ethnic demographics.**
- f. Provide antiracism training for leadership positions (paid and unpaid, ordained and not ordained) in congregations, mid councils, and national staff and boards for continuing education and ongoing leadership development; incorporate an antiracism lens in leadership training, as modeled in the Office of the General Assembly, in congregations, boards, mid councils, and national staff.**
- g. Provide regular antiracism training in presbyteries to teaching elders.**

Rationale for Recommendation 4

Those seeking ordination as teaching elders, and leaders such as teaching elders, ruling elders, commissioned ruling elders, deacons, paid and volunteer Christian education leaders, paid and volunteer youth leaders, mid council and national staff, and other leaders within congregations, mid councils, and the larger PC(USA) are well-positioned to make a discernible impact on conversations about and work to end racism. The diverse members of the Churchwide Conversation have participated in many conversations in congregations, in mid councils (in assemblies and as part of committees and commissions), in national agencies and assemblies, as well as in their communities, regarding race and racism. The experiences of these conversations indicate that most leaders in the PC(USA) are ill-equipped to facilitate or participate in discussions in ways that are effective, appropriate, and informed by our Presbyterian commitments to scripture and theology.

Since ordained teaching elders are required to participate in boundary and misconduct trainings offered by mid councils on a regular basis, the church already has a model for formation that could be utilized to better equip church leaders for discussion and action regarding race and racism in their churches and communities.

Where formation could make a discernible difference is in the work of those bodies overseeing preparation for ministry and those overseeing congregations, pastoral relationships, and approval of calls as well as the work of the body that oversees the composition of ordination exam questions and grading of the exams. Ensuring that people receiving training do not experience the exact same training, but are able to experience more advanced material over time, would help build the capacity of Presbyterian leaders for addressing race and racism.

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 5. See pp. 46, 58.]

5. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to:

- a. Study new models of language usage that impact marginalized communities, particularly persons with different abilities and levels of education.**
- b. Create multimedia/intermedia,⁴ and/or film resources on race, ethnicity, racism, and ethnocentricity for churchwide study.**
- c. Provide the above resources to congregations. These resources will focus on the education of ruling elders, deacons, and congregation members to better serve their contexts and deepen the understanding of the larger body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).**

Rationale for Recommendation 5

The original recommendation for the Churchwide Conversation called for a “churchwide conference.” With fewer than fifty participants, the conversation was not churchwide, despite the energy within the church for this type of conversation. In order to make this conversation truly churchwide and accessible throughout the church, producing and making available a series of resources for churchwide study based on a combination of multimedia and print media, utilizing past General Assembly actions and creative energies throughout the church, from congregations to agencies of the PC(USA), could offer conversational models and new perspectives for this conversation. We as a church benefit from hearing narratives about race and ethnicity, racism, and intercultural engagement from across the church and other communions, and would increase our churchwide fluency in these types of conversations that are increasingly salient in communities struggling to live together in the context of material racial inequality.

In recognition of the ways in which resources are directed or not directed towards marginalized communities, the conversation participants recognized that the current budget restrictions on translation and interpretation into languages other than English are a way of reinforcing marginalization. Many Presbyterians speak other languages beyond Spanish and Korean, and more resources should be available in multiple languages in order to ensure full inclusion of Presbyterians and their ongoing participation in the church.

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 6. See pp. 46, 58.]

6. Urge mid councils to locate organizations and companies offering training on the use of social media, power analysis, harm assessments, racial equity assessments, and organization change training for mid councils and congregations, with assistance made available by the Office of the General Assembly.

Rationale for Recommendation 6

Mid councils are uniquely positioned to resource the churchwide conversation due to their access to individuals and churches engaging in work on race and racism. With guidance from the Presbyterian Mission Agency, mid councils could collect, create, and disseminate new and existing resources.

[The assembly approved Item 11-24, Recommendations 7. with amendment. See pp. 46, 58–59.]

[Financial Implication: Per Capita—\$47,541 (2017), \$47,541 (2018); Presbyterian Mission Agency—\$1,353,830 (2017), \$1,266, 280 (2018), Revised—\$91,138 (2017), \$7,476 (2018)]

7. Call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess its complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery[, and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with ACREC, to].

a. [Direct the Office of the General Assembly, specifically empowering the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the Presbyterian Historical Society, to lead the church to study and to learn about the historic and current social, missional, and theological implications of the Doctrine of Discovery.] [Initiate a process of review of the Doctrine of Discovery that would commence at the end of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and that would]

[i. include a comprehensive review of the history of the Doctrine of Discovery;

[ii. include a review of actions taken by other denominations and religious groups to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, including the explanatory and educational materials created and recommendations developed by these groups related to the Doctrine of Discovery;

[iii. include contacting Native American tribes and individuals in order to understand how this doctrine impacts them.

[b. Prepare a report that

[i. describes the Doctrine of Discovery and explains its history;

[ii. makes recommendations of how congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)] can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights;

[iii. describes how relationships with specific Native American individuals and tribes can be developed;

[iv. suggests specific ways in which congregations may recognize, support, and cooperate with Native American individuals, tribes, and nations who reside within their communities.]

[b-] [c.] Engage in dialogue with ecumenical partners concerning the doctrine.

Rationale for Recommendation 7

The Doctrine of Discovery evolved over time, providing both theological and legal justification for Christian colonial genocide of non-Christian peoples and confiscation of the lands of indigenous peoples and people already present.⁵ The theological formulation began with a papal bull in 1452, proclaiming only Christian rulers to be valid, laying the theological groundwork to justify perpetual rule over any non-Christian peoples.⁶ The doctrine as it developed over time gave permission to European Christian nations to use military force against peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This doctrine laid the groundwork for the genocide of indigenous peoples around the world; the colonization of Africa, Asia, Australia, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas (including U.S. colonialism into the twenty-first century); and the transatlantic trafficking in persons used as slave labor. A U.S. Supreme Court case as recent as 2005, *City of Sherrill v. Oneida Nation of Indians*, utilized the Doctrine of Discovery as legal precedent for the final decision.

The religious bodies that have called for the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery include: The Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and The New York Meeting of the Society of Friends.⁷ The United Methodist Church is working toward the elimination of the doctrine,⁸ with “Acts of Repentance toward Healing Rela-

tionships with Indigenous Peoples, an ongoing commitment to conversation with indigenous peoples.” The World Council of Churches called on all member communions to study the Doctrine of Discovery and its impact.

Overall Rationale

These recommendations are a final response to the following referral: *2014 Referral: Item 09-14. National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force Report. Recommendation 3. Call for a Churchwide Conference on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity in 2015. In Addition, Direct the Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Appoint a Planning Team of Ten People For This Event in Consultation with Groups Named in a. Through f; g. A Report Will Be Submitted to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) on These Matters—From the Task Force on National Racial Ethnic Ministries (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 38, 655–59; p. 243 of the print copy).*

The recommendation for the churchwide conference was one of several intended, according to the *2014 Referral: Item 09-14*,

for this church to intentionally and honestly begin an ongoing effort to a path of reconciliation. All we do as children of God we do with the purpose of reaching reconciliation. This task force has a real commitment for this church to achieve reconciliation within its members. In doing so we must be honest with one another, we must acknowledge the historical context and wounds that have shaped and continue to shape the way we are, the way we do church, and especially the way we interact and engage different people. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 658)

A diverse group of almost fifty people gathered at the Stony Point Conference Center, composed of mid council leaders, parish pastors, community organizers, professors, ruling elders, church members, and national staff, representing Middle Easterners, African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, white people, and Hispanics/Latinos/Latinas (see Appendix 2 for list of participants).

The challenge for the conversation with this diverse group of Presbyterians was to create a space that was courageous and genuine in order to be imaginative, making the conversation and the results of the conversation different from previous conversations about race. Acknowledging that every person present benefited from the church as it is, while also being willing to risk the status quo in order to move the church more deeply into racial justice, the group embraced both the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King’s Christian ethic of radical love, as well as a comfort with being misfits who are willing to dwell in a new kind of space.

The Bible passages grounding the conversation were offered by biblical scholar, Dr. Eric Barreto, who said that the biblical witness tells us difference is indispensable. We have a long history in the United States of misinterpreting the text when we confuse differences as markers demonstrating who is in and who is out, or differences as a problem, instead of seeing differences as a gift from God.

He suggested the Book of Acts is not an instruction manual for the church, but stories that can open up our imaginations. Our diversities are impossible to avoid. Differences are a gift from God; we confused differences with sin by saying differences show who is in and who is out. Acts 2 is often wrongfully misinterpreted as a reversal of the Tower of Babel story in Genesis 11. If Acts were a reversal, everyone would speak the same language, instead of speaking many wildly diverse languages. Genesis 11 never states God is punishing the people for trying to get closer to God; instead, God “wasn’t interested in a world in which everyone speaks the same language and has the same experiences.”⁹

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 goes to show how the text demonstrating God’s commitment to difference. We don’t know if the Ethiopian eunuch was a Jew or a Gentile, but Philip neglects to ask him questions of ethnic identity. Instead, Philip baptizes the eunuch before the early Christian community had determined whether or not Christianity could be open to Gentiles. We in the church set up more boundaries than Philip did in Acts. Dr. Barreto also presented an interpretation of Acts 10 regarding Peter’s encounter with the sheet filled with unclean food, declared by God as clean, refers to food as well as to people. God declared no person unclean. No person is prohibited.

Dr. Barreto asked: “What if God has made nowhere God’s home? ... When we get there, we will find God has been there all along, preparing the waters of baptism. That’s the kind of imagination the text invites us into.” We ask the question: can the church welcome people as we are? Can people of color be seen as a gift instead of a problem? The book of Acts portrays differences as good, clean, and right.

This report and its recommendations stem from a paradigm of repentance and repair, grounded in the biblical understanding of difference and diversity as God’s will, and a gift instead of a problem. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has the option and opportunity to choose to listen to and take seriously the voices of people of color and white antiracist allies who propose a paradigm other than reconciliation and propose concrete actions for the betterment of the whole church.

The primary framework for this conversation, informed by the work of Dr. Jennifer Harvey, was not reconciliation, but repair.¹⁰ Reconciliation has provided the dominant paradigm for understanding race relations in the Protestant mainline church. In the 1960s, the Black Power Movement began to understand the problem of race relations in the U.S. as exploitation of people of color and unequal access to power and resources, not de jure or de facto segregation. The reconciliation paradigm was no longer understood to be effective by power movements of people of color. Resistance to this paradigm was embodied in the presentation of the Black Manifesto at Riverside Church, a document outlining the specifics of what repair

was requested by black/African American people, which was resoundingly rejected by Protestant mainline churches in 1969.¹¹ Reconciliation would be effective if the only problem were misunderstandings between two equal groups. Dr. Harvey emphasized that while the bulk of her expertise is in the black/white binary and relationships between the white mainline church and African Americans, the model is not meant to be exclusive, and the model of repair is expansive. In 2015, racial differences remain in unequal standing, embodying unjust relationships between white people and people of color in the U.S.

Endnotes

1. “Results from a merger of social power and racial prejudice to create systems that treat people differently whether intentionally or unintentionally. It shapes institutions and structures so that they provide privileges for some while oppressing others. It involves inequality and unfair access to the distribution of such resources as money, education, information, and decision-making power between dominant and dominated groups” definition of “racism” from p. 36 of “Hearing and Singing New Songs to God: Shunning Old Discords and Sharing New Harmonies” Report of the Women of Color Consultation Task Force to the 218th General Assembly (2008).
2. *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community* (1999), 1; see also *Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 274.
3. Several Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminaries are engaged in antiracism work, including Austin, Columbia, McCormick, and Princeton. Two non-Presbyterian seminaries doing antiracism work that could provide a model for the PC(USA) are Fuller Theological Seminary and Chicago Theological Seminary.
4. Not only the use of multiple media venues, but the use of them interchangeably.
5. “Doctrine of Discovery,” 2015, <http://www.ucc.org/justice_racism_doctrine-of-discovery> (12 November 2015).
6. “What Is the Doctrine of Discovery? Why Should It Be Repudiated?,” New York Yearly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 2012, <http://www.nyym.org/?q=doc_of_disc_factsheet> (12 November 2015).
7. “Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery,” 9 April 2015, <<http://www.ecclesio.com/2015/04/repudiating-the-doctrine-of-discovery/>> (10 November 2015).
8. “Petition 20831,” <<http://calms2012.umc.org/Text.aspx?mode=Petition&Number=831>> (12 November 2015).
9. Dr. Eric Barreto, lecture, 6 November 2015.
10. For more on reconciliation and repair, see *Dear White Christians* by Jennifer Harvey.
11. Dr. Jennifer Harvey, lecture, 6 November 2015.

Appendix 1

Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity

Study Guide

Introduction

In fulfilling their mandate from the 221st General Assembly (2014) to develop a vision and structure for developing regional racial ethnic ministries that enable each such ministry to “create its own unique way of doing ministry,” the participants in the National Consultation on Regional Racial Ethnic Ministries have sought to do so:

- aware of past mandates and previous strategies (as far back as the 184th General Assembly (1972), which called for establishment of “instrumentalities for ministry among ethnic minorities” in each newly-reorganized regional synod);
- attentive to current denominational conditions and factors—some reported by the national staff who met with them and others identified by consultation participants themselves—which might affect the conceiving, establishing, and adequate resourcing of new regional entities for racial ethnic ministries;
- aligned with a future-oriented vision for a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) actively and authentically engaged in becoming part of the wider church of Jesus Christ which God is bringing into being in the changing demographics of the communities across our country in which Presbyterians have been placed.

The learnings from this tri-focal approach have led consultation participants to see discussions and decisions regarding regional structures for racial ethnic ministries to be more than merely meetings about instrumentalities and processes. Because the structures requested by the General Assembly involve relationships between and among different members and ministries serving diverse communities, discussions about ways of being in relationship are essential foundations for such structures and the attendant policies, practices, and programs that may emerge.

In addition, whether these discussions involve parties within an area served by one or more than one mid-council, taking into account the relevant history or histories of the communities and relationships involved will be also be key to honesty and wisdom in exploring and envisioning new futures and appropriate structures for such futures. Consequently, while the mandate from the General Assembly implies the assumption that “one size does not fit all,” Consultation participants have added the assumption that it is not fitting to develop a package of models or “best practices” from which each regional entity might select a preferred approach to programmatic relationship in joint ministry.

Instead, what is offered in the sections that follow is intended to be a resource for the preliminary individual and group reflection and subsequent dialogue that enable old as well as new partners to discern and develop new racial ethnic ministry together. This resource is organized around five proposed foci for such reflection and discussion:

Patterns—In the light of the “history lessons” learned about interracial relationship, multiracial inclusion, cross-cultural communication, and culturally attentive governance, what unproductive and unhealthy patterns of relationship need to be broken?

Postures—What new postures (ways of being in relationship) and perspectives (ways of seeing one another) need to be set and cultivated in order that “inclusiveness and diversity” are experienced in new or enhanced forms of mutual respect, genuine fellowship, and meaningful representation and inclusion?

Processes—What new or revised approaches are needed in planning, managing, and evaluating in order for the appropriate conception, creative design, and sustained development of racial ethnic ministries?

Practices—What needs to be done so that culturally-different approaches to racial ethnic ministry can be understood, encouraged, interpreted, and supported as diversity-enhancing differences rather than division-causing differences?

Positioning—What immediate adjustments and experiments do we need so that efforts to begin new regional racial ethnic ministries not only celebrate gifts of ethnic culture but also demonstrate sensitive and innovative ecclesiastical culture?

These focal points are not multiple-choice options for consideration; they are offered as a “complete package” with the emphatic encouragement that all five areas be discussed by groups charged with overseeing the design of new ways to organize and sustain racial ethnic ministries regionally. The hope which accompanies this encouragement is that the “far sighted” presbyopia of past attempts will be avoided through painstaking attempts to not only share visions of “distant” future racial ethnic ministries possibilities, but to also be equally attentive to looking at the “up close” impediments to such ministries of the present and recent past. In the spirit of “overseeing but not overlooking,” the following sections provide details and examples of each focus for discernment and discussion.

Pattern Breaking

Through our consultation, one of the key concerns as identified by the team was the practices and patterns that are currently in place. Often times these patterns exhibit the dominance of power of one sector of the church over another and condones the practices and exertion of authority, without the consultation of all stakeholders. The repeated patterns of such practices also demonstrate a lack of sensitivity and recognition of all voices and opinions as reflected within the larger church and of society. The resistance towards change also inhibits the peace, unity and purity of the church.

In order for meaningful and sustainable change to occur, we recognize that there needs to be a collaborative effort among the racial ethnic constituents, as well as the non-racial ethnic constituents and other stakeholders, including the staff leadership of the church. Racial ethnic ministry is an integral part of the PC(USA). We recognize that changes can sometimes be painful but yet they are necessary. We may or may not see the results come to full fruition, however, intentional and purposeful changes lead to lasting impact and legacy.

In order for this process to succeed, we seek and advocate that the PC(USA) be fully committed to identifying and offering the opportunities for racial ethnic individuals to serve on various committees, task forces and other entities, including in upper management positions, with equal voice, power, and vote as to the rest of their colleagues. We shall value the contributions and the gifts presented by all persons within our diverse body of Christ in the overall feasting at the table.

We have identified areas of patterns that need to be broken or must be stopped:

Stop Keeping Racial Ethnic People Out of the Loop

Transparency and open communication serve as the foundation of establishing trust. We seek to be specific and intentional about changes. Coordinate responses before acting; consensus is necessary before implementation. Keep everyone informed of what is taking place and how important decisions are derived, especially those that impact the racial ethnic constituents. Invite those racial ethnic individuals for consultation and contribution towards change and solutions.

Stop Treating Racial Ethnic People as Token Members

Racial ethnic individuals shall not be served as window dressing or to satisfy committee on representation’s requirements. When racial ethnic individuals were invited to serve on committees, task forces, and other entities, they shall be valued for what gifts and contributions they bring to the conversations at the table. Their opinions shall be weighted equally and their voices, regardless of volume, fairly considered. All members shall have equal voice, vote, and power as we are all called as partners in Christ’s Service.

Stop Complaining about PC(USA) at Every Instance

We are called to extend grace and the spirit of collaboration. We should extend appreciation to all those who are a part of the diverse community of faith while giving thanks for the good things that they do. Healthy conversation and dialogue towards meaningful and intentional change shall begin by expressing thanksgiving and appreciation to all. Change begins with self-reflection and evaluation of how we may be a part of process towards such change.

Stop the Practice of Funding to Fail and Planning Studies to Nowhere

After we plan to address an important issue of concerns, we systematically place impediments and constraints (i.e., resources in funding, staffing, and time) that lead to greater tendency toward failures rather than successes. We seek to break the pattern of assumption for

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

new task forces in order to develop new visions and concomitant new models or programs when the preceding/existing initiatives have not been fruitful. The problem may rest upon the genuineness of commitment, attempts to implement sustainable change and to allocate adequate resources rather than the previously ascertained vision.

Stop Working Alone in Our Separate Racial Ethnic Caucuses

In order for the voices among the racial ethnic voices to be heard and for their respective ministries to flourish, we must seek to work together as one voice among all caucuses for effective and lasting change. We seek greater collaboration and solidarity among the various racial ethnic caucuses, especially when pertinent issues arise within the church that impact the welfare of the lives and ministries of those of racial ethnic caucuses. We seek to establish networks that promote racial ethnic leadership and lasting change to achieve parity and equity with the church.

Stop the Addiction of Total Dependence on PC(USA)

We seek to serve the church with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. There are opportunities to be creative in relations and mission. We seek to do more with less than what we used to have. Despite the decline in membership and dwindling financial resources, we seek to fund mission through creative means via new funding sources, partnership, stewardship and volunteerism.

Stop Feeding into Stereotypes

We seek to break the traditional patterns of worship; re-imagining who we worship and why we worship, while embracing different styles of worship through our diversity of cultures and traditions. We shall seek to be mindful of the cultural differences among us and be sensitive to changes regarding our church policies.

Stop Buying into the Current System

The rules are cited regarding why we cannot serve as leaders with vote and limited voice. We have access to our rules; therefore, we can work within the system to choose representatives who will promote our agenda. We seek to work with the system to promote change and improve quality of life for racial ethnic membership (Board membership with voice and vote; liaisons with voice)

Stop Sitting at the Visitors/Kids Table

We seek to be an integral part of the church for we are no longer guests or visitors but contributing members of the body of Christ. We seek to share our gifts with the larger community and to actively engage in the decision-making process in all levels of the church.

Stop Accepting the Status Quo

We yearn for a new season of mutual trust and accountability in all levels of decision making, especially when such decisions impact the lives of many who are already marginalized. We seek to give voice to those who are voiceless.

Stop Microaggressive Tendencies

These are a part of structural racism, that can be well-intended but the consequences are still the same. To refine the reference to Paul's exhortation to what Peter Gomes characterized as transformation of minds marked by "humility and modesty" (Rom. 12:1-2), we invite the mid councils to engage in self-examination, confession, and repentance for policies and practices which have resulted in Cultural Iatrogenesis (and consequent injury to racial ethnic individuals, congregations, and communities) rather than cross-cultural genesis (and racial ethnic experiences of New Creation).

Posture Setting

Once the series of existing patterns that need to be liberated have been identified, we must then look inward and examine our own postures of how we relate with one another, especially among those who are different from who we are. This is a moment of inward reflection with an outward focus. "For there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

We believe that discussions and decisions regarding regional structures for racial ethnic ministries shall not be limited to discussions about instrumentalities and processes. The structures requested by the General Assembly (2012 and 2014) involve relationship building among different ministries serving diverse communities. This ought to be a shift from program oriented to relationship and trust based. It is not about what we do or how much we have spent but how we do and what lessons we can learn from our experience. This shall be the foundation for effective ministry (racial-ethnic or not) at all levels of our church. Discussions about ways of being in relationship are essential foundations for the structures, processes, and practices that emerge.

The patterns identified in the preceding section that need to be broken necessitate shifting the postures with which we relate to one another in spite of our differences. We must seek ways to engage with one another in more helpful and constructive ways that would impact changes to the existing patterns of operation.

We recommend that as we seek to build bridges and work together, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of General Assembly, mid councils, caucuses, churches, and seminaries take up these postures:

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Posture of Humility; Romans 12:1–2 “Humility and Modesty” (Gomes)

We believe in the ministry of all believers, and we believe that we have much to learn from one another. We trust that we particularly learn in relationship. We commit to regularly living in humility with one another by taking the posture of learner. We seek to be informed and transformed through the diverse perspectives and experiences of our brothers and sisters in Christ (Cultural Iatrogenesis).

We believe in the ministry of all believers, and we believe that we have much to learn from one another. We commit to regularly living in humility with one another by taking the posture of learner. We seek to be informed and transformed through the diverse perspectives and experiences of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Posture of Confession and Self-Awareness

We believe that self-examination leads to confession, confession leads to repentance, and repentance leads to new life. We commit to the examination of policies and practices that have caused pain, isolation, or injury to our racial ethnic brothers and sisters. We commit to practices of examination and confession that will lead to transformation in the ways we care for one another and work together.

Posture of Passion

We believe the gospel is good news for ALL of God’s people. We trust that if we are truly passionate about this good news, we cannot help but take risks for the sake of the gospel. We commit to spiritual practices that remind us of the good news of the gospel, and shape the way we live out the work of ministry together.

Posture of Prayer

We seek discernment through prayers. Through prayers, we invite God to transform our minds and renew our spirits. We commit to practicing deep prayer in our personal and corporate lives together.

Posture of Partnership

We value partnerships. We believe that we can do stronger mission by partnering with one another—across cultures, across denominations, across interest groups, across generations. We commit to pursuing partnerships that will help us more fully engage the mission to which we are called.

Posture of Equity

We engage one another as equals with respect, and we pay attention to the equitable distribution of resources and power. We all work with finite resources, yet part of respect is shared access to resources and decision making. We commit to leveling the playing field so that each participates as full partners in ministry.

Posture of Valuing Different Ways to Engage

We recognize and value that different ways of working come out of different values. Just because others may approach the work in different ways, it doesn’t make it “wrong.” We are guided in our work together by the Word of God, the *Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*. How we engage that work may be informed by different cultural backgrounds. We commit to valuing different ways of working together (Ambivalence vs. Ambiguity).

Posture of Possibilities

We believe that imagination and passion for ministry, animated by the Holy Spirit, is the primary driver for mission, not money. While it is tempting to focus on the limitations of financial resources, we commit to pay attention to the possibilities and opportunities that are presented before us. We believe that the primary issue does not rest upon the availability of resources, but rather the allocation and appropriation of such resources. Resources distribution needs to be addressed more fairly and on a more equitable basis among ALL of God’s people, and not just a few of the elites. We seek to hold those in power and in the position of making such critical decisions to be fully accountable in addressing the needs of the whole body and not just a few of the elites.

As we have identified in the previous section, we seek to be led by the Spirit to conduct God’s mission through creative means of funding programs, foster partnership with other community agencies, proper discipleship and teaching on stewardship and volunteerism.

Posture of Risk Taking and Experimentation

We choose to be open to experimenting. We are inspired and encouraged as we discern together, and we discover boldness to take risks. We seek to try things and learn from our past failures and mistakes, especially in this time of rapid change. We commit to experimenting in ministry and decision-making.

Posture of Relational Accountability

We believe that accountability is important, but that it is often lived out in the confines of paperwork and reports. We commit to accountability marked by the stewardship of relationship.

Posture of Evaluation

We engage in evaluation that is learning based instead of achievement based. The pertinent question becomes, “*What did we learn?*” rather than “*Was it a success?*” We commit to evaluative processes that help us to continually shape and reshape ministry that is in process. We also recognize that not everything can be measured by the end-results but rather more importantly by the means of which the process is conducted.

Posture of Future Orientation

We want to engage the question, “*What future is God bringing into being and how do we need to change?*” Recognizing how often our focus is on preserving the past, we commit to boldly anticipating the future.

Posture of Self-Reliance

We believe that we are often held back because we are waiting for someone else (General Assemblies, synods, presbyteries, ... etc.) to do something or allocate the resources. If we are going to faithfully live into the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, we must take initiative and be creative with our resources. We commit to relying more on the power of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and energy that we each bring to the work.

Posture of a Kin-dom

Finally, we are not called to primarily institutional survival. We are called to give the world glimpses of the kin-dom of God. We cannot lose sight of the new reality that Jesus Christ inaugurated in our world and our relationships through Christ’s ministry. We commit ourselves to this movement of God in our world that transcends any individual institution.

Process Changing

Having identified the patterns that need to be broken and changed, and the postures that need to be set, we are now ready to identify the process in which sustainable changes may take shape. In order to do that we must identify the processes that exhibit and inhibit change to take place:

Develop a Process of Advocacy

We believe that a process of advocacy must be developed to exhibit change. The process must be inclined to openness, power sharing and transparency that go beyond the individual churches and mid-councils.

Be Inclusive within the Decision Making Process

We seek genuine collaboration and partnership with all stakeholders (i.e. doing ministry *with* peoples, not *to* peoples). Contributions, stories and spiritual practices that have an impact on people, respect cultural differences and the way ministry is done in diverse contexts must be honored.

Acknowledge Different Cultural Practices

We believe that it is important to learn the varying practices such as language, music, worship, and theology, and honor the diversity and uniqueness of one another.

Acknowledge Different Cultural Traditions of Leaders

We recommend a process of welcoming and acclimating for racial ethnic leaders shall be created. Further, the process should provide a safe space, language translation, a manner of worship and practice of ministry that is aligned with their culture and tradition.

Engage in Intentional Dialogues about Missional Perspectives

We believe that a process of engaging in intentional dialogues regarding the missional perspective of the church in light of today’s demographic changes is necessary. We recommend that racial ethnic groups be invited to be a part of the decision-making process, and that their gifts and contributions be valued and recognized within the councils.

Such intentional dialogues may include, but not limited to:

- a. Strategic missional planning for neighborhoods where significant demographic shifts have occurred over the years;
- b. Establishing missional partnerships between “tall steeple” churches and churches that are “making ends meet” but may be more equipped and motivated to conduct missional outreach to the local community.

Recognize Different Ministry Styles

We believe that different styles of ministry of racial ethnic congregations must be recognized. Not all ministries are “cookie-cutting” and there is no “best” practice in ministries. The seemingly stagnant-growth or declining non-racial ethnic congregations may learn ministry strategies and practices from those that are growing and vibrant racial ethnic congregations. We recommend that where appropriate,

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

congregations be willing to develop a covenantal relationship in order to share and help each other grow and learn in the process. Mid councils and their leaders shall facilitate this process with congregations that are seemingly good-match missionally for such partnership.

Translate and Honor Stories

We encourage mid councils to translate and honor the stories of each population that compose the life of the presbytery, i.e. translation of the docket, cultural celebrations, inclusive worship that uplifts the ministry of racial ethnic congregations.

Cultural Proficiency and Sensitivity Training

We strongly recommend mid councils to include cultural proficiency and sensitivity training when engaging with a racial ethnic congregation that is going through a transition in their ministry.

Mid Council Assistances

We recommend that mid councils introduce and assist congregations with tools and trainings, such as PC(USA)'s *New Beginnings*, to assist congregations that may be "out-of-touch" with the changing demographic landscape of their neighborhood. These trainings afford the particular congregation a period of discernment in their missional planning and vision casting as reflected in the trends that are experiencing in their community.

We further recommend that mid councils assist congregations providing demographics statistics in order to assist the mission development process.

Racial Ethnic Leadership Development

We recommend that mid councils identify and convene all racial ethnic individuals, including young adults, who have demonstrated gifts and potentials of leadership. Empower these individuals to serve in various committees and in all levels of mid councils.

Preparing for a Multicultural and Pluralistic Ministry

In light of the rapidly changing landscape of society and of the church, we recommend mid councils explore new and creative ways by which commissioned ruling elders and teaching elders are to be prepared for multicultural and pluralistic ministry.

Practices Suggested

As previously mentioned, there is no proper or the "right" model of doing ministry. Every ministry is contextual and relevant to the needs of the local constituents while bearing the overarching missional theme of God's greater salvific plan for all humankind. We confess that our mission and our faith are guided by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Over the years, the PC(USA) has demonstrated firm commitment and taken great strides in recognizing the gift of diversity within the body of Christ. Our diversity, our gifts, and our contributions, affect not only how we carry out our ministry plans but more importantly how we nurture and foster relationships with one another through our missional partnership that is built upon mutual trust and covenant. Although traditional worship has been very much influenced by the "western" theology as attributed by our Presbyterian root, some of us may worship in a slightly different style and form, due to our cultural upbringing and practices, nevertheless we recognize that it is the same God who bind us all together as God's children, heirs according to God's promise, and as members of the PC(USA) family.

Making changes within an established organization such as the PC(USA) may be a daunting task but it is not an impossible task. It requires much faith, intentionality, and personal sacrifice in order to plant the seeds for success and reap the harvest of one's labor. It must be a communal effort, where everyone must buy-in and become a stakeholder of the organizational change, rather than the effort of a few who are passionate. The responsibility must not rest solely upon the leader(s) of the organization.

We recognize that most leaders tend to be abstract communicators while many team members think concretely. Concepts bore them; they want specifics. Our vision must accompany with measurable and attainable goals. Furthermore, we must realize that all change is a critique of the past. Some may feel a sense of loss towards those implemented changes, especially changes that call for lasting and systemic change in behavior. While it is important to acknowledge these, the emphasis must be made on moving forward into the future.

There is no exhaustive list that can suggest all the possible practices that mid councils shall consider in the course of developing regional models for racial ethnic ministries in the PC(USA). However, the following may serve as a launching point in addressing and restructuring racial ethnic ministries going forward. Keep in mind that each local demographic context may need to be addressed specifically:

Avoid Tokenism

As referred to earlier, when considering racial ethnic persons for leadership position, tokenism must be avoided. Honor and recognize what gifts racial ethnic persons may have to offer and contribute to the needs of the organization.

Promote Access and Opportunities

We recommend that mid councils promote access and opportunities to leadership trainings, internships and coaching among the racial ethnic leaders, including young adults. An effort to seek new leaders must be made, instead of constantly referring to the same leaders for ideas and consultations.

Encourage Horizontal Networks

We encourage a horizontal network of racial ethnic peers and leaders to exchange and collaborate on ideas, both within mid councils and self-sufficiently finding their own way. For example, REAPS (Racial Ethnic Advanced Pastoral Skills) is a group of racial ethnic pastors from several presbyteries within the Synod of the Pacific who decided to go beyond their mid councils to collaborate and organize their own annual continuing education retreats for ongoing pastoral formation, retooling, and fellowship with funding from GA- Unassigned Restricted Funds, 70047 (Dedicated for teaching elders for teaching and preaching of the Bible for synods of the Western U.S.) and Lilly Foundation Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grants.

Build Genuine Relationships

We recommend that genuine relationships and trust between racial ethnic constituents within mid council and the council be built and ignited. In the case where past relationships existed and a sense of mistrust was developed, such relationships must be rebuilt and reignited. The relationship must be reconciled before lasting and constructive changes may take into effect.

Listen to Racial Ethnic Constituents

We urge the church to value the voices and opinions of the racial ethnic constituents. Practice active listening among all interested groups. Take time to listen to what racial ethnic people may have to offer to one another and to the larger church.

Further, we urge the church to increase the interest base of racial ethnic churches to the wider church. The challenges that racial ethnic churches face are not always exclusive to racial ethnic churches, and can sometimes be better reimagined with a larger more diverse group of people.

Seek Transparency and Build Accountability

Seek transparency and build mutual accountabilities in all decision-making process between mid councils and racial ethnic constituents.

Offer Virtual Instrumentalities

We encourage the consideration of the “virtual instrumentalities” for racial ethnic ministries, which enable organizing beyond one mid council or neighboring mid councils, thereby helping link up unique groups in that part of the country with not-so-unique groups in other parts of the country.

Positioning to Move Ahead

Finally, we conclude by looking beyond and moving ahead. We must identify who we are, whose we are, and who we are called to be. We are all children of God and in life and in death we ultimately belong to God. We are called to be God’s faithful witnesses and be the ambassadors and agents of God’s love in this world.

As Presbyterians, we understand that our theology and polity articulate a format of mutuality—mutual accountability and responsibility that binds us together in covenant relationship.

Renewed Focus on Imagination

With this in mind, we suggest that the *whole church* needs to revisit our ordination vow to “pray for, and seek to serve the people... with imagination,” with a renewed focus on “imagination.” This means governing with permission and protection, with an emphasis on being open to creative ideas. This focus says, “yes” to empower creativity and says “no” to the naysayers.

Mutual Relationship

Positioning in a mutual relationship considers whom we are connected with and how we position ourselves relationally. This means that the larger racial ethnic church community is intentional about working within the larger racial ethnic church community, across specific racial ethnic groups. In doing this we are grounded in modeling the Pentecost vision for the larger church. And grounded in Ephesians 2:19, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household.”

Understanding that people of color are becoming the plural majority in the United States, as the larger racial ethnic church community we position ourselves by working, collaborating, and meeting together. By doing so, we are able to discover a common voice, learn from one another’s challenges and ministries, and seek intersectionality among racial ethnic and immigrant groups. We discover and broker our stories because people are starving for stories and ideas that generate new life, understanding that life begets life.

This can include regular communication, gatherings, and collaboration between racial ethnic caucuses and/or peoples; an annual denomination wide gathering of racial ethnic peoples; intentional connecting and meeting within mid council bodies (synods, presbyteries) to gather, share ideas and resources, as we have mentioned in the Process Changing phase of this process.

Cultural Sensitivity

Within the context of mutuality, we would like to see the greater church community position themselves in a more open, contextual, and culturally sensitive way. The rationale is that those who have power and privilege, by the virtue of who they are, need to learn to listen to what the others may have to say and contribute to the table. We ask our white sisters and brothers to be reflective, sensitive, and take ownership in how they go about conducting ministry in a missional way that would edify and build up the overall body of Christ, and not just those who are already in power and authority. This includes being cognizant of funding, paternalism, imperialism, and cultural sensitivity.

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

On a practical level, this can include white privilege education; learning to be open and culturally sensitive in contextual and new ways (e.g. Mission Co-Working Training Model). It is then, and only then, when we can realize the fullness God's plan for all humankind.

Appendix 2

Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Participants

Elona Street-Stewart	Molly Casteel	Daniel Morales
Joanna Kim	Amy Kim Kyremes-Park	Bertram Johnson
Amaury Tañón-Santos	Allison Wood	Michelle Hwang
Julie Cox	Mirna Wasef	Doug Kelly
Larissa Kwong Abazia	Kyle Kristofalo	Mamie Broadhurst
Nicole Howard Lock	Amir Tawadous	Robin Miller Currás
Shannan Vance-Ocampo	Alex McNeill	Tony De La Rosa
Doris Garcia Rivera	Laura Cheifetz	Valerie Small
Mark Lomax	David Barnhart	Jennifer Harvey
Mati Moros	Afaf Girgis	Eric Barreto
Jessica Vazquez Torres	Eliana Maxim	Randal Jelks
Shivonia Singleton	Buddy Monahan	Stacy Kitahata
Lina Thompson	Arlene Gordon	Sterling Morse
Noha Khoury	Finney Premkumar	Sera Chung
Rosy Latimore	Marielis Barreto-Hernández	Rhaskell Hunter

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-24

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-24—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee for Social Witness Policy advises that Item 11-24 be approved with the following amendments to Recommendations 4., 5.b., 7.: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

Amendment to Recommendation 4:

“4. Direct the Office of the General Assembly [~~in coordination with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries,~~] to work with committees on ministry and committees on the preparation for ministry or their equivalents so that those overseeing preparation for ministry, congregations, pastoral relationships, and approval of calls shall.”

Amendment to Recommendation 5.b.:

“b. Create multimedia/intermedia,⁴ and/or film resources on race, ethnicity, racism, and ethnocentricity for church-wide study [~~drawing on material in this report as well as in Item 11-22 and effective earlier publications and films~~]”

Amendment to Recommendation 7:

“7. [~~Call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to confess its complicity and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.~~]”

“[~~a-~~] Direct the [~~Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), in consultation with~~] [~~Office of the General Assembly, specifically empowering~~] the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the Presbyterian Historical Society, to [~~lead the church to~~] study and to learn about the historic and current social, missional, and theological implications of the Doctrine of Discovery [~~guided by the considerations in Item 11-17, and reporting to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).~~]”

“[~~b-~~] Engage in dialogue with ecumenical partners concerning the doctrine.”

Commissioners face more than ten items dealing with race and antiracism at this assembly, an important sign of what the church as a whole needs to address (Items 03-02, 03-04, items related to supplier/vendor diversity, 10-03, and in this committee, 11-06, 08, 10, 12, 17, 18, 22, and 24). These items come from both presbyteries and General Assembly bodies. This list could also include the Confession of Belhar recommendation, which the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy believes should be a core element in all Presbyterian conversations about race organized in the next two years. Race remains a church-dividing matter, even as it divides societies around the globe.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy has a mandate to speak to specific matters of Christian conscience, informed by the theological and ethical discernment process described in the *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness* noted in our response to Items 11-01 and 11-02. The committee is also authorized to help steward the church's overall capacity for social witness.

Thus, though we do not claim the expertise on racial justice of ACREC and the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries, the amendments proposed to Recommendations 4 and 5 are designed to reduce duplication and strengthen the complementary relationship of the assembly bodies and the presbyteries and congregations. These recommendations do not change the nature of the argument made in the primary resource provided here, "Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity" Study Guide. This is a valuable contribution to the church's conversation, and it presents a different approach than Item 11-22 at various points. Item 11-22's "Points of Engagement" section suggests areas of continuity as well, going back to the earlier 1999 version of that document.

It is also the committee's view that important distinctions should be maintained between the process responsibilities of the Office of the General Assembly and the program responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, broadly speaking. In matters of developing policy to guide both bodies, the advocacy and advisory committees have a key role and must normally ensure that significant new policies are brought before the General Assembly for approval before resources are used.

The amendment to Recommendation 7 would bring this report into agreement with our advice on Item 11-17. The committee does not believe that an action to "repudiate" should be made on the basis of one conference and apart from prior study and deliberation by the body specifically appointed to this kind of assignment, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-24

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-24—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 11-24.

The ACREC commends the diligent and comprehensive efforts taken by the consultation teams that have convened, as directed by the 221st General Assembly (2014) in Item 09-14. Members of ACREC were invited to participate in both the National Consultation on Regional Racial Ethnic Ministries (Item 09-14 Recommendation 1) and the Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity (Item 09-14 Recommendation 3).

The critical issues of race, ethnicity, racism, and ethnocentricity define not only how we relate to one another as a church locally, regionally, and nationally, but also how we may come to engage in God's ongoing mission in this world while transforming the lives of those around us. This is a painstaking, heartfelt systemic issue that has burdened many of our communities (especially communities of color) for so long both within and beyond the church. Unfortunately, many of our church demographics, how we conduct our church practices, and the way decisions are made still carry more influence upon our thinking about differences of race and ethnicity than our commonality in Christ.

Over the years, the PC(USA) has taken significant strides in addressing this important issue; however, many of these consultations and conversations remain fruitless unless they lead to real actions that transform who we are as a church and steer our mission going forward.

The Season of Jubilee from 2016–2018, as called forth by this report, along with its various measures and recommendations, shall convict the PC(USA) and propel us into a season of spiritual humility, repentance, and transformation.

The ACREC supports the recommendations as proposed in this report and the study guide "Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity" as presented. These recommendations for action demonstrated genuine concerns and echoed the sentiments and voices of the church that have often times been unheard, as we strive to live out our calling together going forward as the body of Christ.

Item 11-25

[The assembly approved Item 11-25 with comment. See pp. 47, 59.]

Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

[Comment: In addition to the other government recommendations, the federal government should reclassify all forms of cannabis from schedule 1 to schedule 2 classification. As it is currently classified, research for medical applications is extremely restricted, which limits the opportunity for new treatments for many conditions, especially for degenerative neurological diseases. Reclassification would open up more possibilities.]

In fulfillment of the assignment from the 221st General Assembly (2014) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 35, 36, 630ff), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- 1. Receive the following affirmation, principles, and recommendations for the reform of drug law and policy for study and discussion across the church prior to final consideration at the 223rd General Assembly (2018), inviting particularly campus ministries, persons in recovery, counselors and related medical personnel, law enforcement, judges, and scholars to contribute comments prior to Sept 15, 2017, for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.**
- 2. Receive the supporting study of the consequences of current policies and their needed redirection toward greater public health, harm reduction, and recovery-based approaches in support of the policy being tested.**
- 3. Encourage congregations to host discussions led by persons such as those listed in Recommendation 1 on how Christians and churches should respond to drug use and abuse and the proposals in this report.**
- 4. Direct that the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy post online the policy resolution and its component study, “Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs,” make available appropriate aids for study and discussion, post all comment publicly for transparent consideration, and, in consultation with legal and medical resource persons, bring a revised report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in St. Louis, Missouri.**

Affirmation

Drug use and abuse are two different things and both affect the spiritual life our nation. In response to overtures from seven presbyteries, this report was requested by the 221st General Assembly (2014) to provide advocacy “for effective drug policies grounded in science, compassion and human rights” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 630). The report analyzes the urgent and ongoing tragedies of mass incarceration and drug-related violence in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. It presents a Christian framework for reform but is not primarily a study of addiction and recovery, though these necessarily receive attention. The core of the argument is in the title: *Healing Before Punishment*, which puts evidence-based treatment and racially unbiased regulation to the fore. This initial affirmation condenses the study’s findings and provides the logic for the recommendations.

While many congregations and communities are grieving the recent surge in overdose deaths, many linked to legal painkillers, the larger cultural landscape regarding drug use is changing rapidly. Five states and the nation’s capital have legalized the recreational use of marijuana. This movement is poised to spread, bringing changes to patterns of behavior, with marijuana possibly joining alcohol and tobacco as drugs of choice in our culture. As the church has in the past, we affirm that humanity was created for joyful service to God and the creation, and that each of us is to be a temple of the Holy Spirit as well as a faithful disciple. With Paul we affirm, “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything” (1 Cor. 6:12). Understanding that our deepest happiness is rooted in loving relationships and meaningful callings, all recreational pursuits involve created goods to be enjoyed mindful of excess, potential harms to oneself, and our responsibilities to others, including those less fortunate.

Despite that goal of moderation, even in healthy families and communities of material abundance people experience psychic, physical, and emotional pain, and attempt to treat or dull such pain with mood- and metabolism-affecting substances. Others seek ecstatic states or an expanded consciousness of transcendence, without apparent health consequences. Yet the scale and scope of the abuse of drugs, including alcohol, and other substances consumed compulsively, reveal a culture-wide spiritual problem. In this context, drug addiction became identified as the chief threat.

In reaction, the United States government adopted a legal prohibition model that relies on punitive policies: the “war on drugs.” In practice, this is a war that targets *some* of those who ingest *some of* these substances, or who supply our communities with prohibited substances. Yet this war, fought with mass imprisonment and massive militarization, has become a cure worse than the disease, as documented in the accompanying background findings.

In forwarding this report for consideration, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) calls for a fundamental shift from a warfare model rooted in fear to a healing model rooted in grace. Simply put, we have been fighting the wrong things with the wrong weapons. The “war on drugs” has targeted communities of color and youth, it has become a gateway to more serious crime, and it has failed to reduce sufficiently addictive behavior in a drug-abundant society. Outside the United States, the war on drugs has corrupted and destabilized governments, poisoned agricultural areas, and led to horrific rates of murder and extortion. Attempts to reduce drug supply overseas and at home have cost billions of dollars, while demand for illicit drugs continues to mark a society that is also awash in alcohol. This is not to deny the serious risks of taking some drugs, whether one is addicted or not, but both pragmatism about reducing harm and trust in the higher power of God call us to support healing rather than punishment.

Thus the “just say no” of total abstinence remains too simple for our whole society. This is recognized in the major social experiment that some states are embarking upon with the regulation of marijuana. This report gives a guarded acceptance to legal regulation of marijuana use, *if* coupled with significant levels of publicly funded research into public health, education, and other impacts of such legalization. Other nations have decriminalized or legalized drug use on a larger scale, using their social service networks to offer treatment and reduce harm based on a public health model. As with marijuana legalization, a goal is to reduce the profitability of underground economies and change behaviors through education and regulation.

Further, following the General Assembly’s earlier support for medical uses of marijuana, this report supports the evidence-based revision of the 1970 categorization of drugs upon which the drug war has been based. For some medical conditions, there are currently illicit drugs that—while posing serious risks in other contexts—offer important benefits. At the same time, licit drugs, such as prescription opioids, are being abused extensively. There are also newer synthetic drugs, including drugs related to gene therapies, that require more careful study of potential risks and benefits.

Recognizing that the categorization of 1970 was unscientific and did not provide a proportionate basis for criminal sanctions, it is time to reconsider how drugs are regulated and proscribed. The healing model envisioned here still requires legal regulation (as with cigarettes, alcohol, and pharmaceuticals). This model requires the wise balancing of personal rights and social responsibilities, alert to the fact that corporate interests are actively seeking to change public policy for their own benefit in this area.

The spiritual nature of addiction leads Christians to call for a framework of healing that is more than simply treatment and therapy, important as these are. If addictions are in part responses to cultural values such as dominance, control, and winning, then recovery approaches should be informed by social psychology, anthropology, and criminal justice. These, in turn, need to inform and be informed by our theologies and communities of grace, repentance, redemption, and reconciliation. Some drug users seeking transcendence and mystical experience may have judged the church’s own offerings as lacking.

Most casual drug use does not lead to addiction, and our criminal justice system needs to reflect this more adequately, as proposed below. But, addiction is both a disease and an orientation of life ultimately separate from God as well as others. Theologically, it involves variants of sins we all share, and (sometimes depending on gender) it includes degrees of pride and blaming others, self-loss, and victimization. While many Presbyterians may drink alcohol and come to use marijuana on occasion, we need to be particularly alert to undercurrents of despair or depression. The Gospel does not automatically free us from these things, but it can give us eyes to see that while wine and other substances can “gladden the heart,” they may also numb and atrophy our capacity for love and joy in community.

Based on the tenets of our Christian faith, on precedent Presbyterian social policy, and on current research and expert testimony, the following principles offer wisdom to guide our denomination’s responses to drug use, addiction, and drug policy. These principles for “Building a House for Health” are followed by specific recommendations for PC(USA) policy and action.

I. Principles for Building a House for Health¹

A. Policies on drugs, health, and justice must respond to our theology and ethics. “In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God’s image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community,” says our Brief Statement of Faith (*Book of Confessions*, 10.3, lines 29–32).

the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. ... (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4, lines 66–71)

That sovereign love and that Spirit guide our efforts to transform drug policy.

B. Drug and alcohol policy should be evidence-based. Beginning from a place of compassion and desire for fairness, policy should be based on experience and evidence—in the United States and around the world—of what has effectively protected health and reduced violence. Among relevant considerations:

1. Regulations and social practices that substantially reduced use of tobacco hold important lessons for reducing risks and harms from other drugs, licit and illicit.

2. The U.S. experience with alcohol prohibition—nationwide in the early 20th century and locally to this day—has important lessons about public health gains and unintended consequences.

3. In an environment where media sound bites often misrepresent scientific knowledge, empirical studies help policymakers and the public to evaluate the relative risks and benefits of different drugs, assign resources, and identify best practices for regulations.

4. The experiences of other nations that have implemented harm reduction, public health, and new judicial policies and approaches in response to drug use and addiction are also relevant.

C. Drug addiction functions partly as a disease, and should be diagnosed and treated by health professionals familiar with chemical dependency. People who have suffered trauma as children or adults are more vulnerable to addiction, underlining the value of psychological counseling in many cases. Judicial personnel should not be diagnosing addiction or prescribing treatment, as not all drug use constitutes addiction. Specialized drug courts should offer treatment, restitution, and alternatives to criminalization and incarceration whenever possible.

D. Drug addiction is also a spiritual condition that calls for holistic, communal, and voluntary forms of recovery, to complement medical treatment and therapeutic techniques. The church's ministry is to respond to drug addicts and abusers with compassion and healing, and support alternatives to incarceration whenever possible, while presenting a Gospel that respects the complexity of humans and the mystery of God.

E. Because substance abuse is a public health issue, the bulk of government, church, and private resources that address this problem should be for physical and mental health care and services.

F. Punitive approaches to drug use are generally counterproductive. The criminal justice system should be dedicated to addressing behavior that harms or puts others at serious risk. Adults' right to ingest substances of their choosing holds up to a point where one's individual agency is compromised.² Particularly when it harms dependents, a responsible community may legislate restrictions and authorize protective intervention on behalf of the common good.

G. Public, cultural, and societal messages concerning drug use can set social expectations and create a climate of prevention and recovery (as in I.B.1. above). Public policy may also learn from traditional societies about social practices that reduce excessive and isolated consumption patterns and addictions.

H. Everyone should have access to essential medicines, including new applications of currently controlled substances and derivatives of traditional plants found to have health benefits. With careful controls and under medical guidance, methadone, morphine, and other pain control medications for cancer, childbirth, and palliative care should be available for people who need them.

I. Good drug policies are equitable with regard to race, income, and gender of the population. Policies and strategies for prosecution that disproportionately harm or benefit some groups relative to others, although their rates of transgressions are substantially the same, should be altered or remedied to ensure fair treatment.

J. Children and adults fleeing violence brought on by our war on drugs are not security threats; they deserve asylum and sanctuary. Just as the church responds compassionately to persons suffering from the effects of addiction, people who have fled criminal organizations and state violence in Mexico and Central America need sustained support.

K. Racially differentiated application and enforcement of drug laws cause deep and pervasive harm. As a predominantly white denomination, PC(USA) members have special opportunities and responsibilities to address the racist structures, processes, and social outcomes that give the war on drugs so disproportionate an impact. The lives and rights of poor people, communities of color, and women in the United States and around the world are no less sacred or valuable than anyone else's lives or rights.

L. Economic causes of involvement in drug production and trafficking need to be addressed. Current drug policy has unacceptable unintended consequences for low-income populations at home and abroad, offering risky opportunities to the unemployed and inflating the costs of living in poorer communities.

M. Police uses of military weaponry, surveillance, and tactics tend to increase violent outcomes and community distrust. In addition to longtime support for community accountability, community policing, and police professionalism, Presbyterians can support movements for the lives of people of color by advocating for a number of practical solutions those movements have developed for ending police violence and militarization.³

N. The increase in gun violence in Latin America attributable to U.S. drug policy and U.S. gun industry exports is inconsistent with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s theology of peacemaking. Ending military assistance to often-corrupt police and militaries can reduce the pervasive violations committed by these forces. Restricting the commercial availabil-

ity of military-grade weaponry, and hence its smuggling by organized crime, can help reduce gun violence in Latin America, in concert with the public health emphasis on harm reduction.⁴

II. Recommendations Based on Principles for Building a House for Health

Engaging our congregations in our communities. The goal of these recommendations is that each congregation should have a full referral plan for cases of problematic drug use, insight into the structural violence that underpins current drug policies, and an understanding of how to support healing and advocate for constructive change. Developing such capacities can reduce fear and barriers to mutual understanding among church members, drug users, law enforcement, formerly incarcerated people, social activists, immigrants, and health care providers. In the longer term, engagement also supports learning, enabling the church to be a catalyst within our communities, helping reduce harmful behaviors with productive involvement.

A. *Recommendations for PC(USA) Action and Policy*

1. Out of the church's commitment to be a community of healing and justice, each presbytery is encouraged to designate a drug policy facilitator to support congregational engagement and awareness of advocacy and treatment options. The Presbyterian Mission Agency is similarly encouraged to assist presbyteries in identifying facilitators, drawing on earlier Health Ministries contacts, and the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA) networks of mutual support.

2. Facilitators are urged to visit congregations in their presbyteries to support their deeper reflection, learning, and engagement, and to assist interested congregations in the following processes:

a. *Education*

(1) Use the Drug Policy Reform Curriculum (see www.pcusa.org/acswp), including its suggestions for dialogue about drug policies and race, adapting it for local needs.

(2) Survey congregation members' experiences (or absence of experiences) of drug use, drug enforcement, incarceration, treatment, and recovery, and determine the best ways for members to learn from their communities and obtain reliable information.

(3) Hold congregation and community fora on changes in drug law that are more just, effective, and compassionate than current punitive approaches. These may include listening processes with churches of people of color to share educational resources and opportunities.

(4) Produce or circulate worship materials that reference the goals and recommendations of this report. These would encourage a celebration of God as healer and source of joy and connection, in contrast to our culture's worship of over-stimulation and unlimited consumption.

b. *Community Service*

(1) Help Presbyterian congregations develop a referral capability for problematic drug use, including non-punitive treatment and recovery facilities, harm reduction programs, and police and non-police options in their communities.

(2) While recognizing the benefits of abstinence-based approaches for many people, promote non-prohibitionist efforts to prevent and reduce the harms from high-risk drug use among both youth and adults.

(3) Support re-entry programs for people released from incarceration.

c. *Engagement and Advocacy*

(1) Encourage churches that host addiction recovery groups to continue that support and to engage in constructive dialogue about treatment, prevention of abuse, and harm reduction. Congregations, 12-step programs, and counselors are also encouraged to explore how both drug use and recovery relate to the quest for meaning and joy in life, found by Christians in the "beloved community" of the church.

(2) Join with other faith communities in advocacy for harm reduction legislation and measures, such as needle exchange and all-night drop-in centers, which shift the paradigm away from the drug war model. To this end, the General Assembly invites other faith groups, including members of National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., to join us in this endeavor.

(3) In April 2016, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drugs takes place in New York. While this global event occurs before the PC(USA)'s own General Assembly, we recommend that

PC(USA) participate in the UNGASS follow-up process, which is anticipated to generate further actions to reform global drug policy, testing this report in that context.

B. *Public Policy Recommendations*

In addition to congregational engagement in the process of drug policy reform, the PC(USA) recommends the following reforms and actions by federal, state, and local governments. Some reforms may be more realizable at the state and local levels. Other reforms at state and local levels may not be possible without national changes. Presbyterians can advocate these changes with both elected officials and candidates.

1. Congress and the Executive Branch of the Federal government should

a. Revisit the global prohibition regime, through U.S. actions in the United Nations and in bilateral relations, which support or at least do not oppose international initiatives to explore alternatives to drug prohibition and experiment with new approaches tested by realities on the ground.

b. Encourage examination by states of models of legal regulation of the use and possession by adults of some currently illicit drugs for the purposes of public health and safety, such as is underway with marijuana in several states, with rigorous study of social, educational, crime-related, and medical impacts. In order to restrain the size and power of commercial drug interests, it is advisable to separate production and sale, possibly using state-run (not simply licensed) facilities for sale and monitoring of purity and for studying consumption patterns. Appropriate warnings, labels, and other restrictions would apply, and some drugs would necessarily remain prohibited, based on scientific determination.

2. With regard to Public Health:

a. Expand addiction treatment programs so that drug dependent individuals can receive treatment when and where it is needed. Nonprofit and nonresidential programs may be most cost-effective in public planning for healing rather than incarceration.

b. Revise, in consultation with the medical community and state-level initiatives, the current outdated scheduling of controlled substances based on scientific and public health criteria.

c. In connection with 2.b. above, increase and shift funding to epidemiological and biomedical research on effects of drugs, patterns of drug use, and impacts of punishment and regulation in order to support best practices in treatment, recovery, and public health.

d. Provide to city and county public health agencies the resources needed to serve as first responders to overdose, problematic drug-induced behavior, and mental illness, so that law enforcement is not the only or primary first responder. Make overdose prevention an integral part of public health, including making the antidote Naloxone widely available in places where overdoses occur. Promote Good Samaritan legislation that exempts from prosecution persons notifying emergency responders of overdoses.

e. Reevaluate which behavioral health treatments are selected for insurance coverage, based on evidence of effectiveness and a diversity of approaches according to need. In the absence of universal health care, the twenty-two states that have not done so should embrace the Affordable Care Act's expansion of Medicaid coverage to low-income individuals.

f. Lift the ban on federal funding for needle exchange programs and revise laws on drug paraphernalia (including the possession of clean needles), which is consistent with reducing risks of the drugs themselves and associated diseases of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

3. With regard to the Judicial System and Policing:

a. Condition grants of federal funds to local police and sheriff's departments on ending racially and ethnically discriminatory policing and increasing community trust.

b. Expand the scope of executive orders and group pardons for the release of drug offenders who were sentenced unjustly under the 100-to-1 crack-cocaine and other inequitable and excessive sentencing provisions, in line with efforts at more clemency for nonviolent and over-sentenced prisoners generally.

c. In addition to reforming mandatory sentencing, punitive use of prosecutorial discretion to maintain conviction and incarceration rates (often involving prior, paraphernalia, and possession arrests) should be restrained, especially with defendants who are unable to receive or afford effective counsel. This is to reform the practice of using maximum charges against defendants with limited legal resources to force plea bargains that incur harsher prison sentences than wealthier defendants usually receive.

d. Eliminate preemptive post-incarceration sanctions for drug offenses that create barriers to recovery and family re-integration, including employment discrimination⁵ and restrictions on public housing and voting.

e. Social service agencies and community representatives should engage in restorative justice and investment practices together with people who have been harmed by police violence, unjust mandatory minimum sentences,⁶ and disparate drug law enforcement.⁷

f. Increase and improve the use of drug courts to deal knowledgeably with persons accused of crimes, particularly nonviolent offenses, probation or parole violations, and cases where children are impacted, to facilitate treatment, training, education, and employment, working in concert with medical and social service personnel.

g. End or radically reform asset-forfeiture laws to prevent police seizures of property without due process. Offer people arrested for nonviolent sale of illicit drugs opportunities for training, education, and employment as an alternative to incarceration and a felony record.

4. Economic Policy:

a. Promote sustainable economic development in areas where coca and poppies are grown, centered on local farmer and community input.

b. Promote economic investment in U.S. communities that have been devastated by disinvestment and harmed by discriminatory drug law enforcement and/or drug-related violence. Drug testing of employees should be limited to what is needed to safeguard the person's performance of a job.

5. Foreign and Immigration Policy:

a. Sharply reduce the transfer of weaponry, training, and equipment from the United States to police and militaries in Latin America as part of the war on drugs. Make such transfers of arms and training, in the past and going forward, transparent to the public, to promote accountability. Disclose the extent and general nature of surveillance cooperation and strengthen financial disclosure laws to reduce corruption, money-laundering, and cross-border tax evasion. Advocate for congressional and other public hearings on the human rights and economic development impacts of the war on drugs and any foreign aid linked to it.

b. The president should take executive action to ban the import of assault weapons into the United States, where many are sold and trafficked to criminal drug-trafficking organizations in Mexico and Central America.

c. Provide political asylum and immediate release from detention, pending appropriate process, for those who have fled violence and have a credible fear of violence in their home countries where the war on drugs is occurring.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral: *2014 Referral. Item 09-05. On Calling for a Two-Year Study by the Governing Bodies and Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Discern How to Advocate for Effective Drug Policies Grounded in Science, Compassion, and Human Rights*—From the 221st General Assembly (2014) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 35, 36, 630ff).

Healing Before Punishment

Table of Contents (use hyperlinks to jump down to sections)

Part I: Foundations

- [Introduction](#)
- [Some Definitions](#)
- [The Assignment: Why and How This Study Was Organized and Conducted](#)
- [Previous PC\(USA\) PolicyWork on Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse](#)
- [Theological Grounding and Guidance](#)

Part II: Where We Are Today

- [Changes Since 1993](#)
- [Drug Use and Policies Today](#)
- [Criminal Penalties](#)
- [Harms Versus Legal Classification](#)

Part III: Historical Roots and Dynamics of Drug Policies

- Historical Roots of Punitive Drug Policies
- Illicit and Licit Economies
- Geographically Spreading the Problem of Drug Production and Trafficking

Part IV: Analysis of Drug War Impacts

Part V: Alternatives and Changes to Come

- Changes to Come: Marijuana
- Alternatives: Learning from Positive Experiences

Appendix A: Task Force Members

Appendix B: List of Those Who Gave Testimony to the Drug Policy Task Force

Part I: Foundations

Introduction

Our communities experience psychic, physical, and emotional pain, in isolation or in groups. Many members of our communities attempt to treat or dull such pain by repeatedly ingesting mood- and metabolism-affecting substances. The scale and scope of the abuse of drugs, including alcohol, and other substances used compulsively, reveal a culture-wide spiritual problem. In reaction, our nation has chosen to wage a war that targets some of those who ingest some of these substances, or who supply our communities with prohibited substances. Yet this war, fought with mass imprisonment and massive militarization, has become a cure worse than the disease. In 2014, in response to overtures from seven presbyteries, the General Assembly authorized a study of how Presbyterians might help our society end the war on drugs, an assignment that necessarily led to the consideration of alternatives.

In adopting this report, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) would call for a fundamental shift from a warfare model rooted in fear to a healing model rooted in grace. Simply put, we have been fighting the wrong things with the wrong weapons. The “war on drugs” has targeted communities of color and youth, it has become a gateway to more serious crime, it has corrupted and destabilized governments, and it has failed to eliminate addictive behavior in a drug-abundant society. Attempts to reduce drug supply overseas and at home have cost billions of dollars, while demand for illicit drugs continues to mark a society that is also awash in alcohol.⁸ This is not to deny the serious risks of taking some drugs, whether one is addicted or not, but both pragmatism about reducing harm and trust in the higher power of God call us to support healing rather than punishment.

Thus the “just say no” of total abstinence remains too simple for our whole society, despite our reliance on the legal prohibition model for many drugs. This is increasingly recognized in the great social experiment that some states and nations are embarking upon with the decriminalization and regulation of marijuana. This report gives a guarded acceptance to legal regulation of marijuana, coupled with significant levels of publicly funded research into public health, education, and the impacts of such legalization. Further, following the General Assembly’s earlier support for medical uses of marijuana, this report supports the evidence-based revision of the 1970 categorization of drugs upon which the drug war has been based. For some medical conditions, there are currently illicit drugs that—while posing serious risks in other contexts—offer serious benefits. At the same time, licit drugs may be abused.

The healing model here envisioned still requires legal regulation (as with cigarettes, alcohol, and pharmaceuticals), and a wise balancing of personal rights and social responsibilities—we are “our brothers and sisters keepers.” The Advisory Committee is particularly concerned with large alcohol, tobacco, or gambling conglomerates becoming involved in marketing and influencing government policy and spending on recovery, treatment, and harm reduction.⁹ But because of the spiritual nature of addiction, as Christians we call for a framework of healing that is more than simply treatment and therapy, important as these are. If the processes of addiction and recovery are themselves partly cultural and psychological responses to a culture that idealizes dominance, control, and winning, then we need our theology to inform and be informed by our medicine, social science, and criminal justice.

Most casual drug use does not lead to addiction, and some is prompted by a quest for transcendent experiences that are not addictive. But addiction is both a disease and an orientation of life ultimately separate from God as well as others. Theologically, it involves variants of sins we all share, and (often depending on our gender) it includes degrees of pride and blaming others, self-loss, and victimization. While many Presbyterians may smoke tobacco and drink alcohol and come to use marijuana on occasion, we need to be particularly alert to undercurrents of despair or depression. The Gospel does not automatically free us from these things, but it can give us eyes to see when wine and other substances that can “gladden the heart,” may also numb and atrophy our capacity for love and joy in community.

Addiction has an impact on Christians because it reduces our freedom to regulate when and how much we consume, and stunts our growth and our maturity of relationship with God and other people in our lives. The thing we are addicted to be-

comes an idol, as our need for the thing holds us captive and takes precedence over God and God's desire for our freedom, health, and maturity. Drug policies should, in theory, help us to address all of these problems, but we find that these policies contain their own set of demons.

The war on drugs affects Christian public witness because it affects the healing of society as well as of individuals. We can compare drug abuse to diseases that involve social ostracization, such as leprosy, or conditions that have been the basis of social exclusion, such as blindness or transexuality. Drug producers, transporters, and sellers face a historical demonization by society that sees them profiting from the self-destruction of others, which helps explain society's punitive policies and practices. Yet in our society, with the highest percentage of persons in prison in the world, punishment has taken on a life of its own, fueled by gun violence, racism, and the prison industry. So healing the individual means addressing also the criminal enterprise and criminal-justice economies that profit from ill-health.

One of our first tasks in constructing a healing and just response to drugs and drug policy is to examine what we believe we know about them. Orlando Fals Borda, a Presbyterian who is known as the father of sociology in Colombia, showed that learning from the social sciences can help mission co-workers be more effective in transforming lives.¹⁰ There is a crucial need to think critically about drugs, and about drug policy and laws. This report thus attempts to deeply inform and to demythologize our understanding of drug use and abuse and drug policy, and we document source evidence that readers can consult for further learning.

An understanding of addiction as a disease that actually changes the way the brain works will help us put it into theological context. If we see addiction only in the context of free will, we will understand the choices made by addicts as those of sin—like any other person—which is only part of the story.

Addictive behaviors alter the brain's dopamine receptors, motivation and reward mechanisms, and self-regulation circuits. "Recent studies have shown that repeated drug use leads to long-lasting changes in the brain that undermine voluntary control," according to the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Dr. Nora Volkow.¹¹ In addition, conditions in the brain before first drug use—created by environmental or genetic influences—can predispose a person to addiction, further diminishing some individuals' capacity to exercise free will in response to substance use.

Moreover, our society is more likely to punish drug addicts for continued self-destructive use than we are to punish, say, a diabetic who does not eat appropriately, though the damage and costs to health may be comparable.¹²

Regarding addiction that does not fit a simple disease model, the late Gerald May, in *Addiction & Grace*, shows how similar addictive behavior is to all kinds of self-defeating attachments that serve to separate us from God, suggesting humility about the presence of temptation in all our lives.¹³ True, drugs offer different dimensions of dependency and can require both physical and psychological treatment. Further, scholars like Merrill Singer and J. Bryan Page show some of the ways that modern forms of mass addiction parallel the industrial-scale availability of distilled alcohol and drugs—conditions not foreseen in biblical and other ancient literature.¹⁴ Yet theologians like Linda A. Mercadante and James B. Nelson illuminate how strongly particular strands of Christian theology shaped Alcoholics Anonymous and how other faith insights available in the church may deepen and build upon the recovery process. While both caution that May generalizes the category of addiction too broadly, Mercadante and Nelson wrestle with the nature of the will in self-destruction, "soul loss," and redemption.¹⁵

The church's work with addicted people has aimed to help them, through their focus on God, to stop the use of the substance to which they are addicted. This has been positive for many people. Presbyterian congregations across the country have hosted Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step groups. But often the church has not acknowledged the pain, early exposure to stress and/or trauma, societal reliance on ingesting things to address discomfort, or chemical imbalances that led addicts to become dependent on those substances.

We are not speaking only about the several kinds of pain experienced by addicts, their families, and communities. This is not an academic exercise of policy analysis. Along with pastoral care, we have a stake in changing policy because so many people are killed, die early, live in cages, cannot exercise their rights, are humiliated in public, separated from their families, denied care and treatment, or long for education and opportunities enjoyed by others, including by most Presbyterians. Drug policy, like any policy in the Reformed tradition, should be guided by what are traditionally called the three uses of "the Law." The first use is to distinguish right and wrong, the second to maintain a just civil order by force if necessary, and the third use is to be a non-punitive, even nurturing guide for the redeemed. Laws which themselves cause harm or disorder do not lead to grace; nor is the state of grace one of perfection, hence freedom includes the law's continuing guidance and education or formation in what is good.¹⁶

We are not above or outside drug-related problems; we are part of them, and when our hearts and minds are open to this reality in our society, we experience the suffering, and know a passion to change the structures that cause it. We conclude this introduction with part of a sermon from the pastor of one of the congregations that initiated this study:

Galatians 5 begins: "For freedom Christ has set us free, stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery." Effective drug policy will seek to help people and families be free. Our current drug policy and drug war have failed to decrease drug use and addiction and have contributed further to violence and corruption. But most egregious has been the unequal administration of justice.

It is clear that our current drug laws are not addressing addiction, as many who use illicit drugs are not addicts and there are many things that are not illegal that people are addicted to. In a broad sense, almost anything can be an addiction: sugar, caffeine, food or eating in general, alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, many different types of sexual obsessions . . . , video games, watching TV, messing with our cell phones, nagging at our spouse, shopping, fashion, driving a car, golf, fantasy football, gambling, accumulation of wealth and power, violence, etc. While there are many people addicted to many things, we do not send them to prison for doing them, but instead, there are many marketing strategists trying to make money off our desire to consume them and our desire to stop consuming them.”—The Reverend Max Lynn, St. Johns Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, Calif.¹⁷

Some Definitions

Addiction is “any repeated behavior, substance-related or not, in which a person feels compelled to persist, regardless of its negative impacts on the person’s life and the lives of others.”¹⁸ Addiction can be physical and/or psychological. Gerald May provides a five-part definition that combines both: “(1) tolerance (build-up of resistance, requiring higher dosage), (2) withdrawal symptoms, (3) self-deception, (4) loss of willpower, and (5) distortion of attention.”¹⁹

Legal frameworks to address the production, trafficking, supply, and possession of drugs range from prohibition to a free market model. *Prohibition* forbids production, trafficking, supply, and possession of a particular drug as illegal acts and individuals arrested for any one of these offences are subject to criminal sanctions. In general, the United States has adopted a prohibitionist model at the federal level for drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin. At the other end of the legal framework spectrum, the *free market* approach allows the activities of production, trafficking, supply, and possession of a particular drug with no or very few regulations regarding its production or sales. Drugs of sufficiently low risk, such as coffee and tea have such minimal regulation. In the middle of these two poles is a framework of *legal regulation*, such as currently used for alcohol. Legal regulation can be more or less strict depending on the requirements prescribed in law. For example, the requirements often include who can produce, sell, and buy the drug; locations where the drug can be produced and sold or how much of a drug can be produced or sold at one site, or whether the seller can make a profit.

Also in between the poles of prohibition and the free market legal frameworks is the *decriminalization* of a particular drug. *Decriminalization* “is generally understood to refer to the removal of criminal sanctions for certain offences—usually the possession of small quantities of currently illegal drugs for personal use.”²⁰ For example, during prohibition the manufacture, distribution, and sale of alcohol were criminalized; however, the possession, consumption, and production of alcohol for oneself was not illegal. Often decriminalization is confused with *legalization*, which is the process by which prohibition of a substance is ended or repealed.

We use an operational definition of *racism* as racial prejudice plus power, which can be exhibited by institutions, communities, and individuals. *Institutional racism* does not necessarily involve racist intent, but leads to racially disparate and unjust outcomes. Concepts such as “white privilege,” “microaggressions,” and “subconscious/internalized racism” help us understand the unconscious dynamics of discrimination. These approaches move us forward from the dictionary’s “belief in the superiority of a particular race and prejudice based on this belief.”

The Assignment: Why and How This Study Was Organized and Conducted

“In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage” (*Book of Confessions*, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4, lines 65–66).

The church needs to take a stand. We need to confess.

We are called to understand the present context in which our drug policies and justice system operate. Christ calls us to address situations such as homelessness, joblessness, the welfare system, and poverty in order to “love our neighbors” and care for the whole community. Christ also calls us to partnership with all faith communities and even secular agencies to combat the unhealthy situations that lead to imprisonment, as well as to minister to those in prison. Through these partnerships, we pray that we may develop a society that moves toward both the Old or Hebrew Testament vision of Shalom and Jesus’ teaching about the Kingdom of God.

This study draws on the work of the Drug Policy Task Force, which was established by the 221st General Assembly (2014) to conduct a two-year study “to discern how to advocate for effective drug policies grounded in science, compassion, and human rights” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 630). The task force was mandated to “promote study, discussion, and engagement among church members and congregants and develop a plan of concrete actions and policy recommendations for the 222nd General Assembly (2016)” (*Ibid*, p. 631).

The task force was to serve as a clearinghouse for information and hold four hearings, which occurred in Richmond, California; El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; Denver, Colorado; and Charleston, West Virginia, between February and September 2015. The overture creating the task force also called for engagement with entities such as Presbyterian Women and the Criminal Justice Network, congregants, and Presbyterian church publications “to learn about the history, development, and implementation of U.S. drug policies” (*Ibid*). This overall effort to combine both study and interaction with the larger church also included posting an online collection of articles on the Christian justice journal *Unbound* (www.justiceUNBOUND.org), and creating a page of resources on the website of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The set of drug policy issues to be addressed was wide-ranging, including:

- the roles, responsibilities, and limits of the state and citizenry in relation to our bodies;
- what Christian theology suggests about current drug policies;
- our social responsibility to ensure health for members of our communities;
- the spiritual and ethical implications of: massive and disproportionate incarceration of drug offenders, especially people of color, and of the militarization of relations with communities and other nations;
- laws, policies, programs, and treaties that currently govern our nation’s responses to the production, transit, and use of illicit drugs;
- the consequences of maintaining current punitive drug policies [and] what more effective and humane drug policies [might] look like with regards to the following:

—militarization of law enforcement and the erosion of distinctions between civilian police and military, especially with respect to drug law enforcement;

—relationship between prohibition of drugs and organized crime;

—communities’ use of illegal drugs and the disparate impact that enforcement of drug prohibition has on poor people and racial minorities;

—distinction between harmfulness, addictiveness, and illegality as it relates to use of psychoactive and/or addictive substances;

—allocation of public resources required to enforce current drug policies and effectiveness in addressing underlying problems relating to substance abuse and addiction while programs for social needs such as health, education, and community development are underfunded;

—rates of illicit drug use, abuse, and addiction; health effects and impacts on special populations—e.g. mentally ill, homeless, ‘at-risk’ youth, immigrants, victims of sexual violence (Ibid, pp. 631–32)

The task force was to consist of seven to nine representatives of stakeholders or disciplines, including policy advocacy, addiction science, criminal justice, international relations, formerly incarcerated person, and theologian. Five task force members participated throughout the study, while several other stakeholders participated for parts of it. The group did not include a formerly incarcerated person, for example, though several had relatives who had been imprisoned and had worked with prisoners. Even on its small scale the group worked hard to achieve consensus on both principle and strategy.²¹

Previous PC(USA) Policy on Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse

Throughout much of its history, the PC(USA) was deeply preoccupied with the effects of alcohol and alcoholism. It was widely involved in the temperance movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries, even to the point of asserting in 1873 that: “the Church is essentially a temperance society and her members should use all their influence for the suppression of the liquor traffic.” The 158th General Assembly in 1946 urged reinstating prohibition of alcohol as well as abstinence by PCUSA members.²²

In the 1960s and 1970s, the church increased its emphasis on medical and therapeutic treatment of alcoholism as well as narcotic addiction, to a large extent adopting a “disease model” for understanding them. As early as 1965, the General Assembly called for alternatives to criminalization of drug addiction. The 178th General Assembly (1966) of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) called narcotic addiction a “medical-social problem arising from many diverse factors, including psychological and physiological dependency on drugs, family instability, cultural conflicts, and social and economic deprivation” which necessitates legal distinctions in the criminal punishment between those who sell to support their habit and those who profiteer from addiction.²³

In 1992, the PC(USA) published a special issue of its journal, *Church & Society*, on drug abuse, titled “A Body Broken: Substance Abuse and the Church.” The following year’s 205th General Assembly (1993) issued an extensive statement and recommendations on drugs and drug policy. Much from those statements read as if they could have been written in 2015. A brief review illustrates the similarities. The 1993 statement:

encourage[d] economic conversion and public investment in need-reduction policies:

- Education concerning the addictions, and prevention programs.
- Public health maintenance programs, which include counseling.
- Rehabilitation of individuals who are addicted, and rehabilitation programs for their families.
- Justice in educational opportunity.
- Justice in economic opportunity. ...

[It also urged] reversal of current U.S. drug supply limiting policies:

- mandatory drug sentencing;
- zero tolerance policy and property confiscation without due process; ...
- erosion of personal rights and equal protection under the law; and
- decriminalization of possession with judicial focus on drug manufacturers and suppliers.

[It called for:] the nation to establish “treatment on demand” for those with chemical dependencies and their families ... the support of innovative, ecumenically sponsored treatment programs and halfway houses, with access to medical support; particularly in economically impoverished regions and neighborhoods;[and] ...the demilitarization of U.S. drug wars policies in foreign countries, and replace low-intensity conflicts with programs of economic aid and local self-development. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, pp. 759–60)

Theological Grounding and Guidance

This section does two things: it argues for dedicated action to end the drug war with its millions of unnecessary casualties as a matter of justice, and it points to some sources of wisdom in our tradition for those facing the chief argument made against drugs and alcohol: that they can cause addiction, particularly for a certain percentage of the population. This section does not provide a theological grounding for the role of government to protect the common good through regulation and the justice system: this can be found in many other Presbyterian resources.

God cares about justice and truth. Equitable relationships between neighbors is of paramount importance to the God of the Bible, trumping even the call to religious observance:

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream. (Amos 5:21–24).

Jesus Christ instructed his followers to continually make peace and justice with their neighbors, even if it means interrupting a ritual sacrifice at the altar of the temple:

So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. (Mt. 5:23–24).

The temple was the most sacred site in the world to first century Jews. In today’s world, Jesus’ command would be like asking a Roman Catholic believer to interrupt a pontifical mass at St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City. It would be unthinkable, except under the most dire of circumstances. Yet, this is what Jesus asks of his followers. Religious devotion, in the eyes of God, is meaningless if it is not accompanied by acts of peace, justice, and reconciliation.

This biblical conviction brought the members of our task force together around issues related to the War on Drugs. Our months of research have made it clear to us that current policies are not allowing justice to “roll down like waters” in our local, national, and global communities. Our neighbors are wrongly suffering under the weight of laws that have been written, interpreted, enforced and endorsed by often well-meaning authorities, including members of our church. Yet as it has become more and more clear that our brothers and sisters have something against us, we have not left our gifts before the altar in order to pursue reconciliation. Instead, we have sat comfortably in our churches and sung God’s praises while God’s children sit in prison cells or lie in morgues because of the lies we chose to believe out of fear and prejudice. The time has come for us to attend to what Jesus calls “the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith” (Mt. 23:23).

We read in the book of Proverbs that “A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but an accurate weight is his delight” (Prov. 11:1). The War on Drugs is disproportionately a war on people of color. Racial disparity in law enforcement and criminal justice is the “false balance” being used against minority racial and ethnic groups. This fact is hardly news to the members of our church. The 205th General Assembly (1993) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) acknowledged that

In the war on drugs, enemies are the people that the affluent culture projects its fear upon. In this nation, the enemies are predominately people of color... Although four out of five people who use drugs are white, the vast majority of criminal actions are taken against minority men, whose arrest and conviction put them at a disadvantage in the job market for a lifetime. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 764, paragraphs 40.104, 40.106).

Under this system of unjust oppression that has been disproportionately imposed upon people of color, Christians would do well to remember the biblical promise: “‘Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan, I will now rise up,’ says the Lord; ‘I will place them in the safety for which they long’” (Ps. 12:5).

The justification given for the War on Drugs is that drugs and those who use them represent a menace to society that must be controlled by the power of force. The incarceration of drug users and drug sellers has done little or nothing to help those who live with poverty and addiction. The strategy of ministry that Jesus most often employed with people who struggle outside the bounds of legitimate society is one of healing rather than punishment. When chastised by the Pharisees and scribes for his fellowship with so-called “sinners,” Jesus replied, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Lk. 5:31). The author of Matthew’s gospel applies the words of second Isaiah to Jesus as an image of the characteristic tenderness with which Jesus went about his ministry of healing: “He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory” (Mt. 12:20). In the same way, people in our time who are chemically de-

pendent need healing, not punishment, in order to find recovery from their addictions. That is why it is now so important for Christians to change the way we think about drugs, addiction, and the War on Drugs.

When we reclaim the fears projected on the addicted and self-destructive, and reflect on our Reformed tradition's strengths and weaknesses, several additional themes must be noted, even if space does not permit their exploration.

1. Our tradition's commitment to reform society as well as individuals was seen vividly in the prohibition movement, a genuine effort to protect families and children before it was a form of moralism. The Temperance movement was partly led by women and early on was allied with abolitionism in a desire to free people from all kinds of bondage. Women's suffrage was seen as key to prohibition. The challenge for us now is to keep that concern to prevent the ravages of addiction through other means, and to understand the limits of legislation and regulation alone.

2. Our theology of the "self" lifts up the conscience of the individual and this has led to an emphasis on individual rights, as well as a sometimes guilt-producing awareness of one's duty to be of service to God. Despite the Shorter Catechism's chief end, "to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever" (*Book of Confessions*, 7.01), joy itself was sometimes in short supply and sensual, bodily pleasure looked down upon. A renewed sense of the Incarnation as a joy-giving fullness of God's Spirit in our bodies, and the psychological awareness that "individuation" requires some positive integration of "the flesh," both suggest that there has been a "one-sidedness" in our tradition. The abundant life in Christ is not the total abandonment to the wine-god Dionysus, but it is important to own the goodness of pleasure and beauty that even Calvin said were among God's good gifts.

3. Abstinence from alcohol or drugs is a form of freedom and a way of respecting the integrity of our bodies as God has given them to us. As long as the focus is on that freedom being "for" the fullness of life, there should be no implication that Christians or others should "need" to use any intoxicating or psychotropic substance. From a prudential standpoint also, nonessential substances take money away from other uses and place those who partake to excess in vulnerable states, vulnerable to victimization or abuse. Countless Christians, many children of alcoholics or addicts, abstain based on their awareness of the sometimes-violent consequences of excessive indulgence, and this is to be respected.

4. Anthropologists tell us that a social and ritual context was historically often the only place for taking drugs or alcohol, and this includes the supervised use of psychedelic plants in pursuit of visions. Current folk wisdom about not drinking alone may carry the awareness that drinking only at family meals can limit alcoholism, and similar practices of emphasizing a communal context may carry over with recreational drug use.

5. The Christian ritual of communion in most Presbyterian congregations is done with grape juice out of a fear for tipping persons in recovery back into addiction. Other congregations provide both wine and grape juice. This deserves serious attention, aware that Christ's presence is the main thing for us to experience, and knowing that the Reformation was first of all a reform of worship to give more freedom to God's Spirit.

6. Depth psychology in the tradition of Carl Jung often sees dependence on drugs or alcohol as a failed initiation process, repeatedly putting one in a transformed state, but without leading to a new and awakened person. Adapted to Christian insights (and arguably dependent on them), this perspective appreciates that the desire for deeper meaning and transcendence in life may lead through disorientation and breakdown of the self-controlling "ego" to access unconscious patterns and greater unity. David Dan, a Jungian therapist, points to the double meaning of "getting to the bottom of things" and hitting bottom, and sees the 12-step program as a more complete initiation and transformation process.²⁴

7. The basic Christian pattern of death and resurrection can be seen in the spiritual life of those who do suffer and survive the "demonic possession" of addiction, who live the paradox that by choosing powerlessness they gain freedom from addiction's power. In losing their lives as they knew them, they save their lives for a higher purpose.

We, the members of Christ's church, are invited to assist Jesus in this ministry of healing. We know it is a complex social and cultural task that touches most of our families and many of our own lives. We pray to be open to God's joyful energy even as we are wise about the almost infinite human capacities for self-deception and exploitation. We are called to not break the bruised reeds nor quench the smoldering wicks, but open the floodgates of justice and pursue healing and reconciliation, so that we might participate in the coming of God's kingdom and the doing of God's will, on earth as in heaven.

Part II: Where We Are Today

Changes Since 1993

How is current drug use and drug policy different from use and policy in 1993 when the last substantial PC(USA) social witness policy on this problem was written?

Much damage has been done. The rate and number of people dying from overdoses has more than tripled. The number of overdose deaths from opioids has skyrocketed, first from prescription painkillers, and since 2010 from heroin in the wake of a crackdown on "pill mills" and lowered price of heroin.²⁵ The increase in heroin deaths has been almost entirely among

White people, while heroin-related deaths and emergency room visits among Black and Hispanic people have remained stable.²⁶ Some states, such as West Virginia and New Mexico, have had the highest rates of drug overdose for several years.²⁷

In 1992, *Church & Society* reported, “With more than a million persons behind bars at a cost of \$16 billion a year, the U.S. has the world’s highest documented rate of incarceration.”²⁸ By 2012, twenty years later, the United States had 2.2 million incarcerated in jails and state and federal prisons.²⁹ The 1990s saw an explosion of arrests for marijuana, what two authors called “the transformation of the war on drugs”; while a low proportion of these arrests resulted in felony convictions, they pushed millions of Americans into the criminal justice system.³⁰

“Drug Wars” in Latin America

The militarized approach to U.S. drug control efforts in Latin America described in the 1993 policy has continued and deepened the history of U.S. military intervention in the region, contributed to a growth in serious human rights abuses, undermined civilian governance, militarized police forces, and blurred the distinction between military and civilian police functions. The military and police focus has diverted scarce public resources and foreign aid from unfulfilled basic human needs to unproductive counter-narcotics efforts. While U.S. policy in Central America has focused on narcotics, the region suffers the highest homicide rate in the world. In Mexico, an estimated 100,000 men, women, and children have lost their lives to the war on drugs in the past eight years.³¹ The war in Colombia, fueled in part by more than \$8 billion in U.S. counter-narcotics aid, has displaced more than five million Colombians.³²

Because such military policies have brought such negative consequences while failing to achieve their stated aims, there is also more global support for changing drug policies than existed in 1993. International reforms that show alternatives to prohibition have proliferated during the last twenty-two years. Some of these changes have achieved remarkable success, which we will explore below.

In the United States, public opinion has shifted, especially in relation to punitive marijuana laws. In 1995, one in four Americans favored making marijuana possession legal; twenty years later, a majority favor making it legal. An even larger majority thinks the federal government should not enforce marijuana laws in states that have made it legal.³³ Public opinion favoring reform of laws on other drugs probably lags behind sentiment on marijuana, but even there, 63 percent favor states reducing mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenses of any kind.³⁴ New science also allows the disease model of addiction to be better understood.³⁵

One of the success stories for addressing addiction occurred in the United States: reduced tobacco use, especially among young people. This trend was already well underway at the time of the 205th General Assembly (1993), which encouraged Presbyterians to abstain from tobacco products and urged the elimination of tobacco export subsidies. Tobacco use by adults in the U.S. had fallen from 42 percent in 1965 to 25 percent by 1993. It was reduced further to 19 percent by 2011.³⁶ Regulatory controls are one part of this story: restrictions on advertising, health warnings, and enforcement of prohibition of sales to minors³⁷ have been important. But so have other social forces that have made tobacco smoking decidedly less “cool.”³⁸

Nevertheless, this tale of success is tempered by a devastating reality: tobacco smoking still causes more deaths in the United States than all other substance use combined, by a factor of seven.

The time since 1993 has also seen dramatic changes in health care in the United States, which has become increasingly costly. This has important consequences for the treatment of addiction. The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, implemented in 2010, requires health insurers to extend the same conditions and benefits for persons seeking treatment for a substance use disorder as they do for people with other medical conditions, and these provisions were folded into the Affordable Care Act that mandates health coverage for all individuals.³⁹ But the lack of coverage in the twenty-two states that have declined to extend Medicaid affects some four million people, who are disproportionately poor and people of color.⁴⁰

The costs of current drug policy and changing attitudes affect the church. As the church recognized over time, not all uses of alcohol are sinful or constitute abuse. Similarly, not all uses of illicit substances, although they may imply risks, constitute abuse or sin, which has profound implications for how we respond to persons who possess or use illegal drugs, as well as to those who make or supply those drugs.

In 2003, the church affirmed that:

Our vision is of a society where there is education and health care for all, drug treatment for all who require it, jobs for all who need them, and a sense of belonging to a community. With this vision of community, we can begin to develop a criminal justice system that is truly just.⁴¹

At the task force’s hearing in Richmond, California, we heard a painful reflection on the church from Sam Vaughn, who works on behalf of the city with youth who are at risk of committing violence. Asked what churches can do, Vaughn said:

The Church is absolutely irrelevant, at least in Richmond, and I hate to say that. Someone can get shot out in front of the church, literally, bullet holes in the walls of the church, and the church won’t even let that person have their funeral there, because, “You know what, you’re bringing danger onto us. It’s unsafe. We don’t like you all coming in my church smelling like weed.” So the community has come to an understanding that the church is for healthy people.

The church is a hospital, the pastor is supposed to be a doctor, and the folks in the congregation should be sick. What folks have done, they feel like they're better than everyone out on the streets. And the people out on the street recognize that difference, recognize that I'm not welcome there.

These issues are literally at our doors. In March 2014, police in North Little Rock, Arkansas, responding to reports of a disturbance on a bus, removed Robert Storay, a fifty-two-year-old African American Army veteran, from a bus, during which he allegedly hit the officer with a cane. The officer then shot and killed Storay, who had earlier filed a lawsuit for police abuse. The killing occurred at the front steps of First Presbyterian Church in North Little Rock.⁴²

The Black Lives Matter movement, building on growing efforts to end mass incarceration, has further challenged the church. "This movement is ... challenging the church to live into its calling, to risk stability for faithful action, and to both follow and lead," according to David Wigger, who recently graduated from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. "It is challenging the church to be a witness in the world and to live beyond the four walls or a Sunday service. It is challenging the church to be better."⁴³ Writer and activist Ryan Herring puts it more directly. "If our theology renders us silent and docile in the face of oppression, then it is quite frankly toxic to our faith. What good are we to society and to God's kingdom if we are sitting in pews while the world around us suffers and burns?"⁴⁴

The church's moments of silence on injustices related to the drug war may be a contributing cause to another worldly phenomenon: the rapid loss of young members participating in Presbyterian life. For every PC(USA) congregation worshipper aged 18 to 25, there are now more than six worshippers older than 65, and worshippers' median age is increasing—a change that predates and is separate from the departure of conservative congregations.⁴⁵

More than with most subjects, people offer opinions about drugs and drug abuse based not on their own experience, but on what they have heard. For example, two out of three Americans believe the problem of drugs is very or extremely serious in the country, but less than a third of those same people in a representative survey describe it as very or extremely serious in the area where they live.⁴⁶ The problem, in other words, is somewhere else in the country. This makes the importance of evidence-based policy all the greater, both because direct experience of the problems is highly uneven in our society, and because many people form opinions about the problem or policies not based on direct experience.

What, then, can we do differently? What do our deepest religious tenets of faith call us to do? That drug prohibition and its militarized and racist enforcement have generated so much damage calls on us not only to act to reform those policies, but to inquire why such harmful policies were adopted. This, in turn, requires us to understand current drug use and drug policy. We will then turn to the roots of those policies in our history of racism within the United States, and in a drive for domination in international relations.

Drug Use and Policies Today

About 24 million Americans—or 9.4 percent—used illicit drugs in the last month. Of these, the majority used marijuana. In contrast, 136 million Americans used alcohol, and nearly half of those who use alcohol—about one in four Americans—reported binge alcohol drinking.⁴⁷

In 2014, the U.S. Surgeon General estimated that tobacco use leads to at least 480,000 deaths each year in the United States.⁴⁸ By comparison, there were 25,692 deaths from alcohol-induced causes in the United States in 2010, and 16,235 deaths from poisoning by opioid analgesics in 2013, which represented a near quadrupling of the rate of deaths since 1999.⁴⁹

According to child abuse pediatrician, Dr. Kathryn Wells, "We know alcohol is the worst substance of abuse you can use during pregnancy, most damaging to the fetus, without a doubt based on the information and research we have now."⁵⁰ Neonatal and breast milk exposure to heroin and cocaine also poses significant risks, including infant withdrawal syndrome from opiate exposure. Risks from fetal exposure to marijuana by the mother are not well studied.

Table 1. Illicit drug use in the past month among individuals aged 12 or older: 2013

Substance	Aged 12 or older		Aged 12 to 17		Aged 18 or older	
	Number (in thousands)	Percent	Number (in thousands)	Percent	Number (in thousands)	Percent
Illicit drug use	24,573	9.4%	2,197	8.8%	22,376	9.4%
Marijuana and hashish	19,810	7.5%	1,762	7.1%	18,048	7.6%
Cocaine	1,549	0.6%	43	0.2%	1,505	0.6%
Inhalants	496	0.2%	121	0.5%	375	0.2%
Hallucinogens	1,333	0.5%	154	0.6%	1,179	0.5%
Heroin	289	0.1%	13	0.1%	277	0.1%
Nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs	6,484	2.5%	549	2.2%	5,935	2.5%
Pain relievers	4,521	1.7%	425	1.7%	4,096	1.7%

NOTE: Numbers and percentages do not sum to the illicit drug use estimate as individuals may have used more than one illicit drug. Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2013.

Evidence since 2002 suggests that cracking down on non-prescription opioid use correlates to an increased use of heroin and associated risky behaviors. This is occurring especially among whites, according to one study. The study authors recommended that, “frequent nonmedical users of prescription opioids, regardless of race/ethnicity, should be the focus of novel public health efforts to prevent and mitigate the harms of heroin use.”⁵¹

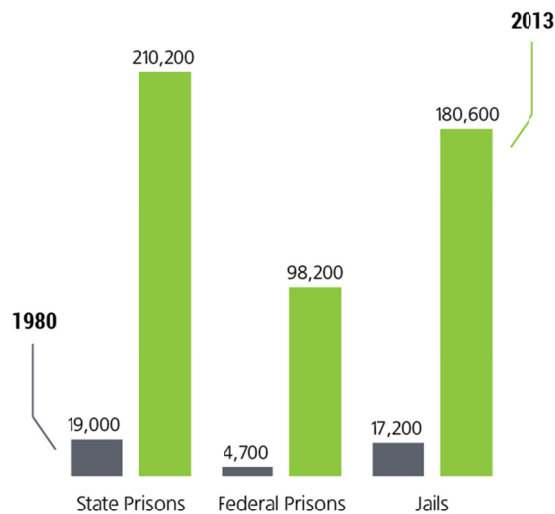
Demographics of use and dependency: Rates of drug use are remarkably consistent across race within the United States. Drug use by white and Hispanic teenagers is higher than for black teenagers: “For nearly all drugs, black seniors report lifetime, annual, 30-day, and daily prevalence rates that are lower than those for their white and Hispanic counterparts,” according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.⁵² More recent government data indicates that while illicit drug dependence among African Americans is slightly higher than for whites, the rate of binge alcohol drinking is higher for whites.⁵³ There is evidence that white youth in fact engage in more retail drug selling than black youth, according to representative survey of 9,000 teenagers on their behavior.⁵⁴

Criminal Penalties

About half a million people are incarcerated for drug offenses in the United States. Mandatory minimum sentences legislated in 1986 dramatically increased federal sentences for sale, transport, as well as possession of drugs, varying according to the type and weight of the drug and prior convictions. For example, someone convicted for a second time for possessing a single ounce of crack cocaine, though no serious injury results, leads to a mandatory ten years in prison.⁵⁵ Most states have adopted similar approaches. There are nearly four times as many people in state prisons and jails for drug offenses as there are in federal prisons.⁵⁶ Many of those incarcerated for drug offenses have not been sentenced; they are in jail awaiting trial.

People convicted of drug offenses who have served prison time also confront extensive post-incarceration penalties. These vary from state to state, and include losing the right to vote, the right to serve on a jury, the right to run for public of-

Number of People in Prisons and Jails for Drug Offenses, 1980 and 2013



Sources: Carson, E.A. (2014). *Prisoners in 2013*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics; Mauer, M. and King, R. (2007). *A 25-Year Quagmire: The War on Drugs and its Impact on American Society*. Washington, D.C.: The Sentencing Project; Glaze, L. E. and Herberman, E.J. (2014). *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2013*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.



...fice, the ability to live in publicly subsidized housing, and the right to employment (because of discrimination based a felony conviction).

The war on drugs has been an important driver of the ‘school to prison pipeline,’ described by the ACLU as “policies and practices that push our nation’s schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems,” and prioritizes incarceration over education. The pipeline operates through under-resourced schools, zero-tolerance discipline policies (modeled on drug policy), reliance on police in schools for discipline, private disciplinary schools, poor legal representation for minors, and lack of educational services in juvenile facilities.⁵⁷

The war on drugs has also impacted property rights, including those of working class people. Civil asset forfeiture allows police to seize assets from anyone if they believe they were involved in a crime, without charging them or showing evidence that they were.⁵⁸ Since 2008, police have seized cash and property worth \$3 billion in more than 55,000 seizures on highways

and elsewhere, according to a *Washington Post* investigation. Some police training companies have specialized in instructing police how to aggressively carry out forfeitures. Hundreds of local drug task forces rely on seized cash to pay for more than 20 percent of their budgets. There is evidence that the seizures disproportionately impact people of color.⁵⁹ The United States also promotes asset forfeiture procedures internationally.⁶⁰ The leader of Texas narcotics agents, Gilbert Gonzalez, told the task force he believes seized assets should be directed to drug treatment and drug courts rather than law enforcement. In January 2015, then-Attorney General Eric Holder issued a directive prohibiting the use of federal law to seize assets without warrants or criminal charges, although agents may still use many existing state forfeiture laws to seize assets.⁶¹

The federal government projected to spend more than \$25 billion on drug control in 2015. While the amount spent on treatment and education has increased from previous years, about 57 percent of the federal drug budget is still spent to control illicit drug supply: law enforcement, interdiction, and international programs. State and local governments also spend on drug control, with an even greater proportion focused on law enforcement.⁶² Besides the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, many state, local, and international agencies are involved in drug law enforcement.

Police forces in the United States have become increasingly militarized since the onset of the drug war. U.S. foreign counter-drug assistance has also contributed to a blurring between military and police functions and operations.

Harms Versus Legal Classification

The U.S. Congress and President Obama took bipartisan action in 2010 to address a gross inequity in drug policy: the 100-to-1 sentencing disparities between crack and powder cocaine. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act established mandatory minimum prison sentences that made five grams of crack cocaine an equivalent crime to possession of 500 grams of powder cocaine. This disparity in sentencing guidelines contributed significantly to more severe impacts on African Americans, not only because whites and blacks were likely to consume cocaine in different forms, but because it incentivized law enforcement not to arrest people possessing powder cocaine, since the penalties were negligible. The Fair Sentencing Act did not entirely eliminate this injustice, since the law was not retroactively applied to those sentenced under the 1986 law, and it still applied a disparity of 18-to-1 for sentences for crack and cocaine.⁶³ However, the Congress and Executive Branch recognized an important principle: relative severity of criminal sanctions for possession, sale, or production of a substance should correspond to the pharmacology and medical risks of the substance’s uses. Proposed legislation would make this principle retroactive and eliminate the differential between crack and powder cocaine sentences.⁶⁴

Reforms should account for the relative risks of harm of different substances. A 2007 study in *The Lancet* used a survey of medical, psychiatric, forensic, legal, chemistry, pharmacology, and police experts to assess the risks of physical dependence, and social harm from using twenty substances. They then compared these risks to the legal classification of the substances in British law.⁶⁵ U.S. drug classifications are even more skewed: they classify cocaine, methamphetamine, and oxycodone as having less abuse potential than marijuana and hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD and Ecstasy.⁶⁶

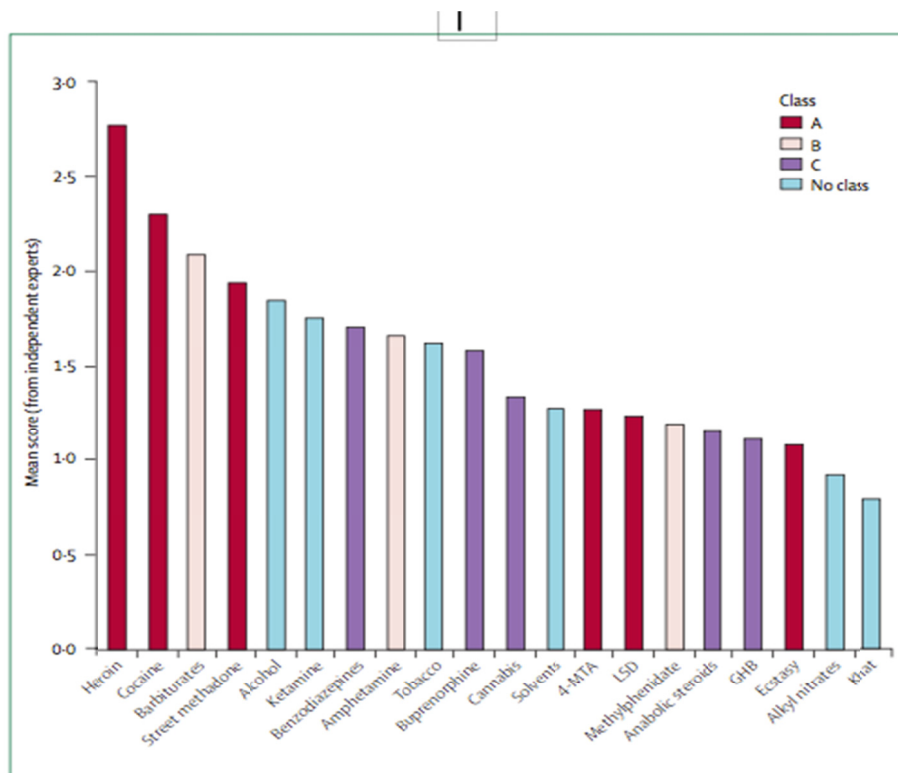


Figure 1: Mean harm scores for 20 substances
Classification under the Misuse of Drugs Act, where appropriate, is shown by the colour of each bar.

What is evident in this classification of harms is that the risks and legal classifications bear little, or at best an uneven, relationship to each other.

An important aspect of the risk of harm is addictiveness. While research shows that many other factors besides the substance contribute to risks for a person becoming addicted,⁶⁷ there is also substantial difference between substances in the risk of addiction (either a physical or psychological dependence).

The estimated portion of people who use substances who develop a dependence on them is as follows: for tobacco, 31.9 percent; heroin, 23.1 percent; cocaine, 16.7 percent; alcohol, 15.4 percent; anxiolytics (including sedatives and hypnotic drugs), 9.2 percent; cannabis, 9.1 percent; analgesics, 7.5 percent; psychedelics, 4.9 percent; inhalants, 3.7 percent.⁶⁸

This means that most people who at one time use what are commonly considered addictive substances, including heroin and cocaine, do not develop addictions to them. When people are detained or arrested for possession of these substances, then, there is a substantial possibility they are not dependent and do not need treatment, even if they used poor judgment during their use of the substance. This has implications for drug courts, as we will see.

“The United States already spends about \$35 billion a year on alcohol- and substance-abuse treatment,” notes author Gabrielle Glaser. “With the Affordable Care Act’s expansion of coverage, it’s time to ask some important questions: Which treatments should we be willing to pay for? Have they been proved effective? And for whom—only those at the extreme end of the spectrum?”⁶⁹ A “one size fits all” type of approach to treatment may be simple to grasp and seemingly easy to implement (Just Say No!). But it doesn’t reflect reality. A more realistic manner to assess the potential for problematic substance use is along a continuum rather than in a binary fashion. An important step to making treatment fit patients’ needs is the development of standards and training for addiction treatment. Casa Columbia recommends establishing evidence-based accreditation standards for treatment programs.⁷⁰

A public health approach to drug policy must address the risks of both substance use by and incarceration of children and adolescents. Considerable research indicates that because the brains of adolescents are still in formation, they are more at risk of developing unhealthy dependence when they use drugs and alcohol.

During adolescence, when the reward pathways in the brain are continuing to develop, they are readily influenced by external experiences and stimuli, including exposure to addictive substances. A growing body of evidence suggests that due to this increased sensitivity, addictive substances physically alter the reward centers of the brain faster and more intensely in adolescents than in adults, heightening their vulnerability to addiction.⁷¹

At the same time, adolescence is a time of individual experimentation and, frequently, of rebellion against authority. Research also indicates that adolescents who are arrested and pulled into the criminal justice system face serious life disruption and costs to health.⁷²

It is important to clarify whether by prevention we mean to prevent first-time use or problematic use. In either case, an effective prevention strategy means investing in health care, in neighborhood development, and in monitoring health. “Primary prevention is making little kids careful about what they put in their bodies,” says Dr. Bryan Page. “‘Education’ is different from ‘prevention.’”⁷³ A cognitive-behavioral approach works better at prevention than education.

Part III: Historical Roots and Dynamics of Drug Policies

Historical Roots of Punitive Drug Policy

While the United States has historically been the global leader of drug prohibition policies, such prohibition was instituted first overseas, in U.S. and British colonial possessions, before it was established within the United States. Protestant church leaders played an important part in such global prohibition. Among them, the Reverend Charles Henry Brent served on the commission recommending prohibition of opium, chaired the first international Opium Conference in Shanghai in 1909, and headed the American delegation to international opium conferences in the Hague.⁷⁴

A century ago, opiates and cocaine were freely available, and used both medicinally and recreationally by people throughout the United States. Scores of patent medicines, elixirs, and liquid concoctions contained substantial amounts of opium or cocaine—including potions used to treat conditions particular to women. Opiate dependence peaked in the United States near the turn of the twentieth century, when the number of addicts was estimated at close to 250,000 in a population of 76 million—representing a drug addiction rate far higher than that of today’s society.⁷⁵ The prevailing attitude was that drug addiction was a health problem, best treated by physicians and pharmacists.

Public attitudes about drug use began to change as perceptions about drug users shifted. Even though white Americans consumed their own fair share of opium in liquid, powder, or pill form in concoctions such as laudanum and other widely available tonics and elixirs, societal prejudice against opiates grew with the arrival of large numbers of Chinese in the United States, whose custom of smoking opium was perceived as strange and foreign. In 1875 San Francisco passed the nation’s first drug law, banning only the smoking of opium in opium dens, the form of opium use most commonly associated with the Chinese. The motivations underlying the birth of the nation’s drug policy are clear: in 1902, the Committee on the Acquisition of the Drug Habit of the American Pharmaceutical Association declared: “If the ‘Chinaman’ cannot get along without

his ‘dope,’ we can get along without him.”⁷⁶ The first state drug prohibition law was passed in 1909, when California outlawed the importation of smoked opium.

In 1910, Dr. Hamilton Wright, considered by some to be the progenitor of anti-narcotics laws in the United States, reported that contractors were giving cocaine to their black employees in an effort to get more work out of them. A few years later, stories began to proliferate about “cocaine-crazed Negroes” in the South running dangerously amuck. One article in *The New York Times* went so far as to state that cocaine made blacks shoot better, and would “increase, rather than interfere with good marksmanship.” Another reported that some southern police departments had switched to .38 caliber revolvers, believing that cocaine made blacks impervious to smaller .32 caliber bullets. Evoking highly racially- and gender-charged imagery, an article in *Literary Digest*, a popular magazine of the era, claimed that, “most of the attacks upon white women of the South are the direct result of the cocaine-crazed Negro brain.”⁷⁷

The impact of these and other racialized representations of drug users were profound—indeed, when Coca-Cola removed cocaine from their popular soft drink, they did so not only out of concern for their customers’ health, but also to appease their southern market, which “feared blacks getting cocaine in any form.” The proliferation of media stories linking cocaine with violence by African Americans may have been motivated in part by a desire to persuade southern members of Congress to support the proposed Harrison Narcotics Act, which greatly expanded the federal government’s regulatory powers with respect to illegal drugs, ostensibly to fight crime. The sensationalism, gross distortion, and appeal to racism inherent in these media stories may have been necessary to garner support for these new laws, given that drug users were actually committing very little crime.

As use of marijuana became popular on the American jazz scene in the 1920s and 30s, blacks and whites increasingly began socializing as equals and smoking the drug together. The anti-marijuana propaganda of the time cited this breach of racial barriers as exemplifying the social degradation caused by marijuana. For instance, officials in New Orleans attributed many of the region’s crimes to marijuana, which they claimed was also a dangerous sexual stimulant. Harry Anslinger, head of the newly formed federal narcotics division, warned political and community leaders about blacks and whites dancing together in “teahouses,” using racial prejudice to sell prohibition.⁷⁸

The first federal law targeting marijuana possession and use, the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, was enacted during the Great Depression, and its proponents once again used racist rhetoric as their chief selling point. It was said that Mexican immigrants, who were vying with out-of-work white Americans for the few agricultural jobs available, engaged in marijuana-induced violence against these whites. The American Coalition, an anti-immigrant group, claimed:

Marihuana, perhaps now the most insidious of our narcotics, is a direct by-product of unrestricted Mexican immigration. ... Mexican peddlers have been caught distributing sample marihuana cigarettes to school children. Bills for our quota against Mexico have been blocked mysteriously in every Congress since the 1924 Quota Act. Our nation has more than enough laborers.⁷⁹

Illicit and Licit Economies

The illicit drug industry is an illustration of what we could call capitalism on steroids, as it seeks profit at all costs. It mimics legal profit-making industries in several important ways: the lowest income is found among workers in the production of raw materials (growing coca and poppies) and in the retail sector (street selling), while much more profit is made in wholesale, transport (traffickers) and financial services (money laundering).

The illegality of drugs is an important driver of violence by traffickers. Susie Byrd, former City Council member in El Paso, explained to the task force the terrible spike in Ciudad Juarez, El Paso’s, sister city along border, which suffered more than 3,000 homicides in 2010:

It used to be that independent smugglers could carry drugs through Juarez. That was allowed; you would maybe pay a little bit of a fee, but the rules changed. The Juarez cartel said, ‘Now we’re the only ones that can carry marijuana through this marketplace.’ But the Sinaloans had all the marijuana and the Juarez cartel didn’t. It created this very combustible violence in Juarez. That’s what happens in a black market when there’s tension, the way you resolve those tensions is through violence - that’s the way you control the marketplace.

The black market has a large impact on drug prices as well. “You can buy in the Golden Triangle [in Mexico] a pound of marijuana for \$23 and you can go up and sell it in Chicago for \$770. So the markup is extraordinary,” Byrd testified.⁸⁰

Money laundering⁸¹ in its most basic form is making money that comes from a “dirty” or illegal source appear like it comes from a “clean” or legal source, so as to not raise suspicions of law enforcement. If law enforcement discovers that money is connected to criminal activity, it can be seized. But by hiding the illegal origins of the money, say drug sales, the money can be used freely in the formal financial system. Another reason that drug traffickers need to launder money is that drugs are primarily paid for with cash, which in large amount is not only heavy and bulky, but also draws the attention of law enforcement.

Drug trafficking organizations have used diverse methods to launder money, several of which have involved participation of large banks. Since 2010, federal investigators have accused Wachovia Bank (subsequently taken over by Wells Fargo) and banking giant HSBC of violations of banking regulations that facilitated moving some \$420 billion and more than \$679

billion, respectively, through their accounts on behalf of Mexican drug cartels. According to prosecutors, Wachovia “willfully” overlooked the suspicious nature of this probable drug money and knowingly failed to institute standard anti-money laundering mechanisms, ignoring persistent and urgent warnings from a London whistleblower and others. When the investigation of Wachovia began, money laundering activities simply shifted to banking giant HSBC.

For both banks, no charges were brought against any individual bankers involved and the banks themselves avoided prosecution. Instead, Wachovia made a \$160 million federal payment, less than one twentieth of one percent of the amount it helped to launder, while HSBC paid a much larger forfeiture and fine amounting to \$1.9 billion.⁸²

Monetary interests also explain why Mexican authorities have not acted effectively against drug traffickers, according to Edgardo Buscaglia, a research scholar in law and economics at Columbia University. “The Mexican authorities fear that if they begin to attack and dismantle these fortunes, it will damage the formal economy. ... There’s no easy way out for the political and entrepreneurial elite: they would have to fight corruption in their own milieus, to stop the laundering that fuels the murder of ordinary people in this country.”⁸³

Geographically Spreading the Problem of Drug Production and Trafficking

An important effect of drug enforcement has been “geographical displacement ... often called the *balloon effect* because squeezing (by tighter controls) one place produces a swelling (namely an increase) in another place.”⁸⁴ Apparent victories in eliminating one source, trafficking organization or transit route are reliably negated by the emergence of other sources, traffickers, and routes. U.S. supply reduction and interdiction approaches result in geographical displacement and the spreading of the illicit drug trade into more regions and countries. “While the arrests of kingpins make for splashy headlines,” *The New York Times* noted, “the result has been a fragmenting of the cartels and spikes in violence ... as smaller groups fight for control. Like a hydra, it seems that each time the government cuts down a cartel, multiple other groups, sometimes even more vicious, spring up to take its place.”⁸⁵ The history of recent drug interdiction and crop eradication efforts in Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Caribbean countries, and most recently Mexico and Honduras demonstrate the ‘balloon effect’ in action.

Experience in many countries shows the futility and suffering generated by strategies that target low-level producers, transporters, and sellers of illicit drugs. People in such roles not only receive few benefits from drug trafficking, while facing enormous risks from the state’s enforcement and the criminal organizations’ regulatory tactics (in the absence of state regulation). Typically they are individuals with few economic options and experiencing structural poverty; they also are easily replaced.

But the strategy of going after high-level traffickers also usually serves only to shift the locus of criminal leaders, and often generates violent battles for succession of leaders who are killed or arrested. The drug war in Mexico “has been a copy of the American antiterrorism strategy of high-value targets,” according to Raúl Benítez Manaut, a professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. “What we have seen with the strategy of high-value targets is that Al Qaeda has been diminished, but a monster appeared called the Islamic State. With the cartels, it has been similar.”⁸⁶

Part IV: Analysis of Drug War Impacts

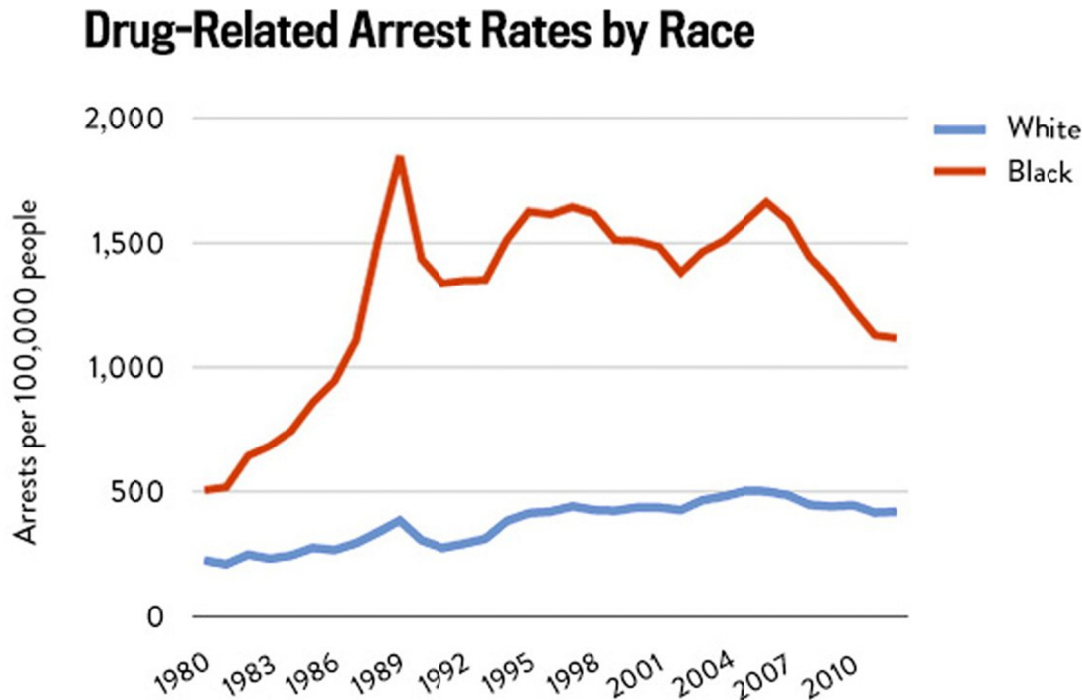
Abstinence is a necessary goal for many drug-dependent individuals. For society as a whole, however, total abstinence is a chimera that has led to disaster. Even career drug agent Gilbert Gonzalez, who as the director of the Texas Narcotics Officers Association is heavily invested in the drug prohibition paradigm, told the task force: “We’re not going to solve the drug issue; we’re going to manage it.”

The criminal justice system is pervaded with racial discrimination at every phase of the process, as documented by Michelle Alexander in her seminal book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The magazine *Slate* combed studies of racial disparities, which found that:

- Black Americans are more likely to have their cars searched.
- Black Americans are more likely to be arrested for drug use.
- Black Americans are more likely to be jailed while awaiting trial.
- Black Americans are more likely to be offered a plea deal that includes prison time.
- Black Americans may be excluded from juries because of their race.
- Black Americans are more likely to serve longer sentences than white Americans for the same offense.
- Black Americans are more likely to be disenfranchised because of a felony conviction.
- Black Americans are more likely to have their probation revoked.⁸⁷

One in four young black men has experienced what he thought was unfair treatment by police in the last thirty days.⁸⁸

Many of these inequities are not a direct result of drug policy, but racial inequalities in drug laws and enforcement force black people into the criminal justice system where these broader injustices exercise themselves onto black people. This is especially the case because, as the graph below illustrates, arrest rates for drug offenses bring black people into jails and prisons at two to four times the rate of white people. Note that this was already the case in the early 1980s, before the drug war began in earnest. Drug arrest rates for whites also doubled since the 1980s. It is also important to note that the abuse of legally available alcohol and prescription opioids is higher among whites than among blacks or Hispanics.⁸⁹



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

When Baltimore residents responded to the killing of Freddie Gray by police in April 2015 with an uprising, one drug policy reformer tweeted: “I’m just trying to imagine what police/community relations might be like today if there’d never been a war on drugs.”⁹⁰

The war on drugs has been characterized by racial and age disparities in enforcement and broader resource inequities even in progressive communities. Many consider San Francisco to be a center of enlightened drug policy reforms. Yet a 2012 study by the Center on Juvenile & Criminal Justice (CJ CJ) showed that African Americans experienced felony drug arrests at rates nineteen times more than other races in San Francisco, and 7.3 times more than African Americans elsewhere in California. While African Americans as a whole had higher death rates from illegal drug use than other races—an approximate measure for illegal drug use—these rates could not account for the high arrest rates of African Americans, especially among teenagers, who had lower drug death rates than other races. “When the city conducted a periodic crackdown on drugs, arrest increases nearly always focused wholly or overwhelmingly on African Americans—a pattern not found elsewhere in the state,” the study authors noted.⁹¹

The CJ CJ presented their study results at a remarkable public hearing organized in April 2012 by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission on the “Human Rights Impact of the War on Drugs,” which led to a set of recommendations for city policy. The hearing is a strong example of positive action that local human rights or civil rights commissions can take in other localities.⁹²

One recovering addict who testified at the hearing, David Moss, recounted going to jail fourteen times for being under the influence of a narcotic, and not once was he offered treatment. He said he never robbed or assaulted anyone, but he was treated like a criminal. “Having a disease is not a crime,” Moss said. He emphasized that drugs and alcohol are symptoms of a deeper problem. “So rather than building more beds, building bigger prisons, give people a chance to find out what’s beneath the alcohol and drugs, so they can be moms, dads, brothers, sisters, and husbands and wives again.”⁹³

Though Moss never sold drugs, his comments highlight ways that drug policy does not address the broader needs that lead people to sell illicit drugs, including lack of funds for education and jobs in low-income communities, and the devastation of housing capital for families of color. The foreclosure crisis hit African American communities particularly hard, com-

pounding long-standing inequities generated successively by slavery, Jim Crow segregation, unequal benefits from New Deal programs, and the GI Bill of Rights,⁹⁴ and “redlining” bank loan practices.

During the housing bubble in the 2000s, for example, Wells Fargo targeted black churches for subprime mortgage loans “because it figured church leaders had a lot of influence and could convince congregants to take out subprime loans,” according to one bank officer.⁹⁵ From 2005 to 2009, the net worth of black households declined by 53 percent, while the net worth of white households declined by 16 percent. The bank’s discriminatory practices led the City of Baltimore to sue Wells Fargo, which settled for \$175 million in 2012, but that “was hardly a fix for the loss of family wealth suffered by those who lost their homes.”⁹⁶

Impacts on Diverse Sectors

We have examined how drug policies affect communities of color and addicted individuals. Other sectors are affected as well.

Women: The vast majority of women who are incarcerated around the world for drug-related offenses are mothers. Women are particularly vulnerable to prosecution and incarceration based on their relationships with men who are involved in the illegal drug trade, rather than their own leadership or conduct in that trade. Whether or not formal penalties are imposed, drug policies encourage social stigma, shame, and discrimination. Research demonstrates that women who are themselves arrested or who live in communities with high incarceration rates for nonviolent drug offenses have greater likelihood of economic instability.⁹⁷ Women also face significant barriers to accessing appropriate drug treatment.⁹⁸ Numerous state policies still permit the shackling of pregnant inmates during delivery and early bonding with their infants.

Poor people: The criminal justice system disproportionately punishes poor people for most offenses, including drug possession, growing, and sales. Moreover, drug testing has become a standard requirement to receive public benefits, representing additional state coercion of poor people not applied to people with more resources.

Impacts on immigrants: The growth in Mexico and Central America of organized crime founded on transporting drugs to the U.S. market has made hundreds of communities in these countries dangerous, especially for young men. Most do not report crimes to law enforcement because they are widely perceived (and often documented) to be part of or collaborating with criminal groups. As Kelly Wells testified to the task force in El Paso:

This has very serious implications for the U.S. strategy for the war on drugs. Up to this point it has focused on giving more resources, more money, more arms, training, etc., to law enforcement in Central America, which overwhelming evidence suggests is often implicated in the crime itself. So we’re basically giving money and arms and training to the criminals. Directly.⁹⁹

In the past two to three decades, the policies, rhetoric, and enforcement agencies that address illegal drugs and immigrants have become increasingly of one fabric. The backdrop for this merging of drug, counterterrorism and immigration policies is the *threat narrative*, which blends the policies through fear. “The dominant public narrative conceives of and portrays immigration as criminals, an economic, social, cultural, and political threat,” observes the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities.¹⁰⁰ A recent example of this narrative is use of the word “surge”—commonly used to describe military offensives—to describe the large number of Central America children fleeing violence to the United States.

As a result, drug laws are applied even more punitively and arbitrarily to immigrants than to U.S. citizens. For example, a U.S. resident with a green card can be deported for a single minor offense occurring decades before. Noncitizens in deportation proceedings who have been convicted of a drug offense (with few exceptions) are also ineligible for bail, and will face mandatory imprisonment until their hearing. “Drug trafficking” in immigration law does not distinguish between drug cartel leaders and someone who sells a small amount of marijuana to a neighbor; both are classified as “aggravated felonies,” with the harshest immigration consequences. The Department of Homeland Security can deport someone if it has “reason to believe” the person sold drugs, even without a conviction.¹⁰¹

Policing in the United States

We believe law enforcement in our country has been delegated with and permitted to exercise an increasingly repressive function, illustrated by the number of police shootings of unarmed people, use of SWAT teams to serve drug warrants, and acquisition of equipment for war and mass surveillance. Drug control has served as a foundational rationale (prior to fears of terrorism) for much of this repressive function, such that reforming drug policy is linked to rethinking the role and operational foundation of U.S. policing.

International Impacts

The United States exercises peerless leadership in the world. Some of this leadership is due to the country’s economic, technological, and military power, as well as its willingness to use force—to serve as the “world’s policeman.” Yet it also leads through the definition of global ideals and norms—the norms it is policing. Global drug policy is a primary example of the way that the United States has both promoted the enactment of drug prohibition laws through international agreements,

national legislation, and coercive pressure, and selectively enforced those laws through military and police intervention and economic and diplomatic sanctions.¹⁰²

The United States has implemented coercive measures against other nations' programs for drug harm reduction. U.S. political pressure, for example, contributed to the curtailment or cancellation of opiate maintenance programs in Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia.¹⁰³

The United States also has exported its incarceration policies, for example through funding of prisons in countries such as Colombia and Honduras.¹⁰⁴ The export of incarceration occurs although, as President Obama has said:

Over the last few decades, we've also locked up more and more nonviolent drug offenders than ever before, for longer than ever before. For nonviolent drug crimes, we need to lower long mandatory minimum sentences—or get rid of them entirely.¹⁰⁵

In this context, the United States' promotion and in many cases imposition of its own drug policies in other nations, some of them with already very weak judicial systems, exacerbates the harms of that model.

U.S. military training of poorly paid young men with few work options plays directly into the game of drug traffickers. The criminal organizations known as “drug cartels” function by controlling the territories through which their illicit commerce passes. Some territories, such as those on the border with the United States, their largest market, are especially valuable. The organizations' income comes not just from drug profits, but by taxing all licit and illicit commercial activity in the territory that they control. Those who don't pay the cartels' “tax” face their terrible and certain wrath. The cartels draw on their military training and access to high-powered weapons to enforce such territorial advances.

A core problem of combating drug cartels through military assistance to Latin American armed forces is that the assistance consists of goods and capacities that the cartels need to control territory—and the cartels can always pay soldiers and police more than the state can. The United States thus trained most of the inaugural members of the feared Zetas cartel, when they were members of an elite Mexican special forces unit, the GAFEs. Similarly, as part of counter-drug programs, the United States Southern Command has been assisting Guatemalan special forces troops known as Kaibiles, former members of which participated in the Guatemalan genocide in the 1980s. The Zetas, in turn, have recruited Kaibiles for their military skills, as trainers, and set up operations in the small jungle town where the U.S. has helped build the Kaibiles training base.¹⁰⁶

Most weapons used by drug trafficking organizations in Mexico do not come from U.S.-assisted government forces, but most do originate in the United States. The United States provides an open market for military-style weapons that are highly desired by criminal organizations in Mexico. Although personal possession of guns of any kind is illegal for most persons in Mexico, it is extremely easy to bring guns over the border. In the Rio Grande Valley of Texas alone, more than 20,000 trucks and cars cross over the border into Mexico every day, 365 days a year.¹⁰⁷ The huge volume of legal commercial traffic, where controls are focused on movement into the United States, makes the border structurally porous in the North-South direction.

As a result, more than two thirds of the guns seized in Mexico and traced between 2008 and 2013 were sold in the United States.¹⁰⁸ A study by the Trans-Border Institute estimated that, from 2010 to 2012, people purchased 253,000 firearms each year in the United States to be trafficked into Mexico.¹⁰⁹ The United States is thus arming both sides in the drug war in Mexico. The leader of a group of Mexicans in exile told the task force that their members fled Mexico because of drug trafficking and weapons trafficking.¹¹⁰ Imported assault weapons could be banned from the United States without congressional action. There is precedent for executive action to do so. Guns are normally considered primarily a domestic issue within the United States. Yet it is also very much a foreign policy and international human rights problem.

The military approach to U.S. drug control efforts in Latin America also has continued and deepened the history of U.S. military intervention in the region, contributed to a growth in serious human rights abuses, undermined civilian governance, militarized police forces, and blurred the distinction between military and civilian police functions.¹¹¹ The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has the largest presence overseas of any U.S. law enforcement agency, operating in sixty-five countries, but Congress exercises little oversight, allowing its actions to remain in shadow.¹¹² A recent study of DEA in Central America and the Caribbean concluded that “the DEA's coordinated drug enforcement operations contribute to increasing the level of violent and property crimes in the region.”¹¹³

The focus has diverted scarce public resources and foreign aid from unfulfilled basic human needs to unproductive counter-narcotics efforts. While U.S. policy in Central America has focused on narcotics, the region suffers the highest homicide rate in the world. Perhaps the starkest example of a breakdown of democratic institutions today is Honduras. After a coup d'état forced the elected president into exile in 2009, the rule of law disintegrated and violence and impunity soared with a resurgence of death squad tactics and targeted killings of land rights advocates, journalists, LGBT persons, lawyers and political activists. Both military and police are allegedly involved in abuses and killings but are almost never brought to justice.¹¹⁴

In Mexico, an estimated 100,000 men, women, and children have lost their lives to the war on drugs since 2007, when President Felipe Calderón declared the war. In addition, more than 26,000 Mexicans have been disappeared,¹¹⁵ and countless numbers have been wounded and traumatized. The massive deployments of military forces across the country have led to increases in enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and torture.¹¹⁶

The war in Colombia, fueled in part by more than \$8 billion in U.S. counter-narcotics aid, most of it military, has displaced nearly five million Colombians, with reports of more than 4,700 extrajudicial killings by the armed forces. More than 95 percent of these killings remain in impunity.¹¹⁷ In response to these catastrophic outcomes, a growing number of Latin American leaders are calling for formal reconsideration of global prohibition and militarized drug control policies.¹¹⁸ Such a call from leaders who have themselves promoted and carried out military approaches to production of illicit drugs presents an unprecedented opportunity to engage in a broad evidence-based approach to drugs, not only in the Americas, but globally.

In Brazil, “in the context of the so-called ‘war on drugs,’ military police forces have unnecessarily and excessively used lethal force, resulting in the deaths of thousands of people over the past decade,” according to a report by Amnesty International.¹¹⁹

The futility of military approaches to reduce or control drug production is perhaps best illustrated by U.S. involvement in Afghanistan since 2001. The United States has spent an estimated \$750 billion on military and police assistance and operations.¹²⁰ Much attention has been focused on the human toll and errors in military strategy there. Yet the country also remains the world’s number-one grower and exporter, by far, of poppies used to produce heroin—as it was before 2001—and poppy production has more than doubled during the period of U.S. war and occupation.¹²¹

Meanwhile, drug crop “eradication campaigns have had devastating consequences for the environment” around the world, according to the UN Development Program.¹²²

Part V: Alternatives and Changes to Come

Changes to Come: Marijuana

Social attitudes toward marijuana use have changed dramatically in the United States. A majority of people who are surveyed favors its legalization, and given generational differences on the topic, this majority is likely to grow. Four states and the District of Columbia have made marijuana use legal; another sixteen states have decriminalized possession of moderate amounts of marijuana. In the next two years, referenda and legislative campaigns may hold referenda to consider legal regulation of marijuana will occur in another ten states.¹²³ Marijuana is also popular around the world: globally, 180 million use marijuana each year.¹²⁴ Its possession and use are decriminalized in many countries, cities, and U.S. states, and in 2012, Uruguay became the first nation to legalize and regulate production and sales as well as use of marijuana.

Health effects: Marijuana has been used for medical, spiritual, and recreational purposes for thousands of years, and it was prescribed by doctors in the United States for a variety of conditions from the mid-1800s until the 1930s. Marijuana use has been shown to have beneficial impacts for pain, nausea, multiple sclerosis, HIV-related conditions, and other illnesses.¹²⁵

Nevertheless, “[t]hose who consume large doses of [marijuana] on a regular basis are likely to have lower educational achievement and lower income, and may suffer physical damage to the airways,” according to a peer-reviewed survey of studies. “They also run a significant risk of becoming dependent upon continuing use of the drug. There is little evidence, however, that these adverse effects persist after drug use stops or that any direct cause and effect relationships are involved.”¹²⁶

More studies are needed to fully understand cannabis’ medical properties and effects. But federal barriers to such research are considerable as long as it is classified as having no medical use. Existing critical studies may be confirmed or disconfirmed with larger data sets.¹²⁷ A co-linear use of nicotine may indicate that marijuana use may reinforce tobacco use for some part of the population, and the effects of “vaping” may also deserve study in this connection.

Addictiveness: An estimated 9 percent of those who use marijuana develop a dependence on its use. “In regular cannabis users, abstinence leads to a withdrawal syndrome characterized by negative mood (irritability, anxiety, misery), muscle pain, chills, sleep disturbance, and decreased appetite.”¹²⁸

Violence and mortality: Laboratory studies find no link between marijuana use and violence. There are no recorded cases of marijuana use by itself causing cancer or inducing a death, which is remarkable when we consider how many innocuous activities lead to death.¹²⁹

Adolescent use: As with alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs, the potential for developing marijuana dependency is substantially greater when an individual’s first exposure occurs during adolescence than in adulthood.

Marijuana is already readily available to a high percentage of young people—high school students are more likely to have tried marijuana than cigarettes,¹³⁰ and more than 80 percent of 12th graders say marijuana is available to them, which has been true consistently since the 1970s.¹³¹ Its illegality has not thwarted this wide availability.

Gateway drug?: There is a clear association between the use of marijuana among teenagers and higher use of other illicit drugs. There is also a strong association between use of tobacco and alcohol with use of other drugs, including marijuana. But in the words of one study:

The causal significance of this sequence of initiation into drug use remains controversial. The hypothesis that it represents a direct effect of cannabis use upon the use of the later drugs in the sequence is the least compelling. There is better support for two other hypotheses which are not mutually ex-

clusive: that there is a selective recruitment into cannabis use of nonconforming adolescents who have a propensity to use other illicit drugs; and that once recruited to cannabis use, the social interaction with other drug using peers, and exposure to other drugs when purchasing cannabis on the black-market, increases the opportunity to use other illicit drugs.¹³²

In other words, where marijuana use is a gateway, it is primarily a gateway to other parts of the illegal or underground market. Taking it out of that market can separate availability of marijuana from illicit drugs. “You don’t go to the liquor store and get offered cocaine,” noted Mason Tvert at the Drug Reform Task Force hearing in Denver.

Alternatives: Learning from Positive Experiences

As individuals we all have much to learn from other people’s experiences, practices, traditions, and innovations, in spiritual as well as material matters. As a nation, too, we benefit from learning what other countries as well as state and local governments within the United States have done in response to drug use, production, and sales.¹³³ Several examples follow of some promising approaches to drugs.

After a long period as a dictatorship and closed society, Portugal opened its borders in the 1970s, and by the 1980s, had a high rate of heroin use, which in turn led to a high incidence of AIDS. The country’s location facilitates its role as a gateway for drug trafficking. When law enforcement was not effective, Portugal in 2001 decriminalized the possession of all drugs and dedicated significant resources to outreach, treatment, and other services. “The big effect of decriminalization was to make it possible to develop all the other policies” of services, according to Joao Goulao, director of treatment programs in Portugal.¹³⁴ While interpretation of data has been disputed, a careful comparison of claims and data shows that current and recent use of illicit drugs remained stable in Portugal.¹³⁵ The most important health outcomes have been a decline in overdose deaths and HIV and AIDS cases, while the drug user population has aged, indicating fewer people starting to use.¹³⁶

Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Canada treat some heroin addiction through supplying safe places and supplies of the drug, part of programs to wean addicts from using as well as to reduce collateral crime and harms from heroin use such as theft to supply their habits. In Switzerland, less than 15 percent of program participants relapsed into daily use after three years, while crimes committed by those in the group fell by more than two thirds. “Some make a virtually complete recovery,” according to a researcher of a similar program in Britain, “but others, we get them from a bad place to a less bad place.”¹³⁷

Some heroin addicts will inject no matter what it takes, often with devastating health and social consequences. When someone has such a chronic addiction, administering the drug in ideal circumstances minimizes the risk of harm to self and others. In Vancouver, British Columbia, a trial of controlled heroin administration in a clean environment led to improved family relations, employment, and mental health, and to lower use of other drugs compared to patients receiving methadone, according to a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.¹³⁸

In Bolivia, indigenous people for millennia have grown and used coca leaves, which they chew as a social connector similar to the way Westerners use tea and coffee, to ward off fatigue, and counter altitude sickness. Coca leaves, which grow only in the Andean region, are also processed with kerosene and other chemicals to make cocaine. When cocaine became a major illicit export product in the 1970s, Bolivia and Peru grew a majority of the coca leaves in the world. The United States sponsored programs of forced eradication of coca leaves, which were opposed by organized coca growers, including current president Evo Morales, elected in 2006. Bolivia, under Morales, temporarily left the United Nations drug convention and re-acceded with a reservation to permit coca growing. The country kicked out the Drug Enforcement Administration in 2008 and established its own drug control strategy, which supports economic development in rural coca-producing areas, and limits coca growing to what will be used for licit products.¹³⁹ Coca cultivation in Bolivia has fallen by 35 percent since 2010, showing that repressive measures are not needed to control crops that can be used to produce narcotics.¹⁴⁰

These countries have undertaken policy change not only without support from the United States, but with Washington actively discouraging such innovations. In light of the deep, persistent, and varied harms that punitive drug policies have generated worldwide, it is critical that the United States allow other nations—and exercise its considerable influence in the United Nations—to implement approaches that are democratic and responsive to their values and situations.

There is a similar imperative within the United States, where the federal government should encourage states to be flexible and innovative, especially in efforts to remedy racially disparate sentencing, reduce and prevent health harms for drug users, and invest in treatment and other public health programs.¹⁴¹

Needle exchange programs are an example of local grassroots initiatives to address health harms from IV drug injection, in which the federal government has lagged behind. Although extensive evidence shows that needle exchange programs have dramatically reduced the incidence of HIV and Hepatitis C among drug users, the federal government bans the use of federal funding for such programs. In areas facing increased heroin use, communities and states must fund their own programs. (When needles are considered drug “paraphernalia,” addicts do not carry their own for fear of arrest, and then often share needles in “shooting galleries,” spreading infection.)

Alternatives for Those Who Sell

If our aim with respect to selling of high-risk drugs is to change behaviors that bring the most harm to communities, then cycling low-level street sellers into and out of prison is often ineffective, and very costly to those individuals, their families, and society. But some focused approaches have had more success. This is how it worked in High Point, North Carolina, where an initiative combined “focused deterrence” with dialogue on racial conflict:

A particular drug market is identified; violent dealers are arrested; and nonviolent dealers are brought to a “call-in” where they face a roomful of law enforcement officers, social service providers, community figures, ex-offenders and “influentials”— parents, relatives and others with close, important relationships with particular dealers. The drug dealers are told that (1) they are valuable to the community, and (2) the dealing must stop. They are offered social services. They are informed that local law enforcement has worked up cases on them, but that these cases will be “banked” (temporarily suspended). Then they are given an ultimatum: If you continue to deal, the banked cases against you will be activated.¹⁴²

This strategy focused on open-air drug markets, which brought with them activities that the community found especially harmful, such as shootings. It was built on programs to address gun violence and other violent crimes. And its success required blunt conversations about race and power between the community and law enforcement, in order to work together for the focused objective. After four years of this model, violent crime declined an average of 39 percent and drug crime dropped by 30 percent.¹⁴³ Comparable impacts were documented after a similar intervention in Providence, Rhode Island.¹⁴⁴

For such a model to function over time and to actually turn around the lives of dealers, it is critical that people selling on the street have adequate legal employment options, education, and services. In San Francisco, the city’s district attorney established the “Back on Track” program that offers alternatives to criminal prosecution to young adults (ages 18 to 30) who are arrested for a first felony of a low-level drug sale. Candidates participate in an intensive community service program, appear in a special court three times a month, and must enroll in school and find employment, often with participating employer Goodwill Industries. Upon completion of the program, charges are dismissed. While incarcerating such low-level offenders costs \$50,000 a year, this program costs just one tenth of that for each participant.¹⁴⁵

Drug Courts

Drugs courts in the U.S. have been an alternative outcome for persons arrested for drug offences. The purpose of these specialized courts is to offer treatment options to drug-dependent people in order to reduce substance abuse and reduce crime. Begun in 1989, there are now more than 2,700 such courts in the U.S.¹⁴⁶ Drug courts operate in a variety of ways to divert persons arrested for drug, alcohol, and related offenses from incarceration to treatment and social programs, typically resorting to incarceration if the arrested persons decline or fail in treatment.¹⁴⁷ They can also function for persons who commit non-drug crimes where it is credibly claimed they did so as a result of drug use.

While there are diverse views about the efficacy and ethics of involuntary treatment for addicted persons, meta-analyses of drug court evaluations conclude there is evidence that this alternative strategy reduces criminal recidivism and substance abuse.¹⁴⁸ The evaluative findings also indicate drug courts can be a cost-effective alternative.¹⁴⁹ Important as well for the mission of our church, drug courts can call upon high-quality performance from faith-based organizations that are called to minister to persons struggling to end their drug addiction.

There are several important issues, however, that should be understood regarding drug policy reform and the use of drug courts:

- In some jurisdictions people who are not drug dependent and do not need treatment are arrested for possession of a drug and have their cases placed into drug courts. The rehabilitative purpose and effort of a drug court in these cases is inappropriate.
- By using drug courts as an alternative strategy, the preference for not arresting people for personal drug consumption confronts the imperative of providing publicly funded treatment to persons with addictions and preventing crime. A strategy that decriminalizes or establishes legal regulation (such as tickets or fines) of certain types of personal drug possession and use could unclutter both the courts and the jails.
- A hybrid reform strategy is possible that combines legal regulation for low-risk substances such as marijuana and drug court use targeted to persons who are addicted to or commit crimes related to drugs that remain illegal.
- At times prosecutors do not cooperate with judicial officers. When this conflict occurs, it often undermines the drug court’s purpose of offering treatment options to drug-dependent people coming into the judicial system.

Based on the information provided to the task force and analysis of the information through the lens of Christian faith, principles to guide the PC(USA) response to drug use, addiction, and drug policy were developed and presented at the beginning of this report. Congruent with these “Principles for Building a House of Health” are specific recommendations that are also listed in the front section of the report.

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to all those who collaborated and gave of their time for the Drug Policy Task Force’s hearings and meetings. We were graciously hosted by Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church in Richmond, California; the Presbytery of

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Denver in Denver, Colorado; Grace Presbyterian Church and Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas; and First Presbyterian Church, Bream Memorial Church, and Presbytery of West Virginia in Charleston, West Virginia. For reasons of economy, each meeting was preceded by a hearing in the same location.

Dozens of people generously gave deeply informed and meaningful testimony to the task force. They are listed in Appendix B.

Appendix A

Task Force Members

The Reverend Gordon Edwards, chair; acting general presbyter, Cimarron Presbytery; former pastor, Stillwater, Okla.; member of Drug Court panels.

The Reverend Barrett Lee, pastor, substance abuse counselor, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Honorable James Rowe, Esq. judge in Charleston, W.Va.

Deborah Small, Esq. director, Break the Chains (education and advocacy), Richmond, Calif.

Matt Stafford, MSW, substance abuse social worker, Austin, Tex.

Gail Tyree (through May 2015); organizer, Planned Parenthood; Memphis, Tenn. (Also active in the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Network.)

Consultant: John Lindsay-Poland, Oakland, Calif., wage peace coordinator, American Friends Service Committee.

Advisor: Dr. J. Bryan Page, professor of anthropology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla.

Liaison to the advisory committee: Dr. Jean Demmler, sociologist, Denver, Colo.

Staff: The Reverend Chris Iosso, Ph.D., coordinator, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Louisville, Ky.

Appendix B

List of Those Who Gave Testimony to the Drug Policy Task Force

Richmond, California

James Anthony, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

Dr. Davida Coady, Options Recovery

The Reverend Kamal Hassan, Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church

Raha Jorjani, Alameda Public Defender's Office

Marilyn Langlois, Richmond Planning Commission

Ted Lewis, Global Exchange

The Reverend Max Lynn, St. Johns Presbyterian Church

Eduardo Martinez, Richmond City Council

David McPhail, St. Johns Presbyterian Church

Dorsey Nunn, Legal Services for Children

Robert Rooks, Californians for Safety and Justice

Andrés Soto, Richmond Progressive Alliance

Laura Thomas, Drug Policy Alliance

Sam Vaughn, Office of Neighborhood Safety

Tamisha Walker, Safe Return Project

El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico

Susie Byrd, El Paso school trustee

Judge Patrick M. Garcia, 384th District Court

Guillermo Ceballos, Jay Nye, Mike Alvarado, El Paso Drug Court counselors

Omar Sanchez, probation officer

Rubén García, Annunciation House

Gilberto González, Texas Narcotics Officers Association

Alfredo Holguín, Mexicanos en Exilio

Mark Lusk, University of Texas at El Paso

Oscar Martínez, University of Arizona

Roger Martinez, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

Zulma Méndez, University of Ciudad Juarez

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Richard Newton, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition
Marisela Reyes, victim of political violence from Juarez Valley
Jeremy Slack, University of Texas at El Paso
Kathy Staudt, University of Texas at El Paso
Kelly Wells, Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services
Dr. Leticia Chavarría, Ciudad Juarez Security Roundtable
Maria Elena Ramos Rodríguez, Maria Luisa González, Programa Compañeros, Ciudad Juárez
Veronica Corchado, Juárez Strategic Plan
Emilia Gonzalez, Commission for Solidarity and Defense of Human Rights
Rebecca Alarcon, Hector Raul Ríos, Jorge Eduardo Ramirez, Gustavo Martinez Medina, Catarina Cantillo Castañeda, Organización Popular Independiente (Independent Grassroots Organization)

Denver, Colorado

Roger Goodman, Washington State Representative (by phone)
Lewis Koski, Marijuana Enforcement Division, State of Colorado
Dr. Christian Thurstone, Smart Approaches to Marijuana
Mason Tvert, Marijuana Policy Project
Art Way, Drug Policy Alliance
Dr. Kathryn Wells, Children's Hospital Denver

Charleston, West Virginia

Darryl Cannady, South Central Educational Development (Bluefield, W.Va.)
Andrea Darr, West Virginia Center for Children's Justice
Dr. Dan Foster
Bob Hansen, Recovery Point of Huntington
The Reverend Dr. Linda Mercadante, Methodist Theological School, Ohio
Lt. Chad Napier, Kanawha Valley Metro Drug Unit
Dr. Robert Newman, President Emeritus, Beth Israel Medical Center (New York)
Prof. J. Bryan Page, University of Miami (Florida)
Robert Wilkinson, Chief Public Defender, Huntington
Michael Mills, West Virginia Bureau for Public Health

Endnotes

1. In elucidating these general principles, and not ranking them in terms of importance, the task force found the 2011 report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy and its recommendations to be very useful, and we encourage its use by others: http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/themes/gcdp_v1/pdf/Global_Commission_Report_English.pdf
2. See the case *Ah Lim v. Territory of Nevada* (1890) Judge Scott's opinion, cited on p. 177 of: Shafer, Raymond P. *Matihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding*. New York: New American Library, 1972, which asserted that the state had no right to punish people who were not harming or infringing on the rights of others.
3. For example, Julie Quiroz, "Solutions Emerging from the Movement for Black Lives," Movement Strategy Center, 13 May 2015, at: <http://letstalkmovementbuilding.org/solutions-emerging-from-the-movement-for-black-lives/>; and <http://www.joincampaignzero.org/demilitarization>. The General Assembly has also called for greater police accountability in 1991 and 2000.
4. See *Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call*, report approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010).
5. There are campaigns, such as "ban the box," which remove from employment applications the question of whether or not one has been convicted of a crime. Discrimination based on past offender status is not EEO discrimination and is not against the law. It is discrimination against a class of persons, however, that ignores the possibility of rehabilitation and does not distinguish among kinds of felonies.
6. For examples of church advocacy here: Kara Gotsch: <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/faith-leaders-influencing-the-debate-on-drug-sentencing/>; Nora Lecesce: <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/for-the-common-good-of-our-whole-inhabited-earth/>.
7. As this is written, there is bipartisan support for draft legislation in both the Senate and the House: S.2123 "Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015" and HR. 3173 "Sentencing Reform Act of 2015" which, if passed, would be unified in conference committee.
8. Clearly there are societies with a zero tolerance approach to drugs and official alcohol bans, with drug traffickers subject to capital punishment. Malaysia, Iran, and China, are among those nations with strict controls over drug use and other areas of life. Even in these societies, some drug use is reported, however draconian the punishments. In the U.S. context, the danger is more that legal and illegal business combinations form to dominate markets, controlling supply and price, and potentially influencing law enforcement.

9. The Ohio vote against marijuana legalization in 2015 was related partly to the role of self-interested businesses: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/11/03/ohio-rejected-legalizing-marijuana-what-that-means-for-the-future-of-pot/>.
10. The Reverend Germán Zárate Durier, “Love your neighbors because they are like you,” *Mission Crossroads*, Summer 2015, p. 4.
11. Gabor Maté, *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010), p. 174.
12. A. Thomas McLellan, et al., “Drug Dependence, a Chronic Medical Illness: Implications for Treatment, Insurance, and Outcomes Evaluation,” *JAMA* (284:13), 4 October 2000, pp. 1689–95.
13. Gerald C. May, *Addiction & Grace* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).
14. Merrill Singer and J. Bryan Page, *The Social Value of Drug Addicts: Uses of the Useless* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014), chapter two. They observe that the category of “addict” did not exist until the last few centuries.
15. Linda A. Mercadante, *Victims & Sinners: Spiritual Roots of Addiction and Recovery* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996); James B. Nelson, *Thirst: God and the Alcoholic Experience* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2004).
16. There are many accounts of the three uses of the law, among them Calvin’s in the *Instruction in Faith* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992, reissue of Fuhrmann translation with Leith forward) especially Chapter 17’s discussion of sanctification and the law being written on the heart, and in the answers to questions 93–97 in the Westminster Larger Catechism.
17. For the full sermon: <http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/a-biblical-and-theological-reflection-on-consumption-addiction-and-prejudicial-drug-policy/>.
18. Gabor Maté, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
19. May, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
20. Transform, *How to Regulate Cannabis: A Practical Guide*, May 2014, p. 30, accessed at: <http://www.tdpf.org.uk/resources/publications/how-regulate-cannabis-practical-guide>. This *Guide* has a useful description of the range of legal frameworks, pp. 28–39.
21. As in the church at large, members differed on how complete a transition away from the “prohibition” model should be, how closely it links to a punitive approach, how much the team should consider addiction as well as its primary focus on the “drug war,” and how these differences are affected by participation in a denomination which is 90 percent white, disproportionately affluent, and largely separated from poor communities of color that are adversely and disproportionately impacted by drug policies.
22. *Minutes*, PCUSA, 1946, Part I, pp. 202–7.
23. *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1966, Part I, pp. 381–82.
24. David Dan, “Beyond the Gingerbread House: Addiction, Recovery, and Esoteric Thought,” *Quadrant*, 1991 (24:2), pp. 41–56.
25. Lenny Bernstein, “Heroin deaths have quadrupled in the last decade,” *The Washington Post*, 7 July 2015.
26. John Tozzi, “Whites Account for the Entire Jump in Heroin Deaths,” *Bloomberg News*, 14 July 2014.
27. CDC, “Unintentional Drug Poisoning in the United States,” July 2010; Trust for Americans’ Health, *The Facts Hurt: A State-by-State Injury Prevention Policy Report 2015*, June 2015, p. 14.
28. Eva Bertram and Robin Crawford, “Is the Drug War a Just War?” *Church & Society* 1992 (82:5), 55.
29. The Sentencing Project, “Facts about Prisons and People in Prison.”
30. New York City, for example, saw a 2,461 percent increase in marijuana possession offenses between 1990 and 2002. Ryan S. King and Mark Mauer, “The War on Marijuana: The Transformation of the War on Drugs in the 1990s,” *Harm Reduction Journal* (3:6), April 2006.
31. Amnesty International, *Mexico: Confronting a Nightmare: Disappearances in Mexico*, June 2013, AMR 41/025/2013.
32. The United States has spent more than \$8 billion since 2000, mostly to strengthen the Colombian military, which during this period has killed more than 5,000 civilians. More than 95 percent of these killings remain in impunity. See Fellowship of Reconciliation, *The Rise and Fall of ‘False Positive’ Killings in Colombia*, 2014, at: forusa.org/colombia-report-2015.
33. “Illegal Drugs,” *Gallup*, accessed at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1657/illegal-drugs.aspx>.
34. Drew Desilver, “Feds may be rethinking the drug war, but states have been leading the way,” *Pew Research Center*, 2 April 2014, at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/04/02/feds-may-be-rethinking-the-drug-war-but-states-have-been-leading-the-way/>.
35. The number and breadth of scientific articles are too many to be cited here. For a useful introduction to much of this science, see Gabor Maté, *op. cit.*
36. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Trends in Current Cigarette Smoking Among High School Students and Adults, United States, 1965–2011,” accessed at: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/tables/trends/cig_smoking/index.htm.
37. E. Feighery, et al., “The effects of combining education and enforcement to reduce tobacco sales to minors. A study of four northern California communities,” *JAMA*, 11 December 1991 (266: 22), 3168–71; L. Jason, et al., “Reducing the illegal sales of cigarettes to minors: analysis of alternative enforcement schedules,” *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 1996 (29:3), 333–44.
38. National Association of City and County Health Officials, Workbook, 2004, “Tobacco Prevention and Control: Implementing Comprehensive Programs” <http://archived.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/tobacco/upload/Tobacco-Prevention-Learners-Guide.pdf> (particularly pp.

14–19 on programs of social pressure and “counter-marketing” the social pressure to smoke from advertising and other community influence strategies).

39. “The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act,” Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, at www.cms.gov.
40. Rachel Garfield, et.al., “The Coverage Gap: Uninsured Poor Adults in States that Do Not Expand Medicaid – An Update,” *Health Reform*, 17 April 2015, accessed at: <http://kff.org/health-reform/issue-brief/the-coverage-gap-uninsured-poor-adults-in-states-that-do-not-expand-medicaid-an-update/>.
41. Resolution Calling for the Abolition of For-Profit Prisons, approved by the 215th General Assembly (2003) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); *Minutes*, 2003, Part I, p. 442.
42. “NLR officer involved in Wednesday shooting identified,” *Arkansas Online*, 7 March 2014, at: <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2014/mar/07/nlr-officer-involved-wednesday-shooting-identified/>; and www.mappingpoliceviolence.org/unarmed.
43. Ryan Herring, “Now Is a Time for Theology to Thrive,” *Sojourners*, September / October 2015, accessed at: <https://sojo.net/magazine/septemberoctober-2015/now-time-theology-thrive>.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Deborah Bruce and Cynthia Woolever, “Looking inside Presbyterian congregations,” 29 March 2011, at: <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2011/3/29/looking-inside-presbyterian-congregations/>.
46. “Illegal Drugs,” *Gallup*, op. cit.
47. “Binge drinking” is usually defined as four or more drinks in one occasion.
48. Brian D. Carter, M.P.H., Christian C. Abnet, Ph.D., et al., “Smoking and Mortality—Beyond Established Causes,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 12 February 2015; 372: 631–40.
49. L.H. Chen, H. Hedegaard, and M. Warner, “Drug-poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics: United States, 1999–2011,” *NCHS data brief no. 166*. US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, 2014, p. 1.
50. Testimony to Drug Policy Task Force, Denver, Colo., 19 June 2015.
51. Silvia S. Martins, et.al., “Racial/ethnic differences in trends in heroin use and heroin-related risk behaviors among nonmedical prescription opioid users,” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 1 June 2015 (151), pp. 278–83.
52. Melissa Sickmund and Charles Puzzanchera (eds.), *Juvenile Victims and Offenders: 2014 National Report*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, December 2014, p. 65.
53. http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms/Drug_Usage#Demographic.
54. From 1997 to 2001, 17 percent of whites reported having sold illegal drugs by age seventeen, compared to 13 percent of blacks and 16 percent of Hispanics. The survey was not repeated in later years. Howard Snyder and Melissa Sickmund, *Juvenile Victims and Offenders: 2006 National Report*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, March 2006, p. 70.
55. Chart of all federal mandatory minimums, at: www.famm.org.
56. The Sentencing Project, at <http://www.sentencingproject.org/template/page.cfm?id=128>.
57. ACLU, “What Is the School-to-Prison Pipeline?” at: <https://www.aclu.org/fact-sheet/what-school-prison-pipeline#3>.
58. For an informative and entertaining, if sobering, report on civil forfeiture, see John Oliver’s *Last Week Tonight*, 5 October 2014, at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kEpZWGgJks>.
59. Michael Sallah, et.al., “Stop and Seize,” *The Washington Post*, 6 September 2014.
60. The United States established an asset forfeiture agreement with Panama in 2013 that will share with Panama the takings from seizures, giving Panamanian agencies greater incentive to participate in asset seizure operations. See U.S. Department of State, International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, March 2014, accessed at: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/vol1/index.htm>.
61. Robert O’Harrow, Jr., et.al, “Holder limits seize-asset sharing process that split billions with local, state police,” *Washington Post*, 16 January 2015.
62. Office of National Drug Control Policy, “National Drug Control Budget: FY2015 Highlights,” March 2014; John Walsh, “Just How ‘New’ is the 2012 National Drug Control Strategy,” 8 May 2012, at http://www.wola.org/commentary/just_how_new_is_the_2012_national_drug_control_strategy.
63. Families Against Mandatory Minimums, “Crack Cocaine Mandatory Minimum Sentences,” at: <http://famm.org/projects/federal/us-congress/crack-cocaine-mandatory-minimum-sentences/>.
64. This is [H.R. 1255, Fairness in Cocaine Sentencing Act](#), introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA).
65. David Nutt, et. al. “Development of a rational scale to assess the harm of drugs of potential misuse,” *The Lancet* 2007 (369): 1047–53.
66. Drug Enforcement Administration, “Drug Schedules,” at: <http://www.dea.gov/druginfo/ds.shtml>.
67. See Carl Hart, *High Price: A Neuroscientist’s Journey of Self-Discovery that Challenges Everything You Know about Drugs and Society* (New York: Harper, 2013) and Gabor Maté, *op.cit.*

68. The margin of error for developing dependence on heroin was much higher than for other substances – 5.6 percent, so the probability of developing heroin dependence among users actually ranged from 17.5 percent to 28.7 percent. J.C. Anthony, L.A. Warner, R.C. Kessler, “Comparative Epidemiology of Dependence on Tobacco, Alcohol, Controlled Substances, and Inhalants: Basic Findings from the National Comorbidity Survey,” *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 1994 (2:3), 244–68.
69. Gabrielle Glaser, “Alcoholics Anonymous,” *The Atlantic*, April 2015.
70. Casa Columbia, *Addiction Medicine: Closing the Gap Between Science and Practice*, June 2012.
71. Guerri, C., & Pascual, M. (2010). Mechanisms involved in the neurotoxic, cognitive, and neurobehavioral effects of alcohol consumption during adolescence. *Alcohol*, 44(1), 15–26.
72. Seth Ammerman, et.al., “The Impact of Marijuana Policies on Youth: Clinical, Research and Legal Update,” *Pediatrics* (135:3), March 2015, pp. 769–85.
73. Dr. Bryan Page, discussion with Drug Policy Task Force, 19 June 2015.
74. David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 25–28.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 303–4.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8, 304–5.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 221; Johan Hari, “The War on Billie Holiday,” *In These Times*, 16 January 2015.
79. *The New York Times*, 15 September 1935, cited in Musto, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
80. Susie Byrd, testimony before Drug Policy Task Force, El Paso, Tex., 2 May 2015.
81. This section is indebted to a draft paper by Ben Leiter of the Latin America Working Group. See also Celina B. Realuyo, *It’s All About the Money: Advancing Anti-Money Laundering Efforts in the U.S. and Mexico to Combat Transnational Organized Crime* (Woodrow Wilson Center), 2012.
82. Christie Smythe, “HSBC Judge Approves \$1.9B Drug-Money Laundering Accord,” *Bloomberg*, 3 July 2013.
83. Anabel Hernández, *Narco Land: The Mexican Drug Lords and Their Godfathers* (New York: Verso, 2014), pp. 293–95.
84. Antonio Maria Costa, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “Making drug control ‘fit for purpose,’: Building on the UNGASS decade,” p. 10.
85. William Neuman, “As Mexico Arrests Kingpins, Cartels Splinter and Violence Spikes,” *The New York Times*, 12 August 2015.
86. Neuman, *New York Times*, *op.cit.*
87. Andrew Kahn and Chris Kirk, *Slate*, 9 August 2015, at <http://www.businessinsider.com/theres-blatant-inequality-at-nearly-every-phase-of-the-criminal-justice-system-2015-8#ixzz3iZOgfi7F>
88. Frank Newport, “In U.S., 24% of Young Black Men say Police Dealings Unfair,” 16 July 2013, at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/163523/one-four-young-black-men-say-police-dealings-unfair.aspx>.
89. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, p. 34; Li Hui Chen et.al., “Drug-poisoning Deaths Involving Opioid Analgesics: United States, 1999–2011,” *NCHS Data Brief No. 166*, September 2014.
90. Sanho Tree, 27 April 2015, at <http://t.co/2NR7580mb2>.
91. Mike Males and William Armaline, *San Francisco’s Arrest Rates of African Americans for Drug Felonies Worsens*, Center on Juvenile & Criminal Justice, April 2012, accessed at cjcj.org.
92. The task force met with the organizer of the hearing, Zoe Polk.
93. *Community Voices: The Human Rights Impact of the War on Drugs*, San Francisco Human Rights Commission, April 2012, accessed at: <http://sf-hrc.org/sites/sf-hrc.org/files/community%20voices%20report%2011%2017%2014.pdf>. See also a 30-minute video of hearing highlights at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnIfIWtxK7k>.
94. Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).
95. Michael Powell, “Bank Accused of Pushing Mortgage Deals on Blacks,” *The New York Times*, 6 June 2009.
96. Nathalie Baptiste, “Them That’s Got Shall Get,” *American Prospect*, 13 October 2014, accessed at: <http://prospect.org/article/staggering-loss-black-wealth-due-subprime-scandal-continues-unabated>.
97. Kerwin Kofi Charles and Ming Ching Luoh, “Male Incarceration, the Marriage Market, and Female Outcomes,” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 2010 (92:3) 614–27.
98. Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, *Facilities Offering Special Programs or Groups for Women: 2005*, DASIS REP., 15 May 2008, accessed at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k6/womenTx/womenTX.htm>.
99. Testimony by Kelly Wells, Staff Attorney, Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, El Paso, TX, 2 May 2015.
100. “What Is Wrong with Current Immigration Policy and How Can We Get It Right?” unpublished paper, NALACC, January 2013.

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

101. Raha Jorhani, Office of the Alameda County Public Defender, testimony before the Drug Policy Task Force, Richmond, California, 18 February 2015.
102. Peter Andreas and Ethan Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe: Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
103. Maté, *op. cit.*, pp. 338–41.
104. James Jordan, “Empire of Prisons,” *Counterpunch*, 5 June 2014, accessed at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/06/05/empire-of-prisons>; U.S. Agency for International Development, “The Future of CARSI in Honduras,” March 2012.
105. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/07/14/remarks-president-naacp-conference>.
106. John Lindsay-Poland, “The Military Logic of the Drug Business,” September 2011, forusa.org. For an in-depth expose of the Mexican state’s persistent and deep penetration by drug traffickers, see Anabel Hernández, *Narcoland*.
107. “Going South: Numbers show international bridge traffic dropping,” *Valley Morning Star*, 10 June 2013.
108. “Mexico,” Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Firearms Trace Data, as of March 10, 2014.
109. Topher McDougal, et al., *The Way of the Gun: Estimating Firearms Traffic Across the U.S.-Mexico Border*, University of San Diego Trans-Border Institute, March 2013, p. 2.
110. Testimony of Alredo Holguin, Mexicanos en Exilio, El Paso, Tex., 2 May 2015.
111. Mesoamerican Working Group (MAWG), *Rethinking the Drug War in Central America and Mexico*, 21 January 2014, at: www.cipamericas.org/archives/11315.
112. A study of DEA in Central America and the Caribbean concluded that “the DEA’s coordinated drug enforcement operations contribute to increasing the level of violent and property crimes in the region.” Horace A. Bartilow and Kihong Eom, “Busting Drugs While Paying with Crime: The Collateral Damage of U.S. Drug Enforcement in Foreign Countries,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2009) 5, 93–116.
113. DEA Administrator Michele Leonhart, statement before House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, June 20, 2012; Horace A. Bartilow and Kihong Eom, *op. cit.*
114. Associated Press, “US Aids Honduran Police Despite Death Squad Fears,” March 23, 2013.
115. To “disappear” a person an act, typically by state authorities, in which a person is taken and never seen again, though they were presumably killed.
116. Valeria Espinosa and Donald B. Rubin (2015), “Did the Military Interventions in the Mexican Drug War Increase Violence?” *The American Statistician*, 69:1, 17-27.
117. Washington Office on Latin America, *Don’t Call it a Model*, July 3, 2010; *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Colombia*, January 7, 2013.
118. Edward Fox, “Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico Urge UN to Review Global Drug Policy,” *Insight Crime*, October 4, 2012, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/guatemala-colombia-mexico-urge-un-review-global-drug-policy>.
119. Amnesty International, *Brazil: You Killed My Son: Homicides by Military Police in the City of Rio de Janeiro*, August 2015, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr19/2068/2015/en/>.
120. Neta C. Crawford, “U.S. Costs of Wars Through 2014: \$4.4 Trillion and Counting,” 25 June 2014.
121. UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “Illicit crop cultivation,” at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/alternative-development/illicit-crop-cultivation.html>.
122. UNDP, *Addressing the Development Dimensions of Drug Policy*, June 2015, p. 27.
123. Marijuana Policy Project, at <https://www.mpp.org/states/>.
124. United Nations Office of Drug Control (2013), *2013 World Drug Report*, at: www.unodc.org/unodc/secured/wdr/wdr2013/World_Drug_Report_2013.pdf.
125. J. Michael Bostwick, “Blurred Boundaries: The Therapeutics and Politics of Medical Marijuana,” *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, February 2012 (87:2), 172–86.
126. Iversen, Leslie L., PhD, FRS, “Long-Term Effects of Exposure to Cannabis,” *Current Opinion in Pharmacology*, February 2005, (5: 1), p. 71, at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15661628>.
127. This study does not deny health threats from all drugs, though it notes the history of how dangers have been magnified for reasons of prejudice and profit. An overview of marijuana science can be found here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/31/opinion/what-science-says-about-marijuana.html?opinion-series> More negative views, generally with limited data samples, can be found through these links: http://www.currentpsychiatry.com/view-pdf.html?file=fileadmin/cp_archive/pdf/0602/0602CP_Article2, <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/766633>, <http://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/publications/139772>, <http://www.bmj.com/content/342/bmj.d738>.
128. *Ibid.* Iversen, Leslie L.
129. Carter, Gregory T.; Earleywine, Mitchell; McGill, Jason T., “Exhibit B: Statement of Grounds,” Rulemaking petition to reclassify cannabis for medical use from a Schedule I controlled substance to a Schedule II (Office of Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor Rhode Island and

Office of Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of Washington: Letter to Michelle Leonhard, Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, 30 November 2011), p. 38.

130. QEV Analytics, LTD., “National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XVII: Teens,” (New York, NY: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, August 2012), p. 30.

131. University of Michigan, *2014 Monitoring the Future Survey*, at: monitoringthefuture.org/data/14data.html, Figure 6, Marijuana Trends.

132. Hall, W., Room, R. and Bondy, S., WHO Project on Health Implications of Cannabis Use: A Comparative Appraisal of the Health and Psychological Consequences of Alcohol, Cannabis, Nicotine and Opiate Use, August 28, 1995 (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, March 1998).

133. Staff of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, for example, have described lessons learned from the legalization of marijuana in Colorado that should be useful for policy makers in other states. Tista Ghosh, MD, MPH, Mike Van Dyke, PhD, Ali Maffey, MSW, Elizabeth Whitley, RN, PhD, Laura Gillim-Ross, PhD, and Larry Wolk, MD, MSPH, “The Public Health Framework of Legalized Marijuana in Colorado,” *American Journal of Public Health* (106), January 2016, pp. 21-27.

134. Johan Hari, *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 162.

135. Caitlin Elizabeth Hughes and Alex Stephens, “A resounding success or a disastrous failure: Re-examining the interpretation of evidence on the Portuguese decriminalization of illicit drugs,” *Drug and Alcohol Review* (31), January 2012, pp. 101–13.

136. Caitlin Elizabeth Hughes and Alex Stephens, “What Can We Learn from the Portuguese Decriminalization of Illicit Drugs?” *British Journal of Criminology* (50), 2010, pp. 999–1022.

137. Gaelle Faure, “Why Doctors Are Giving Heroin to Heroin Addicts,” *TIME*, 28 September 2009, at: <http://content.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1926160,00.html>; Gabor Maté, *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts*.

138. E. Oviedo-Joekes, et.al. *NEJM* (361:8),2009, pp. 777–86.

139. UN Office of Drug Control, “Bolivia to re-accede to UN drug convention, while making exception on coca leaf chewing,” January 2013.

140. Coletta Youngers and Kathryn Ledebur, *Building on Progress: Bolivia Consolidates Achievements in Reducing Coca and Looks to Reform Decades-Old Drug Law*, (Washington Office on Latin America), August 2015; Tim Rogers, “How Bolivia became a drug war success story – after ousting Uncle Sam,” *Fusion*, 19 August 2015, at: <http://fusion.net/story/185398/how-bolivia-became-a-drug-war-success-story-after-ousting-uncle-sam/>.

141. American Public Health Association Policy Statement Number 8817. A Public Health Response to the War on Drugs: Reducing Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Problems Among the Nation’s Youth. Adopted January, 1988; American Public Health Association Policy Statement Number 201312. Defining and Implementing a Public Health Response to Drug Use and Misuse. Adopted November 2013; American Public Health Association Policy Statement Number 201410. Regulating Commercially Legalized Marijuana as a Public Health Priority. Adopted November 2014.

142. David Kennedy, “Drugs, Race and Common Ground: Reflections on the High Point Intervention,” *NIJ Journal* (March 2009), No. 262, pp. 12–17.

143. Ibid.

144. David M. Kennedy and Sue-Lin Wong, *The High Point Drug Market Intervention Strategy*, National Network for Safe Communities, 2012, pp. 33–41.

145. Jacquelyn Rivers and Lenore Anderson, *Back on Track: A Problem-Solving Reentry Court*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, September 2009.

146. National Association of Drug Court Professionals: nadcp.org/learn/what-are-drug-courts/types-drug-courts.

147. Justice Policy Institute, *Addicted to Courts: How a Growing Dependence on Drug Courts Impacts People and Communities*, March 2011, accessed at: justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/addicted_to_courts_final.pdf.

148. For a review of drug court data from 2004–2011, see study the Government Accounting Office performed for the Department of Justice: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/586794.html> For adults, recidivism was generally lowered, but for juvenile drug courts, there were less clear outcomes. Low recidivism is one measurement of success, although low incarceration rates could also be a measure.

149. http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Assessing_Efectiveness.pdf A different perspective is more critical: https://www.drugpolicy.org/docUploads/Drug_Courts_Are_Not_the_Answer_Final2.pdf

Item 11-26

[The assembly approved Item 11-26 with amendment. See pp. 14, 59.]

On the Economic Crisis in Puerto Rico—From the Presbiterio Del Noroeste.

The Presbiterio Del Noroeste—requesting solidarity and support in favor of a fair and humanitarian resolution of the economic crisis of the people of Puerto Rico, which is the result of an unpayable debt that, if executed, would af-

fect the basic services of health, security, education, among other main services, for the next four generations—overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016 to take the following actions:

1. Instruct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to Congress requesting that Congress find a fair, ~~[just, and fiscally rightful treatment in relation to]~~ [long-term debt plan to address] the fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico, ~~[where all]~~ [in which the combination of] actions to be approved [by the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments] ~~[do]~~ [does] not result in greater austerity measures that impoverishes the most vulnerable classes; to include a plan for real economic development in Puerto Rico; and that every alternative include a majority of multisectoral participation of the people of Puerto Rico.

2. Support any gesture in favor of a humanitarian resolution of the economy of Puerto Rico.

3. Request the presbyteries, in turn, to ask its members to write to their congressperson to speak out in favor of a just and compassionate solution for the people of Puerto Rico.

Rationale

Social History

The \$70 billion debt has led Puerto Rico to an economic crisis.

The nonpayment and the inability to pay the debt results in lower wages, dismissal of workers, marginal benefits reductions, and reduction in basic services such as health, security, and education.

The population of Puerto Rico, by virtue of the Jones Act, are granted citizenship of the United States of America. However, they do not receive the same treatment as their fellow citizens that reside in the continental United States. In this case, the right to benefit from a Chapter 9 of the Bankruptcy Law, which would allow the local government to restructure part of the debt that would provide relief for the current crisis.

Puerto Rico enters its second decade of an economic downturn that has affected banks, retailers, the real estate industry, construction, the establishment of fair health services, and family stability. As part of this domino effect, it has caused an increase in dependence on government aid for professionals starting their career and even others with decades of experience. Add this to the fact that more than half of the population already lives under the poverty levels.

As a result of the impact of the economic crisis that has impoverished Puerto Rican families, there has been a decline in employment opportunities on the island, causing an exodus of hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans, including members of our congregations, in search of better opportunities in different parts of the continental U.S.A., and other parts of the world. Most of them are professionals or people able to work.

This membership loss has caused a loss of revenue in offerings, pledges, and bequests, and also has caused, in turn, a re-focus on the mission of the presbyteries, the synod, and the congregations, reducing its mission capabilities. This includes the inability of a large number of churches to provide a full-time pastoral calling, causing ruling elders to be commissioned and used as an alternative to the economic problems inside ministry, knowing that this is not the way it was originally modeled. This then affects the whole structure of the denominations.

Theological

The 208th General Assembly (1996) expressed that: "... The repayment of debts and interest at the expense of the basics life raises serious questions of justice" (*Minutes*, 1996, Part I, p. 539). The 217th General Assembly (2006) approved *Resolution on Just Globalization: Justice, Ownership and Accountability*, which stated "that no economic arrangement is to be allowed to impoverish permanently; the future must not be made hopeless" (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, p. 833).

The Holy Scriptures affirm the principle of social and economic justice without which peace could simply not exist. These also advocate for the children of God (the poor, the orphans, the widows, strangers, among others), wanting to ensure that they are not exploited or abused. They also proclaim the Jubilee year where debts are condoned as an act of justice for nations and nature (Leviticus 25; Proverbs 14:31; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 3:14–15; Amos 2:6–16; Luke 4:18–19).

Our confessions express our responsibility as church with those who are poor and those who are oppressed. (Book of Confessions, 5.101;5.163; 9.45–.46)

We are all members of one Body, and the suffering of a member is the suffering of the whole body (1 Cor. 12:26). This is a matter of all the church.

As the Great Ends of the Church announce, we shall promote social justice, and the manifestation of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world (*Book of Order*, F-1.0304).

Other denominations, such as the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ, have already expressed their support for a just action from Congress based on ~~social justice that will accommodate~~ fiscally fair and equitable options.

Concurrence to Item 11-26 from the Sínodo Presbiteriano Boriquén.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 11-26

Advice and Counsel on Item 11-26—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of this item with amendment to Recommendation 1. as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“1. Instruct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to Congress requesting that Congress find a fair, ~~[just, and fiscally rightful treatment in relation to]~~ [long-term debt plan to address] the fiscal crisis in Puerto Rico, ~~[where all]~~ [in which the combination of] actions to be approved [by the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments] ~~[do]~~ [does] not result in greater austerity measures that impoverishes the most vulnerable classes; to include a plan for real economic development in Puerto Rico; and that every alternative include a majority of multisectoral participation of the people of Puerto Rico.”

This overture reflects prophetic and compassionate action by our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico and deserves the support of the General Assembly. At the same time, commissioners should know that if authorized, a letter by the Stated Clerk and other actions described would recognize the trade-offs and complexity of a situation that has developed over considerable time. In line with the Confession of Belhar, past General Assembly policies in favor of self-determination and self-development noted in the overture would support the statement Item 11-26 proposes. The amendments we recommend reflect some of the larger political choices needed to protect the most vulnerable, ideally by changing certain laws in both the U.S. Congress and in Puerto Rico.

By simply advocating a “fair, long-term debt plan” that meets the criteria desired, we recognize that in strict terms, “fiscally rightful” would entail beneficiaries, especially creditors and those above the poverty line, paying for some of the cost. Achieving this without exacerbating the flight of capital and skilled labor could be difficult and will require priorities to be negotiated with the common good of Puerto Rico in mind.

Second, having “... every alternative include a majority of multisectoral participation of the people of Puerto Rico ...” will also entail solidarity in the electoral, legislative, and executive system of Puerto Rico. Many of today’s problems have resulted from political decisions to run deficits for decades and not to reform the tax system of Puerto Rico, which in a global economy usually means reducing some statutory rates and broadening the tax base. These decisions belong in Puerto Rico, but U.S. congressional action could require some measures to be taken if the Puerto Rican government is not seen to have acted sufficiently.

Third, the unsustainability of Puerto Rico’s debt is due to economic policy failures in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico which may well reflect an unfair historical relationship. At this time, however, actions to address the debt problem, need to be done in the context of a broader reform of the Puerto Rican economy, to which the overture wisely alludes.

For background, Puerto Rico’s economy depends heavily—about 50 percent—on manufacturing, mainly on pharmaceuticals, textiles, petrochemicals, and electronics. These products have high value-to-weight inputs and outputs, which make the industries easy to move in response to incentives, like tax policy. IRS section 936 was critical to these sectors of the economy, as it established tax exemptions for U.S. corporations that settled in Puerto Rico, and allowed their insular subsidiaries to send their earnings to the parent corporation in the U.S. at any time, without paying federal tax on corporate income. This contributed to strong growth of the Puerto Rico economy in the 1980s and 90s. The inequity of 936 (compared to the rest of the U.S. economy) and the tax avoidance that it fostered led, however, to its elimination, with a phase-out from 1996 to 2006.¹ Economic growth then slowed and turned negative, with the economy shrinking about -2 percent per year since 2006.

Puerto Rico-owned firms have not expanded to fill the gap left by the exit of U.S. owned firms, partly due to lack of capital. Another reason is Puerto Rico’s relatively high corporate tax rate (20 percent plus a progressive surcharge that tops out at 19 percent for profit over \$275,000) on profits of its domestically owned firms. Many firms have found some exemptions from these rates, but the high rates discourage new firms in new sectors that do not have the exemptions. Reforms of Puerto Rico’s tax system have been proposed but have not gotten approval in the legislature. At least in the current global economy, reforming the tax system is needed for sustainable economic recovery. If Puerto Rico were an independent country, getting international assistance might be conditional on making such reforms, and the danger of externally imposed austerity is clear. The U.S. government has a long history, however, of not bailing out indebted states and not specifying the details of their fiscal policy. (State often do that with their municipalities, however.) About a quarter of Puerto Rico’s government revenue does come from the U.S. government, earmarked to certain programs. If a letter is authorized, it could advocate that such assistance increase to support social programs targeted to the poor during a reform transition.

Resolving the debt problem as part of Puerto Rico’s economic crisis will require some clarification and modification of the status of the Puerto Rico government vis a vis its creditors. One type of solution (hinted at in the overture) might be to grant Puerto Rico access to Chapter 9 of the U.S. federal bankruptcy law, which applies to municipalities, if their states allow it. Twenty-three states do not allow their municipalities to use Chapter 9, and nine do so only to a limited extent. In any case, municipalities always operate within the varied and generally complex restraints of their state context. Giving Puerto Rico access to Chapter 9 would necessitate the U.S. government doing more to specify the fiscal framework for Puerto Rico, as the states do for their municipalities.

Another solution would be to grant Puerto Rico the status of a sovereign debtor—like states of the U.S. that, according to the Eleventh Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, are immune from legal actions by citizen of other states or nations (including creditors). This makes states appear very un-creditworthy except to the extent that they develop strong rules to limit their borrowing and keep it in line with their ability to pay. States have developed such limits in their constitutions and laws over the past two centuries. [The fiscal crises in states today come largely from employee pension liabilities, which debt clauses in the constitutions did not address adequately, if at all.] National governments in some countries have also developed such limits, especially in the past twenty years, in order to increase their attractiveness to foreign lenders. If Puerto Rico aspires to political (and fiscal) independence, as recent referenda suggest, then it might need to take such measures. Granting 11th amendment status to Puerto Rico could be a step on this path.

References:

<http://taxfoundation.org/blog/tax-policy-helped-create-puerto-rico-s-fiscal-crisis>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico.

Liu, Tian, and Wallis, “Caveat Creditor: State Systems of Local Government Borrowing in the United States”, in Canuto and Liu, ed. *Until Debt Do Us Part: Subnational Debt, Insolvency, and Markets*. World Bank, Washington DC. 2013.

Endnote for ACSWP Advice & Counsel on Item 11-26

1. Section 936 became increasingly unpopular throughout the early 1990s, as many saw it as a way for large corporations to avoid taxes. Ultimately, in 1996, President Clinton signed legislation that phased out section 936 over a ten-year period, leaving it to be fully repealed at the beginning of 2006. Without section 936, Puerto Rican subsidiaries of U.S. businesses were subject to the same worldwide corporate income tax as other foreign subsidiary.

Item 11-A

[The Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues approved Item 11-A. See p. 59.]

Minutes, Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Item 11-Self-Study

[The Assembly Committee on Social Justice Issues approved Item 11-Self-Study. See p. 59.]

Self-Study Report of the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

I. INTRODUCTION

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) was created by the 205th General Assembly (1993) to ensure representation and an active voice for advocacy at the General Assembly level for people of color in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The goal of this committee is to ensure the full access and participation of people of color within the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the maintenance of a strong prophetic witness of the church on issues of racial justice in our nation and the world.

Creation of ACREC represented something of long-standing significance as well as something new in the history of the Presbyterian church. For Native Americans, the Presbyterian church was active both in the formation and implementation of government policies affecting Native American peoples for the first 200 years of this relationship. Because major Indian policy in the United States has focused on the land rights of native peoples, it follows that the story of Presbyterian work among Native Americans is one largely linked to the heart of native America—its land. Second, it is difficult to distill peculiarly Presbyterian work in these issues as much of the work among native peoples was done in cooperation (and sometimes in competition) with other denominations (*Comprehensive Strategy for Ministries with Native Americans Report, Minutes, 2000, Part I, pp. 26, 206ff*).

On the one hand, Presbyterians have a long history of struggling with issues of racial justice since the slavery issue was first introduced into the deliberations of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1774. However, the debate then and over the next two centuries in successor bodies has really been a debate among white men. As Andrew Murray wrote in his *Presbyterians and the Negro: A History* (Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966, p. 3), “In most of the struggle the Negro has not been the main actor in the events that shaped his history, but rather he has been an unwilling spectator, the pawn of contending political and social groups who decided what his destiny should be. Only in recent times has he entered the debate about his future as a participant rather than as a victim.” Thus what was new in 205th General Assembly (1993) action in creating the ACREC was not only to recognize African Americans and other racial ethnic minorities as fellow participants in its debates about the future but also to give them a recognized place together within the structures of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from which to voice their shared convictions and concerns. In so doing, the General Assembly recognized that as an institution where the vast majority of its members are white, it would continue to seek to be inclusive with equity, as it also seeks to increase the diversity of its members. We are not yet where we want to be.

Theological Definitions

“... [W]hat does the Lord require of [us] but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with [our] God?” (Mic. 6:8).

The ACREC is an advocacy committee that is composed of people of color representing racial ethnic groups within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This committee is a fundamental part of the PC(USA) that works for the sake of an expanded sense of justice, inclusion, and equality in the church. Our work is to sound a prophetic call to the church, a call issued by the prophets and the gospel of Jesus Christ that is intended to redeem the whole creation: people, nature, cultural systems, and the whole world.

We live and serve a God who has made us all into God’s image. However, our sins have separated us as it still does from fully expressing the image of God in ourselves and in the world. We are broken, we are divided, and we have not paid enough attention to the racial prejudices that create deep wounds within the life of the church and the world. Thus, moved by the grace of God, we work together to see God’s love renewing and reconciling the whole creation (Ps. 146:5–9; Jer. 9:23–24; 25:31–46; Lk 4:18–19; Jn. 10:10; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 2:1–10; Gal. 6:9–10; Rom. 8:18–25; Eph. 6:10–17).

For ACREC, justice means to confront unbalanced power, to go against the law when law privileges and protects the rich and oppress the poor. As an advocacy committee for justice, we understand justice as a just, equal, peaceful, and sustainable church and world where people, every people, can flourish. It is unacceptable that we live within the church with dramatic social, racial, and economic disparities. Jesus’s “abundant life” includes life abundant for all and not only for a few people. The struggle for justice, love, and righteousness has to happen in every place of our society, as well as in our church, redeeming relationships and providing reparation to historical injustices.

We cannot understand the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) without its commitment to justice here and elsewhere. Our history shows how much the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been an advocate for the oppressed. Thus, the existence of ACREC has deep historical roots in the history of our church.

Being from the underside of history, and from the forefront of God’s love, our work is to be attentive to the ways in which we live the gospel of Jesus Christ in this church. In concordance with the best tradition of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we want to be a voice, most often a disquieting voice that will point to the ways in which our church must deal with its own theological thinking, ministerial emphasis, and structural priorities. We see a plethora of situations where the gospel has fallen short and we call the church to confess together our sins and change our ways. Here are some things we call the church to attend, ask God’s forgiveness, and take actions for change.

First, we must have a long and hard conversation about the racial formation of the United States and how it shaped our theological imagination, our ministerial understandings, and our liturgical and daily practices. Our faith was deeply formed and informed by racial and economic values that persist, up to today, expanding poverty and inequality. Our racial formation has created an interconnected web of injustice and oppression—patriarchy, racism, sexism, classism, and violence are deeply correlated. The history of the US is marked by death, slavery, and apartheid. There have been racist public policies that have increased the possibilities of white people to have access to housing, wealth, education, and inheritance. The decimation of native people, black people, and Latino/as continues to happen. Economic measures still deny access by the poor to jobs and the main sources of wealth of this country. The stealing of lands, the massive incarceration of blacks and Latino/as the new Jim Crow, and growth of poverty continue exclude minorities from access to more dignified forms of life. Our church, as our nation, must confront its white supremacy and deal with it in its General Assembly resolutions, training in theological seminaries, and liturgies in local churches.

Second, our church has to have a long conversation about the economic inequality within the church. In some ways Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mirrors the inequality of our society. Our church is made of very few steeple churches, which are celebrated and a vast majority of struggling churches that are deemed unsuccessful. Our church must share equally its resources to all groups and not only white people. We call our church to pay our pastors equal salary so the definition of a

call is not a financial package but a place and a people God calls us to serve. When was it that we decided it is acceptable that one pastor can be paid ten thousand dollars without benefits to take care of a couple churches while another pastor or church leader can be paid one hundred to three hundred thousand dollars? When did we lose our moral standards? We must confront the very few people in our church being paid huge salaries to call for equity in paid salaries. We must confront the ideological system that sustains the privilege of some people, with great opportunities, wealth, and power while most of our churches are barely surviving.

Third, for our church to move forward we also need to undo the black and white dualism of discussion and add colors to the debate. Within and beyond the black and white divide, there must be the “brown,” the “red,” and the “yellow” people as a fundamental part of the definition of our plural identities as reformed people. We were created as equal people in God’s image and we, as such, must live with justice and equality in God’s world if we are to live into John Calvin’s conception of creation as a “theatre of God’s glory” (John Calvin).

We call our church to rethink and relearn what we already know. If minorities or poor people don’t matter for our churches, then white lives and their richness don’t matter either. Unless we deal with the white and wealth oppression in our church, we will never deal with the root causes of our unequal system.

However, Jesus reconciled us to be equals! As Karl Barth said, “Jesus Christ as mediator and reconciler between God and man [sic] is also the Revealer of them both” (Karl Barth in *The Humanity of God*). Unfortunately, our church’s structure shows a God who reveals Godself fully mostly to few white people. Since Jesus is the reconciler and mediator of us all, we must instead call for a God of the oppressed, repairing injustices and distributing equally the free spiritual and material gifts of God. In the voice of disquiet, ACREC is doing what we find in Proverbs: “Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prov. 31:8–9).

II. WHO WE ARE

The ACREC has twelve voting members nominated and elected through the General Assembly Nominating Committee process, with the exception of one, who is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). Members are elected to four-year terms and may serve two consecutive terms. The composition of the committee is outlined in the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) *Manual of Operations* and is composed of two members from each of five racial ethnic groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and Native Americans. Two additional members are one member-at-large elected with consideration for special expertise, fast-growing racial ethnic communities, geographic diversity, and ethnic balance; and one member of the PMAB.

The PMAB member is ordinarily nominated to serve a four-year, non-renewable term. They serve as a voting member on ACREC and fulfill the responsibility of liaison between the PMAB and the advocacy committee.

Members of the five racial ethnic caucuses recognized by the General Assembly select a member from their caucus to be nominated through the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) process. The remaining six vacancies are filled through at-large nominations from the GANC—with one representative in each of the five racial ethnic groups identified above. Additionally, ACREC works with the caucuses and the GANC to try to maintain gender balance and diversity in age and geographic representation. The racial ethnic caucuses that nominate members to ACREC are:

- National Asian Presbyterian Council;
- Native American Coordinating Council;
- National Black Presbyterian Caucus;
- National Hispanic/Latino Caucus; and
- National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus.

The ACREC receives liaisons from other entities to provide for communication, coordination, and representation. Liaisons serve on the committee with full voice, but not vote. These include the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) (as of 2015). The ACREC sends liaisons to ACWC and ACSWP.

The ACREC also appoints one member to sit on the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee. That person is a full voting member of MRTI.

III. MISSION AND PARTNERSHIPS

In order to respond to its mandate, the committee is designed to have direct access to the General Assembly (GA) and the PMAB to provide advice and counsel on matters it deems appropriate. This access is provided for in a number of ways:

11 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

- The chair of ACREC sits as a corresponding member of both GA and PMAB.
- The committee provides advice and counsel on new business.
- The committee provides reports and resolutions to introduce new business.
- The committee holds regular consultations with the executives of the six agencies of the General Assembly.

The ACREC works in close partnership with the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) to provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly through written comments on overtures and reports to the General Assembly and a briefing session for commissioners at the assembly. The committee has advocated on critical issues impacting communities of color on a wide range of issues, including:

- Racial Ethnic, New Immigrant Group Church Growth, a recommendation. Based on racial ethnic church growth goals set by the 208th General Assembly (1996), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s racial ethnic membership was to be 20 percent of the total for the denomination by the year 2010. The current percentage is around 9 percent and ACREC is proposing action to help determine what caused the church to fall short of its goal and to consider what its new goal should be.
- Registering concern with Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries regarding the vacant Middle Eastern staff position in Louisville and Native American staff.
- Requesting consultation by ACREC in the revision of the paper on Christians and Jews
- 2010 Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change, report and recommendations. Every two years ACREC interviews and receives reports from the chief executives of two of the six General Assembly agencies on the same six-year cycle schedule as that used by the Agency Review Committee in order to ascertain the status of the "Creating a Climate for Change" recommendations approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004). A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was implemented and communicated.
- Updated Nomenclature, a recommendation. The 208th General Assembly (1996) was asked to substitute the term "Emerging Majorities" for "Racial Ethnic." The assembly referred this recommendation back to ACREC for reconsideration and upon further examination the committee found it to be exceedingly complex with lots of potential ramifications. The committee is recommending a method for concluding the issue.
- Nature of the Church for the 21st Century, a recommendation. No serious study has been undertaken of the nature of the church since 1993 in a time when the Form of Government is undergoing serious consideration for revision and in a new century where there is a tremendous need to integrate an increasingly diverse group of Presbyterians into the church and its leadership. ACREC is proposing that the church remedy this situation.
- Mission Funding, a recommendation. The church's mission council and its ministries, and indeed all church agencies, are under increasing pressure to do more with less as giving patterns change. A new funding plan and strategy with varied methods, philosophies, and material would be helpful in order to increase giving in this growing diverse church community.
- Criminal justice issues and incarceration.
- Immigration.
- Workers' rights.
- Concern about the Ferguson, Missouri, grand jury failure to indict the police officer in the killing of Michael Brown.
- A Resolution to Define and Interpret Standards for PC(USA) Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges (in response to Referral Item 10-01 from the 220th General Assembly (2012)).
- A Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy.
- A Resolution on Behalf of Dominicans of Haitian Descent and any Others Impacted by the Decision 168/13 of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic.
- A Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression.

The committee has urged the church to examine its own policies and practices, such as:

- A Resolution to Retain the Name, "Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns," in response to the 2012 Referral, Item 09-16.

- A Resolution on Racism, Incarceration, and Restoration.
- A Resolution to Reaffirm the Call to Prophetic Witness in the PC(USA).
- A Resolution to Reaffirm the Commitment of the PC(USA) to Making Just Immigration a Reality
- A Resolution on Workers’ Rights and Income Inequality.
- A resolution to recognize the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to making just immigration a reality.
- Requested that the General Assembly reexamine mission funding.

And on occasion the committee has lauded the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on its General Assembly vote on divestment in 2014.

The ACREC’s chairperson attends the PMAB meetings as a corresponding member to provide similar advice and counsel. The ACREC provides a written report to the PMAB on an annual basis and directs written correspondence to the council as needed.

IV. EVALUATION

To access cultural proficiency within the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the committee developed a survey questionnaire, presented here in detail.

Objective: To conduct a survey of the cultural proficiency within the PC(USA) for the purpose of informing future work of ACREC in its role to ensure representation and an active voice for advocacy at the General Assembly level for people of color in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Methods: Staff from PMA Research Services, in collaboration with ACREC staff and committee members, designed the study as a single web-based survey. The population for this survey came from the committee members’ contacts, conference attendees, individuals who have worked with or requested information from ACREC staff, and members of congregations. Demographic information obtained included age, gender, income, and race/ethnicity. This population is not representative of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), so the findings are not applicable to the church at large.

Description of Sample

The population for this survey came from the committee member’s contacts, conference attendees, individuals who have worked with or requested information from ACREC staff, and members of congregations. Demographic information obtained included age, gender, income, and race/ethnicity. There were 876 names on the survey list. This population is not representative of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), so the findings are not applicable to the church at large.

Race/Ethnicity

The original survey offered ten racial ethnic options; however, due to low numbers in several of the options, five groups comprise the redefined racial ethnic groups.

African American and black were grouped together (18.7 percent). Asian, non-Korean, and Korean were grouped together as Asian (20 percent). Middle Eastern, multiracial/ethnic, Native American/Alaska Eskimo and Other became “Other” (11.6 percent). Hispanic/Latino/a (16.8 percent) and white (32.9 percent) remain as originally listed.

Income

Income options include eight groups with intervals of \$25,000, with the last group being \$150,000 or more. Three income groups comprised two-thirds (67 percent) of the responses: \$75,000 to \$99,999 (27.7 percent), 100,000 to \$124,999 (20.4 percent), and \$50,000 to \$74,999 (18.9 percent).

Whites cluster in the middle-income categories; however, they are found in each income group. Hispanics skew to lower income groups with no one in the upper two groups of more than \$125,000 or more. African American/Blacks skew to slightly higher income with no one in the lowest group of \$0–\$25,000. Asians are distributed evenly over four of the seven upper-income brackets.

Age

The three age ranges are 25–34, 35–54, and 55 years or older. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) are 55 years or older.

An average cannot be computed for age or income as the options were ranges rather than a unique number. However, the mode or most frequent selection for age is 55 years and older. The mode for income is \$75,000–\$99,999.

Gender

There are three common descriptions among the respondents. The first is white male, age 55 years or older with a total household income of \$75,000 to \$99,000 is the most frequent respondent. Second is African American/black female, age 55 years or older with a total household income of \$50,000 to \$99,000. Third is white female, age 55.

Males comprise 54.7 percent of respondents with the remaining 42.8 percent being females.

The ACREC members developed questions for the survey. Following consultation with staff of PMA Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a web-based survey utilizing Survey Gizmo software was implemented by staff of Research Services. Once the survey was approved, it was distributed to the email list provided by ACREC staff. Upon survey completion, respondents received an automatic thank you note. There are 206 responses: 164 complete with 42 partial responses.

The survey was quantitative with limited qualitative responses. That is, the survey primarily provided closed-ended questions with the responses assigned numeric values. Respondents had multiple opportunities to provide descriptions of their ecumenical and interreligious relations experiences.

*Results**Education*

Education is a primary concern for the PC(USA); however, only two-thirds (66.1 percent) know the history of funding schools for people of color. With finite resources, the definition of what is meant to be a racial ethnic school needs review (79.6 percent). Diversity awareness, practice, and application are expressed concerns for all areas of the PC(USA), from its seminaries' leadership to agencies' boards. Diversity is valued for seminaries (97.6 percent); however, less than half (46.6 percent) think that diversity exists within seminaries' leadership. The diversity of leadership should be mandated for seminary staff (69 percent), boards (64.5 percent), and boards of racial ethnic schools (70.1 percent).

Anti-racism

In general, there is agreement that the church should have an antiracism policy (55.2 percent strongly agree; 26.7 percent agree). Many are aware that the church has an antiracism policy (65.1 percent). Most agree that there should be antiracism trainings at the national offices (50 percent strongly agree, 31.5 percent agree). More than half (50 percent) are not familiar with the definition of cultural competence; however, they are in agreement with its components. The six Presbyterian agencies should interview people of color for open positions and that their boards or comparable governing bodies should be monitored for diversity.

The Belhar Confession

Most (84.7 percent) are familiar with The Belhar Confession and of its impending inclusion in the *Book of Confessions* (81.9 percent). Eleven respondents first learned of The Belhar Confession thru this survey. There is agreement that worshiping communities should be welcoming of all peoples.

Immigrants

Many (57.1 percent) are aware of new immigrant communities in their area. However, slightly more than half (54.3 percent) do not think that the community has sufficient non-English resources. Support for new immigrant communities is strong with 90.7 percent for nurturing and 84.7 percent wanting PC(USA) to financially support these communities. Most agree that the church should uphold these communities (91.1 percent) and families by supporting policies that keep families intact (80 percent).

Witness

Most are aware of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s historical stance for advocating for justice (89.2 percent), and that it is a central mandate of the church to pursue justice (94 percent). One avenue for the pursuit of justice is to take positions on human rights and human rights violations (88.1 percent).

Incarceration

Jim Crow refers to the laws that reinforced segregation. The New Jim Crow refers to the mass incarceration of people of color, particularly blacks and Hispanics/Latinos/as and the resultant permanent stigmatism, loss of rights, and impact on communities as detailed by Dr. Michelle Alexander in her book, *The New Jim Crow*. A little more than half are familiar with either the term "The New Jim Crow" (54 percent) or how it affects communities of color (52 percent). However, many agree (41.85 percent) and more strongly agree (37.5 percent) that the church should encourage mid councils and congregations to work with prisoners as they reenter society.

Workers' Rights

Slightly more than half know PC(USA)'s history of advocating for workers' rights, compensation, and benefits (59 percent) and its support of collective bargaining (56.6 percent). The church should be educating congregations about growing inequities in society (36.9 percent strongly agree and 46.3 percent agree). The church should be educating congregations about growing inequities in society (51.6 percent strongly agree and 36 percent agree). The widening wealth gap trend is a concern for the church (53.8 percent strongly agree and 27.5 percent agree). No differences exist between racial ethnic groups; the groups were equally aware and unaware of the church's work related to workers' rights.

Civil Society

One role of the church is to encourage members to participate in the democratic process of voting and to understand voting rights for all. Most agree that is an appropriate role of the church (55.3 percent strongly agree, 32.7 percent agree). Voter suppression is a problem (44.7 percent strongly agree, 33.3 percent agree). Nearly two-thirds (62.8 percent) are aware of recent changes regarding the 1965 Voting Right Act. Of all respondents, 71.3 percent are aware of any connections between the current levels of incarceration in communities of color and their disenfranchisement due to the laws that prevent former convicts from voting. And 67.9 percent are aware how the changes in the Voting Rights Act have affected communities of color.

Passions

Education (19 percent), justice (18 percent), and promoting change within the church (14 percent) top the list for passions. Other passions listed but with lower percentages were Immigrant Education (7 percent), Peoples of Color (5 percent), Civil Rights (5 percent), Immigrant Resettlement (3 percent), Voting Rights (3 percent), Worker's Rights (1 percent), Prisoners (1 percent), and Fair Employment (1 percent).

Other passions that had 1 response each were: Law, Conversations of Mutual Respect, Creating Mission Communities, Creation Care, Disaster Ministry, Ecology, Education, Evangelism, Evangelism through Economic and Community Development, GLBTQ Issues, Global Peace Advocacy Human Rights, Jesus Christ, Leadership Development, Multicultural Congregations, Non-White Communities, Spirituality and Contemplative Practices, Theological Friendship, Training Disciples, and Women's Issues.

Survey Conclusions

Even though the respondents to the 2015 ACREC survey are not representative of the church's demographics, the survey did provide valuable information about the cultural proficiency and passions of the demographic represented by the survey sample. As can be seen from the racial ethnic distribution of the respondents, slightly more than a third of the respondents were members of minority racial ethnic groups. The listing of the "passions" of the respondents is particularly valuable and provides a window into the concerns of the racial ethnic minority within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

In general, the respondents are equally aware of the work of ACREC and in agreement with new policy development. Where differences exist in awareness or agreement, the differences were equally distributed across racial ethnic and income groups.

We express appreciation and thanks to Susan Barnett of the Office of Research Services for her excellent collaboration with the ACREC study team.

V. SCOPE OF THE REPORT AND SELF-STUDY TEAM

This self-study report is based on the work of the committee for the five-year period from 2008–2014. Sources for the report include minutes, agency summaries, reports, resolutions, and advice and counsel submitted to the General Assembly, and briefing booklets prepared for commissioners. The self-study team had a conference call April 20, 2015, for planning purposes, and consulted by email and conference calls in the preparation of the report.

Members of the self-study team are: Nahida H. Gordon (chair of self-study team); Raafat L. Zaki, chair of ACREC; Noushin Framke, former member of ACREC; Mark S. Jones Sr., current member of ACREC; Debra L. Battise-Kleinman, current member of ACREC; and Gwendolyn D. Magby, current member of ACREC.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns expresses its gratitude to the self-study task force for their work in preparing this report.

Item 11-Info

A. *The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) Agency Summary 2014–2016*

“The [Holy One] is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Ps. 9:9).

“The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us” (Acts 11:12).

“... [Be] doers of the word, and not merely hearers ...” (Jas. 1:22).

Introduction

The context of women's advocacy is a human situation where women experience injustice because they are women. Grounded in communal faith in God who liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted with Israel that they might do justice, and motivated by painful recognition of sexism within and without, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) explicitly articulated in the Articles of Agreement its commitment to work against gender-based discrimination. The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) is a contemporary fulfillment of this promise. The new *Book of Order* continues to uphold this commitment: “... In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person ...” (*Book of Order*, F-1.0403). Created by the mandate of the 205th General Assembly (1993) at the recommendation of the *Report of the Task Force on Shape and Form*, ACWC is charged with the responsibility of assisting the church to

give full expression to the rich diversity of its membership as specified in the *Book of Order*, G-4.0403 ... monitor[ing] and evaluat[ing] policies, procedures, programs, and resources regarding the way in which they impact the status and position of women in the church ... and advocat[e] for full inclusiveness and equity in all areas of the life and work of the church in society [as a whole]. (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 262)

Assigned Responsibilities

The ACWC's assigned functions are delineated in the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations (October 2015)* (Appendix 1F, pp. 38–39).

They include:

- Preparing policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on women's concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, or on its own initiative;
- Advising the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of women's concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly;
- Providing advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of women's concerns;
- Assisting the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on women's concerns and provide information to the church as requested;
- Providing the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on women's concerns;
- Monitoring the implementation of women's policies and programs relative to women's concerns; and,
- Through advocacy, maintaining a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of women's concerns.

The ACWC is housed in the Office of the Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency. The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The ACWC has organized itself with a leadership team of three co-chairs: two serve as corresponding members to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board respectively. One member of ACWC is a voting member of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI). There are twelve voting members of the committee; ten members are nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and elected by the General Assembly. They are chosen based on their individual qualifications and do not represent any constituencies. One member is the current moderator for Justice and Peace of Presbyterian Women and one member is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, chosen and sent by that body. The committee also has liaison members: Lilia Ramirez from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), Joanne Sharpe from the National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC), and Marsha Fowler and Christine Darden from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Christine was generally the member to attend meetings). Members who were elected to the committee in July 2014 were Kerri Allen (filling a two-year partial term from a vacancy

and dual member of Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), Louise Davidson, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Regina Meester (from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), Wanda Beaman (Presbyterian Women moderator for justice and peace), Jacob Parsons-Wells, Joyce Rarumangkay, Floretta Watkins, and Susan Carter Wiggins. Voting members who continued on from the previous term were Joann Haejong Lee, and Darcy Metcalfe.

Gatherings and Foci

At each of ACWC's meetings, the committee reviews and evaluates its work. The ACWC has also committed to checking in on having an intersectional approach to gender justice, taking into account the various intersections of women's identities, including but not limited to considering race, physical and mental ability, class, etc. Each meeting includes reports from all liaison and dual members on the work of the groups to whom they are connected. Whenever possible, when meeting in Louisville, ACWC connects with the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the director of Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women, the associate for Gender and Racial Justice, and the Racial Ethnic Leadership Development manager.

2014–2016: ACWC had five regular meetings:

- August 20–22, 2014, in Louisville, Kentucky:
 - The committee spent a significant amount of time on introductions and orientation, as this was the first meeting for those elected at the 221st General Assembly (2014).
 - The ACWC met with several staff people at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville to learn about their work and the connections of the work being done by the Presbyterian Mission Agency with ACWC's work.
 - The committee reviewed their work at General Assembly and looked ahead to what items they would need to monitor in the coming years.
 - The ACWC determined a focus for their work in the next two-year cycle, including making assignments for their two working groups.
- January 8–9, 2015, in Louisville, Kentucky:
 - ACWC was led in a workshop titled, *Interrupting the Church's Participation in Cultural Dominance*. The workshop prompted the committee to have a conversation about the definition of culture. In addition the committee pondered how it could create conditions for the church to reach a place of identity change and culture shift.
 - The committee met with the associate for Gender and Racial Justice to hear updates on the Status of Women Theological Consultation planning and also the planning for the Women of Color Consultation.
 - The committee discussed 1001 New Worshiping Communities and the need for an examination of Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) employment practices and the need for equality in the treatment of women and men and people of color and white people.
 - The committee held a discussion of the PMA revisions to the Affirmative Action Equal Employment Opportunity Policy noting that ACWC as well as the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) would be consulted before a final version is submitted.
- June 4–5, 2015, in Louisville, Kentucky
 - The committee reviewed the Childcare Policy submitted by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) and agreed to thank COGA for their childcare policy.
 - The committee held a conversation with Chip Hardwick, director of Theology Worship and Education (TWE) and Evangelism and Church Growth (ECG), about inclusive and expansive language.
 - The committee had a conversation with Jewel McCrae, associate for Women's Leadership Development & Young Women's Ministries, who noted that she is working with executive presbyters to fill the open positions in her area.
 - The committee had a conversation with Merri Alexander, the convener of the Women's Listening Visits, to ascertain where ACWC can be helpful.
- October 29–30, 2015, in Chicago, Illinois:
 - ACWC agreed to seek to have the PMA change its Manual of Operations striking mandatory language around requiring one church lay employee in the ACWC description. The committee came to the conclusion that while they

would like finding such a person, they would also like to allow the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) flexibility when a non-teaching elder woman employed by the church is not available to serve.

—The committee was joined for lunch by Shannon Kirshner, pastor, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago Illinois, who shared highlights of things she has been doing since becoming the pastor of Fourth. She also addressed the challenges both professionally and personally of being female clergy in a tall steeple church.

—The committee agreed to send the Women of Color Consultation Work Group a letter of support and possible collaboration.

—The committee began a session of self-reflection and dreaming forward and were encouraged to be creative about how to bring about gender justice in the church.

—The committee began discussion of resolutions to General Assembly.

- January 14–15, 2016, in Louisville, Kentucky:

—The committee met to finalize its work going into the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

—The committee held a conversation with Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director, PMA, who explained to them the PMA Mission Work Plan. The committee emphasized to Tony that ACWC has been a consistent voice for the denomination with integrity, insight, and intellect.

Actions of the committee for consideration of the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

- ACWC’s 2016 Resolutions:

—A Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA)

—A Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed Via Third Party Contractors

—A Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence

—A Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies

- ACWC’s 2016 Response to Referral

—2012 Item 11-12. Continuing the Work of Deborah’s Daughters

B. *Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) Agency Summary.*

Assigned Responsibilities: Strengthening Presbyterian Social Witness

Social witness is part of what it means for the church to be “salt” and “light” in the world today. Coming from Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:13–14, the images of Salt & Light also give name to the ACSWP on-line newsletter. They undergird the committee’s faithfulness to its mission statement:

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) serves the prophetic calling of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by providing the General Assembly with careful studies of pressing moral challenges, media for discussion and discernment of Christian responsibilities, and policy recommendations for faithful action.

This brief narrative summarizes the committee’s responsibilities, its procedures and personnel, its accomplishments and activities.

The term, social witness, is a shorthand way to combine evangelism and social justice. Witness is bigger than advocacy, but it has the moral purpose of pointing to God’s intention for some part of the world, and often drawing attention to people in need or who are suffering. The key point of the mission statement is that everybody has a conscience where the Holy Spirit speaks, what John Calvin called, the “inner forum.” Yet the sense of moral concern is not just our individual “social righteousness,” to use the name of one of the six “Great Ends” of the church. The Confession of 1967 makes clear that just as individuals and congregations have prophetic responsibilities, so does the whole church, to demonstrate the “kingdom of God” to the world. As expressed notably by Martin Luther King Jr., the church is to be a “moral conscience” to the nation.

Jesus asks whether his disciples can discern “the signs of the times” of their particular time and place. The work of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) is to help the church discern what it means to proclaim and embody the Gospel in relation to contemporary society. In this work, the ACSWP and its task forces are directed to draw upon a wealth of resources:

- the voices of the biblical text;
- the wisdom of theological discourse;
- the guidance of the Reformed confessions;
- the tradition of past policy statements;
- the insights of sociopolitical disciplines;
- the advice of members and all governing bodies of the church;
- the insights of people who are poor, victims of existing policies, and those who have not had a voice in councils of the church; and • the counsel of ecumenical partners. (*Minutes*, 1993, Part I, p. 769).

Social witness can occur at many different points: in a church session, in a presbytery, in an advocacy group, in the participation of Christians in mission, in a meeting of the ecumenical church, in an individual Christian's brave refusal to "go along" with injustice. At this General Assembly, one of the study teams is bringing in a handbook for pastoral and educational treatment of "end-of-life" issues—this is a new model for helping support Christian conscience on a very personal level, but with it is a brief statement of the kind of public and corporate policies needed to give patients and their families the space and information they need.

For Presbyterians, decisions about the church's social witness are made by persons elected to serve in mid councils (session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly). As councils of the church meet, the elected persons are commissioned "... not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ" (*Book of Order*, F-3.0204). The advisory committee's structure and function go back to 1936 when "consecrated" and justice-oriented persons from the Boards of Christian Education and National Missions were elected to a Social Education and Action Committee.

In providing service and resources to meet the needs of congregations, mid councils, and the General Assembly, ACSWP members find guidance in the mission statement quoted above. Theologically grounded ethical reflection is part of the salt and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The ACSWP engages with the "grassroots" in assisting the General Assembly to discern what it means to proclaim and embody the Gospel in a world that remains too grim for too many. Experience counts. At the same time, the committee's membership contains persons with expertise in theology, social ethics, and various other disciplines, most of whom hold advanced degrees. And on a matter like that "end-of-life" study, the committee called on Presbyterian doctors, a nurse, a hospice corporation executive, and several folks who wear multiple hats. All volunteers, we think they did a great job.

Making a personal social witness begins with very individual ways of growing and developing as a Christian—prayerfully studying the Scriptures, being inspired by Jesus, the prophets, and courageous stands of the church, gaining insight from past ethical witness, connecting one's faith with others in the Christian community, and then being faithful in the world beyond the church. The ACSWP seeks to be a partner in the ministry of reconciliation, for "each member [who] is the church in the world ..." (*Book of Confessions*, The Confession of 1967, 9.38).

The churchwide work of the ACSWP is based on ethical guidance from the Scriptures, the *Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*. The 1993 General Assembly policy statement, *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Policy Witness* (OGA-93-019), provides extensive documentation of key biblical passages and is a useful document in congregational interpretation of the ACSWP and its mission.

All of those biblical texts have a common theme. The Gospel says that to confess Jesus Christ as Lord is to believe that God can and has overcome the powers of sin in the world. Christians do not work alone, but join that Christ Jesus who is already at work in our world. John Calvin taught that social concern, expressed by action on behalf of our neighbors, is a central part of the faith. Our historic confessions, the work of theologians, and the actions of 220 General Assemblies have reaffirmed that message. Our faithfulness as Reformed Christians is to be embodied in love and justice.

a. *New Developments*

The traditional way of transmitting the church's social witness was print. In addition to the *Minutes* of the General Assembly, since 1908 there were print journals that provided analysis and "how to" for congregations and individuals, agencies and councils of the church. ACSWP has migrated partly to the online world where many of our members live, as do many others we have not yet reached. We will say a word about our online journal and also point to two projects where we also tried different approaches.

In 2011, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy launched an internet justice journal, with the support of the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministries area and the larger General Assembly Mission Council, now Presbyterian Mission Agency. The new journal, *Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice*, was designed to strengthen the social witness of the whole church and to be an open forum on areas where new witness is needed. The url (internet address) for the journal is <http://justiceunbound.org/>; the name, "unbound," refers not only to the lack of binding, but to Jesus' words at the

resurrection of Lazarus, “unbind him,” and to images of prisoners freed. In September 2011, the then General Assembly Mission Council designated the journal to be the successor to *Church & Society* magazine, which itself continued the work of print journals going back to 1908 (*The Amethyst*, *Moral Welfare*, and *Social Progress*). Back issues of all of these journals have been made available through the American Theological Library Association.

A key goal has been to reach twenty- and thirty-something readers, using an intergenerational editorial staff. The current managing editor is the Reverend Ginna Bairby, a recent graduate of Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, Virginia. She follows the Reverend Patrick Heery, who in 2013 moved to become editor of *Presbyterians Today*, the denominational magazine. Recognizing Ginna Bairby’s work as a form of ministry, the Presbytery of the James ordained her to serve *Unbound* and also to serve as associate for young adult social witness. She has also served the Education Initiative approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) and smaller projects within the Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries unit where ACSWP is located. (ACSWP had been in the Executive Director’s Office until 2009.)

While the “metrics” Google provides on readership are very good for a denominational publication, and the contributor list is intentionally diverse and tilted toward younger folks, the committee is considering ways for this vehicle to help us interact more directly with presbyteries and congregations. Certainly there are other methods of general communication and fundraising in the church, but no common space for sharing stories and building allies for social justice and social teaching. We know from sales of print policy booklets—down to about \$2,800 last year (2015) from about \$4,000 in previous years—that accessing the policies is mainly by download (free), but it is also on the individual or congregational basis. We think our church would want that engagement broadened, and the younger demographic of *Unbound* brought more into conversations in their presbyteries and perhaps church-related colleges and universities.

In addition to the internet journal, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy maintains a website and distributes an e-newsletter, “Salt & Light.” *Unbound* links to these and to the various sites of other Compassion, Peace and Justice ministries.

Since the 221st General Assembly (2014) in Detroit, where the committee met briefly, the committee then met August 29–31, 2014, in St. Louis, Missouri, shortly after the death of Michael Brown; November 6–8, 2014, in Berkeley, California; March 15–21, 2015, in Tampa, Florida, and Havana and Matanzas, Cuba; June 14–17, 2015, in Washington, D.C.; November 10–12, 2015, in Elmhurst, Illinois, and (anticipated) April 8–9, 2016, in Louisville Kentucky. In all but the last location, the committee met with representatives of the presbyteries, related organizations, and congregations doing vital forms of social witness.

In St. Louis, hosted by the presbytery and the Reverend Anita Hendrix, presbytery leader, the committee visited Ferguson and the site of a civic tragedy that crystallized racial justice concerns. The group also heard from presbytery committees active in racial reconciliation and antiracism work. In Berkeley, California, later that year, the committee heard from advocates and researchers on drug policy and criminal justice, hosted by St. Johns Presbyterian Church in that city.

Meeting in Tampa for a briefing beforehand, and then in Havana and Matanzas, ACSWP served as a study team and visited partners in that country, guided by the Cuba Partners. This was a unique cooperation that also involved World Mission and, of course, built on the strong relationship that has been maintained between the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

In Washington, D.C., the committee was still focused on Cuba and had the great opportunity to meet with both National Security Council and State Department representatives. It was a very positive sign that both of the pastors from the Cuban church were welcomed in with us! The committee also met in Washington with experts on voting rights and electoral reform from “FairVote,” a nonpartisan group, with James Winkler, general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and with the Reverend Robert Wilson-Black, a Presbyterian minister who serves as CEO of *Sojourners*, known for its social justice magazine.

In Elmhurst, near Chicago and the offices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the committee was hosted by the First Presbyterian Church of Elmhurst. We met with the Presbyterian chaplain of Elmhurst College (a United Church of Christ school), and with the theological ethics policy director for the ELCA (some also visited the ELCA offices). The committee reviewed papers going to the General Assembly. It also reflected on the varying ecumenical methods of engaging members and congregations in social witness policy development, using contrasts with the Lutherans.

In Louisville, the committee concentrates on reviewing “advice & counsel” memoranda that address social witness related matters going to the General Assembly, consulting with a range of staff and elected leadership.

b. *Procedures and Personnel*

In support of the work of the assembly, the ACSWP is given direct access to the assembly as it meets biennially. Between sessions of the assembly, the ACSWP also assists the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and other agencies of the church as their work involves the development and interpretation of social witness policy.

The committee carries out its responsibilities in five major ways. They are the

1. development and recommendation of new social witness and policy for approval by the General Assembly;

2. interpretation and communication of the General Assembly's social witness and policy, both to the church and the world at large;

3. provision of advice and counsel to the entities and mid councils of the church on matters of social witness policy when developments merit social-ethical attention;

4. provision of advice and counsel to the General Assembly when it meets as a governing body (in oral and memorandum form); and

5. monitoring of peace and justice concerns per mandates from the General Assembly.

The ACSWP develops and recommends new social witness policy primarily in response to referrals from the General Assembly (GA) and its entities, and in a manner consistent with the *Manual of the General Assembly*, "On Forming Social Policy." This section is based on the 1993 "Why and How" document cited at the beginning of this narrative. Both the more extensive policies and shorter resolutions require depth of theological reflection, breadth of input, and diversity of participation. In most cases, the presbyteries originating the General Assembly assignments remain connected to the work of the study teams, although teams are more representative and seek to meet in and receive input from people in other parts of the country.

The policy statements, Risking Peace, and Prevention Not Harm (on drug policy reform), represent different approaches to broadening the dialogue in policy development. In the former case, the policy includes five affirmations developed from sixty-five congregational and presbytery discernment groups that were later tested in thirty-four presbyteries. The committee had hoped for more participating congregations and presbyteries, but this six-year long process did get much good engagement (see that report). On the drug policy reform study, at each of four meetings that study team also held public hearings, partnering with local presbyteries and congregations and bringing in many community resource people. Those sites were Oakland/Richmond, California; Denver, Colorado; Charleston, West Virginia; and El Paso/Ciudad Juarez. While not entirely representative, these sites did bring in considerable diversity in areas of particular drug-related concern.

The committee's Advice and Counsel group carries out the task of providing advice and counsel at the meeting of the General Assembly (GA). This group of elected committee members, together with other staff and resource persons from several Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and Office of the General Assembly (OGA) entities, advises commissioners in assembly committees and other entities about social policies applicable to issues before the assembly. It may also comment on the need or direction for future social policy. Such analysis and recommendations are provided through "Advice and Counsel Memoranda," by oral testimony by resource people before assembly committees, and informally. The ACSWP chair or a co-chairperson is a corresponding member to both the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, with voice but not vote, and can offer advice and counsel in those meetings.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) consists of twelve members, nine of whom are at-large members elected by the General Assembly from the whole church and three who are Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) members confirmed by the assembly. The members are: Christine M. Darden, Hampton, Virginia (co-chair); Jean Demmler, Denver, Colorado; Linda Eastwood, Chicago, Illinois; Rachael Eggebeen, Tucson, Arizona; Marsha Fowler, Altadena, California; Kevin R. Johnson, Detroit, Michigan; Mary C. Jorgenson, Kansas City, Missouri; Eric Mount, Danville, Kentucky; Kathryn Poethig, Watsonville, California; Raymond R. Roberts, Westfield, New Jersey/Richmond, Virginia, (co-chair); Noelle Royer, Seattle, Washington; Steven Webb, Fairfax, Virginia. Staffing for the committee includes Christian T. Iosso, coordinator; Virginia "Ginna" Bairby, managing editor, *Unbound* journal; and Peggy Dahmer, part-time senior administrative assistant.

b. *Accomplishments* The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) members and staff make themselves available for interpretive events and preaching as requested and as time allows. Such events included presentations in presbyteries and congregations and consultations with a number more. Staff represented ACSWP and *Unbound* at the Company of New Pastors meeting in Louisville (October 2015), introducing participants to the committee's work and the social witness policy of the PC(USA), and led workshops at the Montreat College Conference on the theory and practice of social witness and its role in the church.

As part of the Peace Discernment process, the committee helped the Steering Team convene a team in Louisville in December of 2015 to review responses to the Five Affirmations.

The committee welcomes inquiries through its office in Louisville. All mid councils, churches, and members are encouraged to use the "Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation," which contains the core of the assemblies' social policy statements since 1946. It is revised regularly to meet the needs of the church and can be downloaded from the worldwide web at ([http://index.pcusa.org/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm](http://index.pcusa.org/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates$fn=default.htm)).

The ACSWP holds a stated meeting following each General Assembly to discern and prioritize its work; periodically between the assemblies, to review progress on papers and projects; and in January before an assembly, to edit and approve final drafts for submission to the assembly. This year the committee has prepared the following reports to strengthen current social witness policies:

- *Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions*: This is a report in the form of a handbook for advance directive planning and bedside decision-making, plus recommendations for congregational use and public policies to support the deliberations and care-giving encouraged.
- *Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs*: In the place of the punitive strategies and violence that have led to mass imprisonment, narco-state corruption, and an underground drug economy, this report advocates a basic shift in how Christians should approach a drug-abundant society and its addictive appetites.
- *Prospects for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine*: The idea of a “two-state solution” continues to reflect the hopes of international treaties, yet the profound and—in the current period—politically insurmountable obstacles to feasibility require approaches that increase human rights for all in the absence of state-level solutions.
- *Trafficking and Forced Labor: Next Steps for Concerned Churches*: Across-border prostitution receives much attention, but there are many other ways that adults and children, men and women, are exploited in a globalized economy also marked by wars, climate related migration, and nations with weakened powers to protect their citizens.
- *New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations*: Based on overtures from presbyteries with some of the many congregations partnered with Cuban congregations, the assembly’s referral requested the Cuba Partners and ACSWP to draw on the lessons from throughout the prolonged Cold War with Cuba and lift up values needed during the coming period of political and economic change, and in the broader Caribbean context.

Shorter resolutions requested by the General Assembly:

- *Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance: An Update to “Lift Every Voice: Voting Rights and Electoral Reform”*: This update covers impacts of the Supreme Court decisions removing limits on money in campaigns and the many efforts to make voting more difficult, some by states once covered by “pre-clearance review” under the Voting Rights Act, a provision also ended by the Court.
- *City Churches: Convictions, Conversations, and Call to Action*: The 221st General Assembly (2014) referred The Gospel from Detroit, a call for renewing urban mission in Detroit and other cities, to an “urban ministry roundtable,” and requested the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to prepare resources to strengthen both congregations and their communities. This brief resolution draws on last year’s report and looks toward the next two cities where General Assemblies will be held, following suggestions from urban roundtable members. See: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/gospel-detroit-renewing-churches-urban-vision/>. (Ethicist: Gloria Albrecht was a primary author.)

The final report of the six-year Peace Discernment process begun by the 2010 General Assembly:

- *Risking Peace in a Violent World: Despite War, Five Peacemaking Affirmations*: The 220th General Assembly (2012) approved a congregational study for discerning new approaches to peacemaking, thirty-two years after *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* created the Peacemaking Program and three-part Peacemaking Offering. Drawing on congregational and individual responses and consultations with seminary and college/university faculty, chaplains, and students, a Steering Team appointed by Peacemaking Program and ACSWP developed the report, *Risking Peace in a Violent World*. The 221st General Assembly (2014) approved sending this out with Five Affirmations for advisory votes by the presbyteries. Of the thirty-four presbyteries responding, more than thirty have approved all five, though with differing levels of support. The vote tallies, revisions, and comments have led to revisions of the five and the Risking Peace statement for the 222nd General Assembly (2016), while confirming most of the framework approved by the last assembly.

Note: The title, *Risking Peace in a Violent World*, draws on phrases from the Confession of 1967 and the Brief Statement of Faith. The revisions include references to the Belhar Confession.

One recommendation for study extension:

- *The Precautionary Approach, New Technologies, and Sustainable Development*: The study approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) addresses the dangers of introducing new biological technologies, chemical agents, and nanoparticles and machines into our changing environment. A group of Presbyterian scientists (both academic and corporate), ethicists, and experts in regulation has met to organize the very broad scope of the task and identify key roles for churches to play, given the original overture’s request for both an assessment of “the precautionary principle” itself and its application to new technologies in the context of increasing climate change. The team requests additional time to develop ecumenical partnerships familiar with the religion and science dimension and able to increase the public value of its analysis and recommendations. No additional funding is requested, but funds allotted by the assembly for 2015 would be used in 2016.

Resources requested by the General Assembly: In the cases of the Drug Policy Reform Task Force and Resolution for Equal Rights in Israel and Palestine, resources have been posted on the ACSWP website (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/acswp/>) and in the online journal, *Unbound* (www.justiceUnbound.org) in fulfillment of some of the recommendations.

In preparing this year's General Assembly reports, ACSWP took into consideration the comments and reflections shared by individual Presbyterians and adult education classes, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) program ministry areas, and other bodies within our church. From 2014, following their approval by the General Assembly, the committee assisted the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) in the publication of the following reports: *Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age; Fairness in Ministerial Compensation; The Gospel from Detroit: Renewing a Vision for Urban Mission; and Drones, War, and Surveillance*. These resources can be downloaded at <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/publications/> or <http://www.pcusa.org/acswp/resources.htm>.

The ACSWP works collaboratively with the four mission and ministry areas of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), other General Assembly agencies, and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). The ACSWP has liaisons from the Compassion Peace and Justice ministry area, and from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC). When possible, the committee spends time with local church members, with relevant presbytery committees, and with ecumenical contacts during its stated meetings. ACSWP members and staff have spoken at and distributed policy resources at several presbytery meetings and gave workshops at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days co-sponsored by the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C.

As invited, the committee assists in programming an annual gathering of the Social Ethics Network (SEN) (formerly known as the Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness (TEPSW)). This group is composed primarily of Christian ethicists currently or formerly serving in seminaries and other educational institutions related to and/or in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Since the last General Assembly, the committee assisted with two such gatherings. In the fall of 2014, the SEN met at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and in the fall of 2015 at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The ACSWP also hosts a reception for Presbyterians at the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics. The January 2015 meeting was held in Denver; and the January 2016 meeting in Toronto, Canada, where the SEN also met with representatives of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Other responses by the committee to General Assembly (GA) assignments may be found in the responses to referrals section of the reports to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

C. Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary

The committee is composed of twelve regular members representing African Americans, Native Americans, Latina/o Americans, Asian Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and European Americans. The 2014–16 membership of the committee is as follows:

- Raafat Zaki: chairperson; National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus representative; corresponding member to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly;
- Debbie Battise-Kleinman: vice chair; Native American, at-large;
- Samson Tso: secretary; National Asian Presbyterian Caucus representative;
- Nahida Gordon: chair of resource and referral subcommittee; Middle Eastern American, at-large; liaison to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP);
- Mark S. Jones Sr.: chair of study and comment subcommittee; National Black Presbyterian Caucus representative;
- James Ephraim: dual member from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board;
- Claudio Carvalhaes: Latino American, member at-large;
- Buddy Monahan: Native American Consulting Committee representative;
- Joo Kim: Asian American, at-large;
- Jose Luis Casal: National Hispanic/Latino Presbyterian Caucus representative;
- Gwendolyn Magby: African American, at-large;
- Lilia Ramirez-Jimenez: Latina at-large representative, liaison to the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), member of Women of Color Joint Working Group;
- Kevin Johnson, liaison from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), African American;
- Joyce Rarumangkay, liaison from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC), Asian American;

Ruben Ortiz Rodriguez, liaison from the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), Latino American.

The committee was staffed by Courtney Hoekstra, associate for advocacy committee support, Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Sherri Pettway, administrative assistant, Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Assigned Functions

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) works to fulfill its General Assembly mandate to provide advocacy and monitoring on issues affecting people of color in both church and society. The committee evaluates social trends in church and society and provides advice and counsel to the General Assembly (GA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). The committee addresses issues, including civil rights, racial justice, environmental justice, economic justice, public education, law enforcement, health care, employment, and housing as they directly impact communities of color and, thereby, the entire body of Christ. The committee also monitors the implementation of programs and policies approved by the church that impact the participation and quality of life for people of color within the church. The committee works in close cooperation with other agencies and entities within the church, including the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), to fulfill its responsibilities. The ACREC's assigned functions, as stated in the *Presbyterian Mission Agency Manual of Operations* include:

- a. Prepare policy statements, resolutions, recommendations, reports, and advice and counsel memoranda on racial ethnic concerns to the General Assembly at the request of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, or on its own initiative.
- b. Advise the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on matters of racial ethnic concerns including statements concerning pressing issues that the council may wish to consider between meetings of the General Assembly.
- c. Provide advice and counsel to the General Assembly and its committees on overtures, commissioners' resolutions, reports, and actions before the General Assembly that impact issues of racial ethnic concern.
- d. Assist the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy in maintaining an up-to-date and accurate compilation of General Assembly policy on racial ethnic concerns and provide information to the church as requested.
- e. Provide the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board with information as they fulfill their responsibilities to communicate and interpret General Assembly policies on racial ethnic concerns.
- f. Monitor the implementation of racial justice policies and programs relative to racial ethnic concerns.
- g. Through advocacy maintain a strong prophetic witness to the church and for the church on existing and emerging issues of racial ethnic concern.

The committee has direct access to the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and its chair has corresponding member status with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and with the General Assembly.

Officers for 2014–2016

The 2014–2016 Executive Committee of ACREC consists of Raafat Zaki, chair; Debbie Battise-Kleinman, vice chair; Samson Tso, secretary; Nahida Gordon, chair of resource and referral subcommittee; Mark S. Jones Sr., chair of study and comment subcommittee.

Accomplishments

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns used its regularly scheduled meetings to explore a wide range of topics of special interest to the committee and its work. The ACREC is committed to and has participated in antiracism and cultural proficiency training at each of its meetings. The committee also hears and responds to reports at each meeting from all of the caucus/council/coordinating committee representatives and liaisons to and from other groups. At most meetings in Louisville, ACREC connects with the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the director of Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women, the associate for gender and racial justice, and the racial ethnic leadership development manager, when possible.

In 2014, following the 221st General Assembly (2014), the committee met as follows:

September 3–5, 2014: The ACREC's first meeting after General Assembly consisted of new-member orientation, which included learning about ACREC's history and functioning, meeting staff people in the Louisville office, and generally getting a feel for the work of the committee. At this meeting, ACREC participated in antiracism training, installed its new executive committee, reviewed actions taken by the General Assembly, met with several staff people, and set some priorities for the current cycle of work.

In 2015, the committee continued its work with the following schedule of meetings and content summaries:

1. January 22–23, 2015, Louisville, Kentucky: The ACREC met with Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, to discuss the One Great Hour of Sharing/Special Offerings campaign. The committee emphasized to Linda Valentine that both ACREC and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) are here for consultation and feedback. The committee discussed follow-up on several General Assembly actions. The committee agreed to write a letter to Linda Valentine and Sara Lisherness, director, Compassion, Peace and Justice (CPJ), to request that CPJ take over the planning of the urban roundtable in lieu of the administrative leave of Evangelism and Church Growth (ECG) staff. The ACREC met with and received updates from several staff people, including Kathy Francis, senior director of communications, Kathy Melvin, director of mission communications, Patrick Heery, editor, *Presbyterians Today*.

2. July 16–17, 2015, Albuquerque, New Mexico: The ACREC met with Lindsey Gilbert, president of Menaul School who discussed the racial ethnic make-up of the Menaul School and board. Sallie Watson, missional presbyter, Presbytery of Santa Fe, gave the committee an update on initiatives going on at the Synod of the Southwest. Laura Polk, Office of Immigration Issues, Office of the General Assembly (OGA), apprised the committee of conferences, networks, and training her office is involved with revolving around immigration issues. Conrad Rocha, synod executive, Synod of the Southwest, gave the committee highlights of his work with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Cook College’s transition to Foundation, and Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Training at Cook College. Several members of the committee participated in conversations or committees that resulted as actions of the General Assembly, so the group heard reports and discussed follow-up actions regarding the review of ordination exams, and the work of the National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force, to name a few. The ACREC heard an update from its team that is preparing the ACREC self-study for the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

3. December 2–4, 2015, El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico: The committee was led on a tour by Amanda Craft and Omar Chan, PC(SUA) mission co-workers. The committee toured El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico, and heard from people that are striving to rebuild Juarez. The ACREC noted productive, collaborative, and collegial efforts have been established in their conversations with Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly staff in discussion on revisions to the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (AA/EEO) and the Climate for Change Report. At this meeting, the committee decided to write an open letter to Donald Trump regarding his comments on people celebrating after 9/11 and other statements he has made.

In 2016, the committee had its final, full-committee meeting prior to General Assembly:

January 21-22, Louisville, Kentucky: The ACREC worked to complete all of its reports and resolutions in order to submit the reports in time for review by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. The committee discussed plans for the ACREC Commissioners’ Briefing at General Assembly, decided who on ACREC would write A&C’s and attend General Assembly, and made plans for the exhibit hall at General Assembly.

Items of Business for the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

The following items were sent to the 222nd General Assembly (2016):

- A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- ACREC Self-Study

Item 12-01

[In response to Item 12-01, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 66–67.]

On Acknowledging and Reconciling for Killing Korean Civilians in July 1950—From the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse.

The Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

1. Acknowledge that American troops knowingly killed at least 150 Korean civilians (and probably between 250 and 300, mostly women and children) on July 26–29, 1950, near the village of No Gun Ri, and offer apology and condolences to the approximately forty surviving victims.

2. Instruct the Stated Clerk to communicate to the president of the United States and to members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, requesting them to acknowledge the responsibility of the United States military for the deaths of those Korean civilians, to officially apologize for the actions of United States troops at No Gun Ri, and to provide appropriate compensation to the surviving victims and to the families of those killed or wounded in the No Gun Ri incident.

3. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to arrange a meeting between United States soldiers who were present at No Gun Ri and Korean survivors of the incident there, for the purpose of resolving the long pent-up resentments and feelings of guilt, and moving toward true forgiveness and reconciliation.

4. Recommend to John Knox Press/Geneva Press that they publish an English translation of the true-story novel, *Do You Know Our Pain?*, written by the late Eun-yong Chung, whose two infant children were killed at No Gun Ri and whose wife was severely wounded there.

5. Establish a task force within the Presbyterian Mission Agency consisting of at least two staff persons from the World Mission Office and two staff persons from the Office of Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry charged to research the events at No Gun Ri and coordinate the response of the PC(USA) as outlined in this overture.

6. Transmit this overture and rationale, containing information about the events in Korea in 1950, to the churches and presbyteries of the PC(USA) and recommend study of materials including *Do You Know Our Pain?* and the book *The Bridge at No Gun Ri* by Charles J. Hanley, Sang-hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza, AP journalists whose reporting of the incident won the Pulitzer Prize for investigative journalism in 2000.

7. Instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consult with the PC(USA)'s mission partners in South Korea, including the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), about the feasibility of jointly commissioning and funding the construction of a memorial church on the grounds of or near the No Gun Ri Peace Park in South Korea.

Alternate Resolution:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

1. Acknowledges that during the Korean War, American troops knowingly killed at least 150 Korean civilians (and probably between 250 and 300, mostly women and children) on July 26–29, 1950, near the village of No Gun Ri.

2. Directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with the president of the United States and members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, to request an official statement to the Republic of Korea that would include:

a. an acknowledgement of the responsibility of the United States military for knowingly killing Korean civilians at No Gun Ri;

b. an apology and statement of regret for the actions of United States troops at No Gun Ri, with an indication of openness to consider appropriate compensation to the surviving victims and the families of those killed or wounded in that incident; and

c. a commitment to include information about the events at No Gun Ri in the training of United States military personnel to diminish the likelihood of such events happening in the future.

3. Directs staff persons from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consult electronically with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s mission partners in the Republic of Korea, including the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), in order to:

- a. offer condolences to the approximately forty surviving victims of the events of No Gun Ri on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);**
- b. create a bibliography of resources about the events at No Gun Ri;**
- c. create worship materials to remember the people impacted by the events at No Gun Ri;**
- d. share the bibliography and worship materials and this overture and rationale electronically with the congregations and presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK);**
- e. explore possibilities for joint prayer and witness regarding continuing tensions on the Korean peninsula, in the South China Sea, and other considerations for peace, world order, security, and meeting basic human needs that are currently before their congregations and members.**

[Financial Implication: PMA—\$14,932 (2017), \$0 (2018)—Revised]

Rationale

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea in force, overwhelming the South Korean defenders. As the North Koreans surged south, the United States sent occupation troops from Japan to try to slow or halt their advance. North Korean pressure was too strong, and as American and South Korean soldiers retreated south, thousands of civilian refugees trekked south to escape the fighting.

By July 23, 1950, five hundred to six hundred refugees were hiding in the mountains near the village of Im Ke Ri, behind American lines a little more than 100 miles from the 38th parallel. In the evening of July 25, American troops entered the village of Im Ke Ri and forcibly moved the refugees, saying they would lead them into a safe zone. Walking with what belongings they could carry, they spent the next night in the open near a river.

Early in the morning of July 26, the American soldiers who had guarded the refugees at night retreated to the south, leaving the refugees alone. The refugees moved along a highway, looking for freedom and safety, toward the south where American troops had positioned their defense line. Around noon the column of refugees was stopped by American soldiers, who ordered them to go up on an elevated railroad and searched their bags and bodies. No weapons were found. As they continued along the railroad, a U.S. reconnaissance plane circled over the heads of the refugees, and not long after, American planes dropped bombs and strafed the refugees resting on the railroad. More than one hundred were killed.

Seeking safety, the surviving refugees hid inside the No Gun Ri twin tunnels under the elevated railroad. For three nights and four days, soldiers of the 7th Cavalry Regiment, U.S. First Cavalry Division, who had dug in on the hills at both ends of the tunnel, fired into the tunnels with rifles and machine guns. Many of the men and older boys escaped under cover of darkness, believing that the Americans would not fire on women and children. By the time the Americans retreated further south, more than one hundred civilians lay dead in the tunnels, three quarters of them women, children, or elderly. An official Korean investigation fifty years later identified 150 individuals who had been killed in the tunnels, 13 missing, and 55 wounded, some of whom later died of their wounds. The true number killed is likely much higher, probably 250 to 300 or more.

After the Korean War ended with the armistice in mid 1953, compensation was offered to civilians who had suffered losses from the actions of South Korean and American forces. Survivors of No Gun Ri applied for compensation, but were told that their application was too late and that there was no evidence that anything had occurred at No Gun Ri. The repressive government in power in South Korea at that time deterred the survivors from pressing their claim further.

Eun-yong Chung, a lawyer whose two infant children had been killed at No Gun Ri, and his wife seriously wounded, began to document the event, collecting newspaper reports, searching libraries, and reviewing official records from that time. Beginning in 1960, he sent petition letters to the U.S. government, Senate, and House of Representatives about twenty times, asking for an investigation of the attack, official apology, and compensation. The U.S. Army at first denied that the 7th Cavalry Regiment had been positioned at No Gun Ri. When Mr. Chung produced military documents showing that they were there, the Army insisted that there was no evidence of their involvement in the incident. For decades, Mr. Chung was turned away, but he continued to gather documentary evidence and to interview other survivors. He formed an Association for Bereaved Families of No Gun Ri Victims.

While Korea was ruled by a series of military governments, it was dangerous to make claims about atrocities committed during the Korean War. Mr. Chung turned to historical fiction, the only way to publish safely about wartime events that were less than heroic and honorable. His first novel was published in 1977. In 1994, after doing additional research, he published a full-length novel on the No Gun Ri Incident, *Do You Know Our Pain?* After this, his son, Dr. Koo-do Chung, researched No Gun Ri-related documents in the U.S. National Archives and published papers on the No Gun Ri Incident in terms of history and international law. He discovered many documents that confirmed events and commands that impinged on the No Gun Ri Incident, but the operational log of the 7th Cavalry Regiment for July 1950 was unaccountably missing from the archives.

In 1998, a Korean reporter for the Associated Press heard of Mr. Chung's work and became interested in the difficult struggles of the victims of No Gun Ri. He and two AP colleagues spent a year reviewing the documentation, interviewing victims, and locating surviving American soldiers who had been at No Gun Ri that July. They published an in-depth investigative article reporting "the truth of the No Gun Ri Incident" in late September 1999. Because of this publication, the No Gun Ri Incident was widely known all over the world, and public indignation boiled over in South Korea and overseas. The journalists of the AP who investigated and reported the No Gun Ri Incident received the Pulitzer Prize for investigative journalism in 2000, and ten more prizes later.

Both the Korean and U.S. governments began an official investigation on the No Gun Ri Incident in October 1999. At last, in January 2001, the U.S. government acknowledged the existence of the No Gun Ri Incident, which they had denied all along. Then President Clinton issued a statement expressing "deep regret." But in spite of evidence to the contrary, the U.S. investigation claimed that no orders were given to shoot civilian refugees, so their deaths were just unfortunate collateral damage during the conduct of war. Neither apology, nor compensation to the victims, has ever been offered.

The investigation by Korean officials came to different conclusions following the revelation that there were several significant documents in the U.S. Archives that had been reviewed by the American government investigators but not included in their official report. Among many such unreported documents was a communication from the U.S. ambassador to South Korea at that time advising the State Department in Washington that the U.S. Army had established a policy of firing on approaching refugee groups, out of fear they might harbor enemy infiltrators. Despite repeated calls for the U. S. to re-open its investigation, no action has been taken. The Korean government declined to press the issue, for fear of damaging U.S.-Korea relations.

On February 9, 2004, the South Korean National Assembly adopted a Special Act on the Review and Restoration of Honor for the No Gun Ri Victims. Among its provisions was the establishment of the No Gun Ri Peace Park at the site of the tunnels as a memorial, museum, and peace education center. Dr. Koo-Do Chung, son of the long-time researcher, is the current director of the Peace Park.

In 2014, an adult delegation and a youth delegation commissioned by the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse as part of its mission partnership with Pyongyang Presbytery in South Korea visited the No Gun Ri Peace Park and learned about the terrible events there in July 1950. Moved by their experience there and committed to promoting peace and preventing future human rights violations, they proposed this overture for the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse to present to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Misconduct like this by American troops that results in avoidable injury and death of civilians casts a dark shadow of resentment and distrust of American intentions and actions, in spite of proclamation that the United States is militarily involved in other countries to protect the welfare and freedom of the people there. If the tragic events at No Gun Ri had come to the attention of U. S. authorities and been taken seriously at the time, or even within a few years after the armistice ending the Korean War, changes in military doctrine and training could have been put in place that would have prevented similar massacres that took place later, in Vietnam and elsewhere.

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States extended humanitarian relief and recovery assistance to peoples whose lives had been disrupted by the war in both allied countries and enemy nations, earning a reputation for promoting peace and championing human rights. Irresponsible acts of violence against civilians, like the one at No Gun Ri and others that followed, belie that reputation and suggest instead that the United States engages in terrorist tactics. As this reputation has grown, it has spawned resentment and hatred of Americans and has fostered terrorist actions against the United States and its citizens. Taking responsibility for the massacre at No Gun Ri and offering restitution to its victims and their families will be a significant step toward restoring the good reputation of our country.

The rate of suicides among U.S. soldiers returning from combat in the Korean War was considerably higher than in World War II. When soldiers find themselves killing civilians, either inadvertently or under orders, as at No Gun Ri, they are apparently more likely to suffer from PTSD, experiencing long-lingering feelings of guilt and shame that drive many to suicide. Had military doctrine and training been changed in the aftermath of the No Gun Ri incident to reduce civilian deaths, it is likely that a considerable amount of the suffering experienced by veterans of later conflicts could have been avoided.

Among the Korean survivors and others acquainted with the terrible event at No Gun Ri, the experience of unmerited injury and unrequited suffering has created what Koreans call *han*, a condition of hopeless resentment and depression that is very injurious to their quality of life. Even at this late date, an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, sincere apology, and appropriate compensation (what theologians call "repentance") can provide welcome relief to those people whose lives were shattered by what Americans did at No Gun Ri.

This overture offers an opportunity for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to unveil the violence that the United States has often inflicted on the population of our ostensible allies, to open the way for changes in the conduct of U.S. military operations in the future, and to undertake steps toward reconciliation between American veterans and civilian casualties in South Korea.

Concurrence to Item 12-01 from the Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean and Northumberland.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-01—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the assembly approve Item 12-01 with the following alternate resolution:

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

“1. Acknowledges that during the Korean War, American troops knowingly killed at least 150 Korean civilians (and probably between 250 and 300, mostly women and children) on July 26–29, 1950, near the village of No Gun Ri.

“2. Directs the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate with the President of the United States and members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, to request an official statement to the Republic of Korea that would include:

“a. an acknowledgement of the responsibility of the United States military for knowingly killing Korean civilians at No Gun Ri;

“b. an apology and statement of regret for the actions of United States troops at No Gun Ri, with an indication of openness to consider appropriate compensation to the surviving victims and the families of those killed or wounded in that incident; and

“c. a commitment to include information about the events at No Gun Ri in the training of United States military personnel to diminish the likelihood of such events happening in the future.

3. Directs staff persons from the World Mission and the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministries to consult electronically with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s mission partners in the Republic of Korea, including the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), in order to:

“a. offer condolences to the approximately forty surviving victims of the events of No Gun Ri on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

“b. create a bibliography of resources about the events at No Gun Ri;

“c. create worship materials to remember the people impacted by the events at No Gun Ri;

“d. share the bibliography and worship materials and this overture and rationale electronically with the congregations and presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK);

“e. advocate with the governments of the United States and the Republic of Korea that they arrange a meeting between United States veterans who were present at No Gun Ri and Korean survivors of the incident there, for the purpose of resolving or releasing remaining senses of grievance, grief, or guilt, and moving toward forgiveness and reconciliation; and

“f. explore possibilities for joint prayer and witness regarding continuing tensions on the Korean peninsula, in the South China Sea, and other considerations for peace, world order, security, and meeting basic human needs that are currently before their congregations and members.”

This item reminds us of the importance of “loving our country enough to remember its misdeeds,” in the words of the Reverend Dr. Donald W. Shriver in his book, *Honest Patriots*. It also lifts up the importance of working for reconciliation through symbolic action and moral initiative. The actions recommended are among those contained in the ten principles for Just Peacemaking, approved by the General Assembly in 1998. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy offers this substitute motion as a way to engage in the critical tasks of remembering and working for reconciliation that fits within the capacity of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and respects our Presbyterian partners in Korea. It is understood that all statements of fact in all materials produced will be documented from both U.S. and Korean sources and will reflect an awareness of current mission concerns in both our countries. Commissioners are encouraged to hear from representatives of our Korean church partners at the General Assembly, who are aware that this substitute action is being presented.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-01

Comment on Item 12-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Every war is tragic. As it is with so many stories of war, No Gun Ri is an incident fraught with many conflicting accounts. The Presbyterian Mission Agency grieves that lives were lost and that families continue to struggle.

While supporting such a meeting in principle, the Presbyterian Mission Agency does not have the capacity nor the financial resources needed to arrange such a meeting. Further, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), global partners of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in South Korea, have not named this as a critical issue in need of our intervention. We believe it would be more appropriate to instruct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to communicate with our Korean partners and take appropriate action based on their request, whether advocacy with U.S. government or other steps.

Item 12-02

[The assembly answered Item 12-02 with the action taken on Item 12-06. See pp. 66, 67.]

On Celebrating the Completion of the Six-Year Discernment on Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of Mission.

The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Celebrate with gratitude and joy the completion of the six-year discernment process initiated by the 219th General Assembly (2010) to “seek clarity as to God’s call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war” and to “identify, explore, and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence” (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, pp. 68, 967).

2. Call upon Presbyterians at all levels of the church to employ the understandings and insights gained by this process to meet the challenge of the 219th General Assembly (2010) to respond to and prevent violence on the local level, the national level, and the international level through prayer, direct action, and advocacy; and to address sexism, racism, and other patterns of oppression as tasks of peacemaking and justice seeking.

3. Recognizing that discerning God’s will is an ongoing task, commit to continue to seek clarity as to God’s call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war; and to continue to explore and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence as the peacemaking witness and ministry of the church grows.

Rationale

In response to several overtures on peacemaking, the 219th General Assembly (2010) initiated a six-year process of church-wide discernment on peacemaking. Congregations, presbyteries, seminaries, colleges, and conferences have participated and responded. This overture asks the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to continue the process of discernment and innovation as an ongoing and essential part of peacemaking programs at all levels of the church.

Concurrence to Item 12-02 from the Presbyteries of Baltimore, Hudson River, National Capital, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-02

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-02—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises approval of Item 12-02 with amendment as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“3. Recognizing that discerning God’s will is an ongoing task, [~~commit to continue to seek clarity as to God’s call to the church to embrace~~] [encourage congregational study groups to read the Five Affirmations in *Risking Peace in a Violent World* (Item 12-06) and renew their Commitments to Peacemaking in light of that report’s consideration of] nonviolence as [~~its~~] [the church’s] fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war; and to continue to explore and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence as the peacemaking witness and ministry of the church grows.”

Item 12-02 reflects the faithfulness of its presbytery proponents to the fundamental call to Christians and the church to be peacemakers. Their own peacemaking commitments are to be celebrated as well!

The proposed amendments name the written result of the process they celebrate and have supported, and suggest how the report might be used to strengthen the peacemaking work of congregations. The language that would be removed was part of the charge for the process in 2010 and was given careful consideration by the congregations and presbyteries whose deliberations went into the final report. A *Presbyterian Panel* survey of member opinion done as part of the discernment process showed that many Presbyterians wrestle with the application of nonviolence to conflicts, both national and international. Item 12-02 celebrates Presbyterians where they are with five clear affirmations, while also providing fuller background for each from Reformed tradition and current practice.

Item 12-03

Item 12-03 has not been assigned.

Item 12-04

[The assembly approved Item 12-04. See pp. 14, 67.]

Overture Pertaining to the Congo—From the Presbytery of Chicago.

The Presbytery of Chicago respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to:

1. Affirm its support for free, fair, and credible elections in all countries guided by the following principles:

- Respect for the civil and human rights of all people, including the rights to assemble peacefully, to discuss issues of common concern, to petition government officials, to express support for or opposition to government policies, to form political parties and other civic organizations, and to vote freely in regular elections that are free from violence, intimidation, coercion, fraud, or outside interference;
- The enforcement of constitutionally or legislatively defined term limits on all public office holders;
- A commitment to ensuring the full involvement of women and youth, not only as electors, but also as candidates;
- The strict political impartiality of security forces and civil servants;
- The rule of law, impartially applied to all citizens regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, political affiliation, or gender; and
- Specific tax and accounting legal frameworks that could improve transparency, prevent corruption, limit improper payments and influence on office-holders, and provide for simple and fair common standards among countries to reduce the “race to the bottom” and enhance impartial revenue collection.

2. Express its support for the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa in their peaceful efforts to ensure regular and credible opportunities to elect public officials and influence the formulation of public policy.

3. Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate to the president of the United States, the U.S. State Department, relevant Congressional leaders, and international bodies, as appropriate, the General Assembly’s particular concern for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and to call upon the U.S. government and international bodies to join with other nations and religious and humanitarian organizations to promote credible, fair and transparent elections in the DRC by:

- Promoting respect for and adherence to constitutional term limits;
- Encouraging the monitoring of elections in the DRC (including the next general election, expected in December 2016) and the independent assessment of the integrity of those elections and the extent to which the announced results accurately reflect the will of the Congolese people;
- Urging the government of the DRC to investigate and prosecute all cases of election-related violence, fraud, and intimidation, and to implement mechanisms to prevent such violations in the future;
- Providing encouragement and financial and technical support to the Congolese government to provide quality education for its children and youth, including civic education in order to enable them to become informed, active, and responsible citizens.

4. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to advocate for public policies that are consistent with the principles and objectives set out in Recommendations 1 through 3, taking into account existing treaties and encouraging international cooperation to promote collective security, human and civil rights, and effective electoral participation in the DRC and other nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and around the world. This would include, in particular, encouraging the United Nations to work with member states to promote electoral best practices and to develop and implement mechanisms to assess and improve standards of governance, and encouraging the U.S. government to condition its diplomatic recognition, trade, and aid on the implementation of such human rights and fair governance standards.

5. Encourage presbyteries, congregations, and individual members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to:

- **Pray with the people of the Congo and other sub-Saharan countries for justice, peace, and the impartial rule of law that respects all people as uniquely created in God’s image;**
- **Study the social, political, economic, and spiritual context within which our Congolese partners minister, making use of the wide range of information and resources available from World Mission, the Office of Public Witness, and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations;**
- **Participate in the advocacy initiatives of the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations;**
- **Support the work of PC(USA) mission co-workers in the region and the ministries of our Congolese partner churches;**
- **Join the Congo Mission Network as it accompanies partners in the DRC and involves U.S. Presbyterians in the PC(USA)’s ministry of advocacy;**
- **Support financially the training organized in collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC), All Africa Council of Churches (AACC), coalition of protestant churches in Congo (ECC), Presbyterian Church of Congo (CPC), Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa (CPK), for election observers and civic educators to explain the electoral process.**

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long history of involvement in the Congo and other Sub-Saharan countries and a deep concern for their peoples. The ministry of U.S. Presbyterians, notably the Reverend William Sheppard, Lucy Gantt Sheppard, and the Reverend Samuel Lapsley, helped to lay the foundation for strong and vibrant Presbyterian communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) today. From the outset, Presbyterian involvement in the region has been marked by a profound commitment to promoting justice, peace, and respect for the dignity and human rights of all of the Congolese people. Recent General Assembly actions specific to the DRC include:

- On Promoting a Free, Fair and Democratic Election in the Democratic Republic of Congo, approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006) (*Minutes*, 2006, Part I, pp. 1006ff);
- On Support for the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, pp. 1304ff); and
- On Helping to Remedy the Tragic Conditions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 887ff).

Since 1948, General Assemblies have repeatedly affirmed the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and have strongly endorsed peoples’ rights to self-determination through free and democratic political institutions. The 219th General Assembly (2010), for instance, approved an Affirmation of Human Rights and Moral Principles that included recognition of “the human right to self-determination through free elections and the rule of law.” At the same time, it approved an overture condemning extra-constitutional changes of government in Honduras and Madagascar.

In the past year, the DRC and its neighbor, Burundi, have seen their elected leaders take steps to extend their terms in office beyond agreed constitutional limits. The surrender of the paramilitary M23 rebel movement has brought renewed hope to communities of the east, and the past two years have seen MONUSCO’s “Force Intervention Brigade” work closely with the Congolese military to defeat many other armed factions. At this time, the DRC and the other countries of the Great Lakes Region have a unique opportunity to end their long-running conflicts and to turn their attention to the many pressing economic and social needs of their peoples. Yet the extra-constitutional gambits of their leaders threaten these gains, often inflaming ethnic and social tensions as well as suppressing fresh leadership and inhibiting democratic participation.

The PC(USA) is called to continue to accompany its Congolese partners and others in the region as they strive for justice, peace, and security during this time of transition. Building on the actions of the 220th and the 221st General Assemblies (2012 and 2014), which aimed to reduce the incentives for indiscriminate and wholesale violence in the DRC and to imple-

222nd General Assembly (2016)

ment educational and governance policies that can begin to rebuild the shattered lives of the people, this overture identifies additional steps that can enhance support for our brothers and sisters in the DRC and other Sub-Saharan countries.

The corruption of the previous regimes and the destruction of infrastructure and the tax base by the war has left the government of the DRC ill-equipped to take effective measures to restore its sovereignty or the rule of law in Eastern Congo. Any attempt by elected leaders to stay in office beyond constitutional term limits runs the risk of diminishing the government's accountability to the people, undermining its legitimacy, and thereby contributing to civil unrest. This will provide fertile soil for opportunistic militias whether formed by local commanders turned warlord or by the incursions of foreign troops under cover of self-defense. Consequently, the lack of robust civil institutions can only contribute to the continued brutal exploitation of the people of Eastern Congo. Therefore, it is critically important that the U.S. government, the U.N., and other bodies impress upon the DRC government the necessity for proceeding with free and fair national elections in 2016.

Concurrence to Item 12-04 from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy.

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-04—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 12-04 be approved.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a long and storied history of presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that stretches over one hundred years. The Presbyterian witness in the DRC started during the Belgian colonial years, stayed after independence in 1960, and has seen the years of turmoil and oppression in the last several decades. The November 2016 elections represent a key test for the current constitutional system as their current president, Joseph Kabila, is not eligible for reelection due to term limits and a new president must be chosen. Other African countries that faced the same transition of power often saw the current president amend the country's constitution to remain in power. The global community's eyes will be on the DRC as they prepare for an open election in November (<http://www.undispatch.com/elections-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo-could-mean-trouble/>).

This statement in support of the DRC in particular, and more broadly sub-Saharan Africa and the world reflects a continued commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to peoples deciding for themselves how and who should govern them. The call for elections is particularly pertinent to the American context, as we also prepare for elections in November 2016.

Item 12-05

[The assembly approved Item 12-05 with a comment. See pp. 66, 67.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) does not include support for the concurrence material from Genesee Valley and San Francisco presbyteries, since the overture does not make reference to any specific conflict situations.]

On Affirming Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human Oppression—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley.

The Presbytery of Muskingum Valley overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. Affirm the historic means by which the Church of Jesus Christ, and specifically the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has engaged in nonviolent witness for the sake of identifying and calling a stop to forms of human oppression in American society and throughout the world.

2. Acknowledge that such tools have historically included calls for boycott, decisions to divest from companies that profit from violence and oppression, and the establishment of sanctions to be applied by governments and other entities towards states and other organizations that may intentionally or unintentionally support acts of violence and oppression thrust upon innocent people.

3. Create resources that teach the church about its theology of peacemaking and nonviolence in relation to its historical decisions to boycott companies and/or their products, divest from holdings in corporations that profit from non-peaceful and violent pursuits, and otherwise call for sanctions by entities that have the power to effect positive change.

4. Direct the Stated Clerk to

a. communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils and entities, as well as the entire membership of the PC(USA), calling upon them to build greater awareness of our historical witness for peaceful and nonviolent resistance to oppression; and

b. inform our ecumenical partners of this action, both nationally and globally, making the resources we create available to them as well.

Rationale

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions in Historical Context

A great deal of discussion and debate as of late has focused on boycott, divestment, and sanctions. The fact is that these have been recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor church bodies as nonviolent tools for achieving justice for more than a century. In the early 1970s, both the UPCUSA and the PCUS churches established permanent committees on responsible social investment with professional staff. These committees are the predecessors of the current Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, which was created in 1986. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/mrti/what-mrti/>

1. *Boycott*

In its report, approved by the 191st General Assembly (1979) of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the church was reminded how far back in time our church has called for boycotts:

- 1910—“We solemnly admonish our people to keep themselves financially, and politically ‘separate and apart’ from the liquor traffic, and to ‘touch not the unclean thing,’ to the end that this traffic may by organic law be expelled from our land and our people be saved from its despoiling influence.”
- 1913—“That any minister or member of the Presbyterian Church who is a member of any club or association licensed to sell and does sell intoxicating liquors to its members ... should resign from such club or organization. ...”
- 1917—“That in the future, invitations to the General Assembly should be accompanied by the assurance of local committees that a sufficient number of Temperance hotels are available. ...”
- 1922—“Resolved, that the General Assembly call upon the constituency of our churches to refrain from attendance upon any theatre which permits upon its screen the presentation of pictures that are suggestive and unclean. ...”
- 1937—“We favor the adoption by the Congress of legislation ... which forbids the shipments of Child Labor goods in interstate commerce. ...”
- 1952—“We call on all church members to avoid taking part in any kind of gambling, even for charitable causes. ...”
- 1960—“Urges our members to take note of hotels, restaurants, and other public accommodations that discriminate ... and urges United Presbyterians to seek out and patronize those places of public accommodation that serve the public without such accommodation.”
- 1964—“Investments of the Board (of National Mission); that the Board shall refrain from investing in the securities of any company that has an open, flagrant policy and/or practice of discriminatory hiring based on race or ethnic group. ...”
- 1967—“Urges continued dialogue and personal consultation with U.S. industry and banks operating in the Republic of South Africa to encourage them to use their presence and involvement to oppose the system of apartheid and give assurance that personnel practices within their jurisdiction are not discriminatory ... if firms cannot be persuaded to cooperate, we urge the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and individual investors to protest by beginning to divest themselves of their holdings in such business enterprises.”

More recently, the 214th General Assembly (2002) voted to “endorse and support the national boycott of Taco Bell restaurants and all Taco Bell products until Taco Bell, SixLS Corporation, and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers mutually agree to begin negotiations that can lead to resolution of inhumane working and living conditions” (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 571). The 220th General Assembly (2012) called for the boycott of all goods manufactured in illegal Israeli settlements (*Minutes*, 2012, Part I, p. 1366).

2. *Divestment*

In 1971, the UPCUSA adopted investment guidelines calling the church to “be especially critical of enterprises that use the political process to support increased military spending” as well as those that produce “weaponry whose use does not permit a distinction between civilian and combatant” (paragraph 25.288).

The 196th General Assembly (1984) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted for study and use the documents: *Divestment Strategy: The Ethical and Institutional Context* and *The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria*. The latter document stated that “the theology of mission extends the concept of stewardship into society and insists that the full influence and impact of church investment be seen in the larger social context, with motivation beyond financial gain, important as that is” (paragraph 25.200); and “the imperatives of the gospel demand that we weigh the church’s involvement in a particular investment with the church’s engagement in the larger society” (paragraph 25.202).

Divestment is defined as “a conscious decision to dispose of any current financial stake in an enterprise or class of enterprise because of policy or practice in regard to a social issue and to prohibit future stake so long as the offending situation holds” (paragraph 25.261). “Divestment can be seen as a ‘boycott’ on investment rather than on products or services, and an investor can be seen as a ‘consumer’ as well as part owner and beneficiary” (paragraph 25.262).

In regard to divestment from companies supporting the South African apartheid regime, our church said: “the official policy of apartheid is fundamentally offensive to a Christian undertaking of life and society. Apartheid is the political and social manifestation of a theological heresy—a direct defiance of God’s will for both human and social existence. ... The church has tried for many years to effect change in the policies and practices of those corporations in effort to produce change in South Africa, but the efforts have been largely ineffective” (paragraph 25.276). It must also be noted in regard to the divestment decision by the 221st General Assembly (2014), that action did not call for divestment from Israel, but from U.S. corporations profiting from non-peaceful pursuits.

3. *Sanctions*

The 1984 General Assembly report cited previously points out how boycott and divestment decisions lead to wider sanctions against societies that violate human rights. In the case of South Africa, for instance, “...the shareholder resolution strategy has contributed to some improvement in wages and working conditions at U.S.-owned factories, a curtailment of bank loans to the government and sale of products to the South African police and military, and policies of nonexpansion in a number of key industries. These resolutions and other public pressures have also contributed to changes in domestic public policy regarding exports to South Africa” (paragraph 25.296).

Along these same lines, one of the most recent General Assembly actions in regard to calling for sanctions towards companies and governments that violate human rights was in the report of the Middle East Study Committee approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) that called upon “U.S. government policy to fulfill its ‘honest broker’ aspirations and honor a region-wide human rights agenda.” This is followed up by a list of actions that should be taken by the U.S. government in the face of human rights violations by any party in ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

The 1984 divestment strategy report states the following: “The identity of the church is found in its commitment to faithful life and action, in investments as in other areas of life. Divestment from a particular enterprise thus can be a means of effective participation and witness in the larger social enterprise of justice. ... At certain times, divestment may be an action of transforming effectiveness, and at those times the church must be free to act with both integrity and realism (paragraph 25.279).

Conclusion

The 192nd General Assembly (1980) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America approved the report entitled: *Peacemaking: The Believer’s Calling*. This document called for an increase in “the witness, advocacy, and legislative action efforts of the United Presbyterian Church on issues of peacemaking, disarmament, international economics, foreign policy, and international justice, with particular attention to the concerns of those who struggle for liberation, human rights, and social justice.”

Our church has consistently called for nonviolence. Most notably, of the original companies referred to the PC(USA) Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee in 2004 for corporate engagement because they profited from violent activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, one of the success stories from that engagement was the decision by Citibank to separate itself from a subsidiary that laundered terrorist money. Citibank responded positively to our engagement and relatively quickly. The other companies profiting from the other side of the conflict never did, and after a decade of corporate engagement, in 2014 MRTI made the difficult decision to call for divestment, which was finally in line with repeated overtures to do the same from presbyteries throughout the denomination for a decade.

Our church has condemned violent resistance to injustice and human rights violations historically and consistently. Boycott, divestment, and sanctions have been our ecclesiastical tools for seeking justice in nonviolent ways for more than a century. We cannot demand that certain societies refrain from violent means for ending their misery and oppression and then when they do, tell them that the nonviolent tools they seek to employ are invalid and not available to them. We support other nonviolent tools such as international diplomacy, direct mission to afflicted areas, and positive investment. We also believe, however, that taking away the other nonviolent tools we have used historically as a church to effect justice and secure human rights is an uninformed and foolish endeavor in a world of complexity where political power and economic gain often out-

weighs the well-being of God's children anywhere upon God's earth. The matrix of oppression and human subjugation in this modern world is far too complex and extensive to expect that all nonviolent tools of resistance should not be used.

This overture seeks to reaffirm the tools we, as a peacemaking church, have consistently employed throughout many decades. Our use of such tools precedes any recent global movement called for by an oppressed society at any given point in time. Simply because a movement takes place that calls for these nonviolent tools to be used, this does not mean that the church as an organization, or its individual members, are automatically aligned with all that goals and objectives of any particular movement. When our time honored practices for peacemaking coincide with such movements, however, there is no need to deny this reality. To do so would deny that our church tradition has been on the forefront of peacemaking and non-violent movements throughout the world for a long time. As those called out by Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace, it is always our obligation to partner with those who do, along with us, embrace Christ's values of nonviolence and ask us to join with them in the hard work of peacemaking in this broken and hurting world.

The promise of the Kingdom of God fulfills our hopes beyond the secular expectations of history. Our hope is in the Kingdom of God and not in any particular political system or solution. That hope, however, invigorates us for the particular political struggles in which approximations of justice can be achieved. By trusting in the Kingdom of God, we know that the final fulfillment is not ours to realize. We also know, however, that the displacement of those arrangements and institutions that are antithetical to the realization of God's Kingdom is part of the historical process over which God is sovereign and that we are called to serve God in it. God redeems history; we do not. We must act as consistently with that redemption as our light and our power permit. (*Peacemaking: The Believer's Calling*, 1980).

Concurrence to Item 12-05 from the Presbytery of Genesee Valley.

Concurrence to Item 12-05 from the Presbytery of San Francisco (with Additional Rationale).

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Although a great deal of discussion and debate as of late has focused on boycott, divestment, and sanctions in regard to Palestine, the fact is that these have been recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor church bodies as nonviolent tools for achieving justice for more than a century. In the early 1970s, both the UPCUSA and the PCUS churches established permanent committees on responsible social investment with professional staff. These committees are the predecessors of the current Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment, which was created in 1986, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/mrti/what-mrti/>.

1. *Boycott*

In its report, approved by the 191st General Assembly (1979) of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the church was reminded how far back in time our church has called for boycotts:

- 1910—"We solemnly admonish our people to keep themselves financially, and politically 'separate and apart' from the liquor traffic, and to 'touch not the unclean thing,' to the end that this traffic may by organic law be expelled from our land and our people be saved from its despoiling influence."
- 1913—"That any minister or member of the Presbyterian Church who is a member of any club or association licensed to sell and does sell intoxicating liquors to its members ... should resign from such club or organization. ..."
- 1917—"That in the future, invitations to the General Assembly should be accompanied by the assurance of local committees that a sufficient number of Temperance hotels are available. ..."
- 1922—"Resolved, that the General Assembly call upon the constituency of our churches to refrain from attendance upon any theatre which permits upon its screen the presentation of pictures that are suggestive and unclean. ..."
- 1937—"We favor the adoption by the Congress of legislation ... which forbids the shipments of Child Labor goods in interstate commerce. ..."
- 1952—"We call on all church members to avoid taking part in any kind of gambling, even for charitable causes. ..."
- 1960—"Urges our members to take note of hotels, restaurants, and other public accommodations that discriminate ... and urges United Presbyterians to seek out and patronize those places of public accommodation that serve the public without such accommodation."
- 1964—"Investments of the Board (of National Mission); that the Board shall refrain from investing in the securities of any company that has an open, flagrant policy and/or practice of discriminatory hiring based on race or ethnic group..."
- 1967—"Urges continued dialogue and personal consultation with U.S. industry and banks operating in the Republic of South Africa to encourage them to use their presence and involvement to oppose the system of apartheid and give

assurance that personnel practices within their jurisdiction are not discriminatory ... if firms cannot be persuaded to cooperate, we urge the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and individual investors to protest by beginning to divest themselves of their holdings in such business enterprises.”

It should be noted that the PC(USA) was evolving in its understanding of the interrelatedness of boycott and divestment. Clearly in this policy analysis of boycotts approved by the General Assembly, both the subjects of boycott and divestment are covered. In addition, “boycott” and “selective patronage” were often coupled in this report, demonstrating that there were times when the latter was, in effect, a boycott action because to selectively patronize one business implied a willful decision not to patronize another on moral grounds.

Additionally, it should be noted that calls for boycott and to individual conscience often preceded calls to corporate action as a church. In 1960, for instance, the General Assembly called for individual Presbyterians to note those public accommodations that discriminated according to race and then do business elsewhere, in places where such discrimination did not take place. By 1966, the General Assembly called for prohibition of corporate investment in entities that were not pursuing racial integration. By 1967, the General Assembly was already calling members’ attention towards the evils of apartheid in South Africa, with an actual decision for divestment from companies doing business with the apartheid regime not coming for more than a decade later. Recent actions by the General Assemblies of the PC(USA) have demonstrated a similar pattern. The PC(USA) called for boycott of illegal Israeli settlement goods in 2012, and following that called for divestment from three U.S. corporations profiting from the occupation of Palestine in 2014. It is interesting to note that in 2012, the year boycott of settlement goods passed by a large margin, an overture for divestment for essentially the same reasons failed by only three votes, and then in 2014 was approved by seven votes. History seems to indicate that when faced with issues related to discrimination and oppression, it has been easier for General Assemblies to appeal first to the individual consciences of church members and then later, to the church’s institutional conscience. It also seems to indicate that the church eventually gets to both individual and corporate response through boycott and divestment.

2. *Divestment*

The 196th General Assembly (1984) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted for study and use the documents: *Divestment Strategy: The Ethical and Institutional Context* and *The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria*. The latter document stated that “the theology of mission extends the concept of stewardship into society and insists that the full influence and impact of church investment be seen in the larger social context, with motivation beyond financial gain, important as that is” (paragraph 25.200); and “the imperatives of the gospel demand that we weigh the church’s involvement in a particular investment with the church’s engagement in the larger society” (paragraph 25.202).

In this report, the tension that exists whenever the church entertains the possibility of divestment decisions was made clear with the following examples (25.217):

- “Women and members of racial-ethnic groups will generally feel a greater commitment to AAEEEO policies and plans than is felt generally by white male clergy.”
- “Corporate executives may view the Nestle boycott as an ill-timed and counterproductive tactic in light of the potential effect. Mothers of small children are likely to have a different view of the seriousness of the problem of infant formula abuse.”
- “The consequences of the decision to move a manufacturing plant from one city to another will undoubtedly seem different to the Presbyterian pastor whose community is devastated and the Presbyterian corporate executive in a distant city under mandate to cut operating costs.”

The report makes clear that “investment holdings are in themselves a resource, an instrument for pursuing mission objectives of the church directly ... and the decision to bar investment or to divest holdings not only witnesses to the clash between the values of the church and those of the listed corporations but can also influence the activities of those corporations, particularly when such actions are taken in concert with many other church or institutional investors. Thus, investments function through the intentional exercise of their power and influence to support the nonmonetary objectives of the church, as well as through the income they provide” (paragraph 25.228).

Divestment is defined as “a conscious decision to dispose of any current financial stake in an enterprise or class of enterprise because of policy or practice in regard to a social issue and to prohibit future stake so long as the offending situation holds” (paragraph 25.261). In distinguishing between boycott and divestment the report says this: “Divestment can be seen as a ‘boycott’ on investment rather than on products or services, and an investor can be seen as a ‘consumer’ as well as part owner and beneficiary. The boycott is primarily a strategy for those ‘outside’ a corporation who wish to affect it ... Divestment is an intentional decision to move ‘outside’ into the location of the boycotter” (paragraph 25.262).

This is what the report said about divestment from South Africa: “the official policy of apartheid is fundamentally offensive to a Christian undertaking of life and society. Apartheid is the political and social manifestation of a theological heresy—a direct defiance of God’s will for both human and social existence. ... The church has tried for many years to effect

change in the policies and practices of those corporations in effort to produce change in South Africa, but the efforts have been largely ineffective. Do we divest as a witness that we can no longer justify participation where change is hopeless?" (paragraph 25.276).

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessors have never taken the leveling of charges concerning heresy lightly. Even in regard to apartheid, as the political manifestation of a Christian tradition that attempted to subjugate an entire people with the theological equivalent of smoke and mirrors, it struggled mightily to come to such conclusions. We are observing the same kind of evolution in regard to the unmasking of political Zionism that was an invention of the 19th century by those who dared subvert the theology of the oldest of the three Abrahamic faith traditions in order to take land from Palestine and supplant the indigenous people.

In the face of similar tensions, arguments, and concerns, the PC(USA) did finally vote to divest from those companies profiting from apartheid even though it could no longer be argued that such action would actually cause those companies to reform. By that time the decision was made simply because the church had to say it would no longer participate economically in the injustices of subjugation and systemic oppression. This is the same point to which the PC(USA) came in 2014 through its decision to divest from companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.

Throughout its history, the PC(USA) has chosen not to invest in the so-called "sin" stocks of tobacco, liquor, and gambling. In the 1970s the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) voted to divest its holdings from Duke Power after the death of eighty-nine men in the Brookside coal mine in Kentucky in 1974 in light of the company's poor safety record. In 1971, the UPCUSA adopted investment guidelines calling the church to "be especially critical of enterprises that use the political process to support increased military spending" as well as those that produce "weaponry whose use does not permit a distinction between civilian and combatant" (paragraph 25.288).

Clearly, an Israeli military policy that does not distinguish between Palestinian civilian and combatant (most notably in Gaza, but it consistently happens in the West Bank as well), is a justification for divestment by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) because it is completely consistent with the principles and parameters established by the church more than forty years ago when it comes to committing our resources to indiscriminate military activity. What has not been addressed by the PC(USA) since these investment principles have been established in the 1970s and 1980s (and should be) is the kind of diversification in corporations taking place in our modern era that makes it possible for companies to be engaged in the production of military equipment and technology that is used in indiscriminate ways and yet does not meet the arbitrary standard of representing a majority percentage of their business.

In what seems like an eerie prediction of the conversation that has been taking place about divestment lately, the concluding words of the report states: "Business corporations protest that they have no authority in relation to legislatures and foreign governments. Given the true dynamics of power in society this is rarely the case, but the absence of direct cause and effect relationship makes the ethical and pragmatic calculations more complex and more difficult to interpret to those instinctively seek direct means-ends patterns" (paragraph 25.309)

3. *Sanctions*

One of the best explanations of sanctions comes from a report of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)-USA entitled, *Sanctions Against the Israeli Occupation: It's Time*. The report describes sanctions as "a powerful, non-violent, popular means of resisting the Occupation ..." that includes the following elements:

- Sales or transfer of arms to Israel conditional upon their use in ways that do not perpetuate Occupation or violate human rights and international humanitarian law...
- Trade sanctions on Israel due to its violation of the "Association Agreements" it has signed with the European Union that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the "Made in Israel" label, as well as for violations of their human rights provisions;
- Divestment from companies that profit from involvement in the Occupation. In this vein, ICAHD-USA supports initiatives like that of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which targets companies contributing materially to the Occupation and certainly against Caterpillar whose bulldozers demolish thousands of Palestinian homes;
- Boycott of settlement products and of companies that provide housing to the settlements or which play a major role in perpetuating the Occupation; and
- Holding individuals, whether policy-makers, military personnel carrying out orders or others, personally accountable for human rights violations, including trial before international courts and bans on travel to other countries.

As stated earlier, the PC(USA), by calling for boycott by church members, and by divesting its stock from companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine, is indeed engaged in a certain level of sanctions that is within its power as an entity to participate. In regard to government-towards-government sanctions, specifically in the case of U.S. policy towards the

Israeli government, the best the church can hope for is to use the voice of its highest governing body for the sake of moral persuasion. And so, the church has passed measures calling for the U.S. government to abide by its own laws in regard to extending military aid to Israel. If such laws were followed, the U.S. would at least, temporarily, stop the extension of this aid until such time as Israel ends the occupation of Palestine, ceases the violation of international law through building illegal settlements on occupied land and usurping that land's natural resources for its own use, and stops the unchecked violation of human rights in Gaza and the West Bank.

4. *Conclusion*

The 192nd General Assembly (1980) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America approved the report entitled: *Peacemaking: The Believer's Calling*. This document called for an increase in "the witness, advocacy, and legislative action efforts of the United Presbyterian Church on issues of peacemaking, disarmament, international economics, foreign policy, and international justice, with particular attention to the concerns of those who struggle for liberation, human rights, and social justice."

To this day, the PC(USA) has continued to value the witness of this report and calls upon its local congregations to sign on to the "Commitment to Peacemaking" which became the means by which churches could embrace and endorse the purpose and intention of this document. By signing on, congregations commit to practice peacemaking through worship, prayer, and Bible study, peacemaking in families and community living, community ministries, study and response to global issues, global security, making peace with the earth, and by receiving the Peacemaking Offering. Specifically in regard to the church's study and response to global issues, the commitment means "supporting human rights and economic justice efforts in at least one area of the world. ..." The World Mission Agency of the PC(USA) has helped empower local congregations toward this task by creating dozens of mission networks focusing upon different areas of partnership with peoples throughout the world for the purposes of common ministries and achieving human rights and justice for all people.

In regard to relationships with peoples of other lands, the 1980 report states: "there have been times when economic relationships between nations were such as to make separable destinies thinkable. But today interdependence has become so apparent that it is less and less possible to isolate interests according to national destinies. The intertwining of interests has become as crucial as the interests of nations themselves and indeed constitutes new and vital 'national interest' in itself."

The PC(USA) witness is that such interdependence requires a greater, and not lesser, commitment to justice and human rights because so much of what one society desires and does inevitably impacts all other societies it touches. The peacemaking witness of our church has also been clear that seeking cooperation and partnership for the sake of ending injustice and human rights violations means that violence can never be a solution that leads to lasting peace. As a result, the tools of peacemaking, and the nonviolent means of achieving the purposes of Christ, our Prince of Peace, in this world are essential.

Our church has consistently called for nonviolence. Most notably, of the original companies referred to the PC(USA) Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee in 2004 for corporate engagement because they profited from violent activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, one of the success stories from that engagement was the decision by Citibank to separate itself from a subsidiary that laundered terrorist money. Citibank responded positively to our engagement and relatively quickly. The other companies profiting from the other side of the conflict never did, and after a decade of corporate engagement, in 2014 MRTI made the difficult decision to call for divestment, which was finally in line with repeated overtures to do the same from presbyteries throughout the denomination for a decade.

Recent attacks on the BDS movement in the PC(USA), and outside of it, ignores the fact that in our church tradition boycott, divestment, and sanctions have been time-honored tools of nonviolent resistance. Our church has condemned violent resistance to injustice and human rights violations historically and consistently. Boycott, divestment, and sanctions have been our ecclesiastical tools for seeking justice in nonviolent ways for more than a century. The truth is that we cannot demand that certain societies refrain from violent means for ending their misery and oppression and then when they do, tell them that the nonviolent tools they seek to employ are invalid and not available to them. We support other nonviolent tools such as international diplomacy, direct mission to afflicted areas, and positive investment. We also believe, however, that taking away the other nonviolent tools we have used historically as a church to effect justice and secure human rights is an uninformed and foolish endeavor in a world of complexity where political power and economic gain often outweighs the well-being of God's children anywhere upon God's earth. The matrix of oppression and human subjugation in this modern world is far too complex and extensive to expect that all nonviolent tools of resistance should not be used.

This overture seeks to reaffirm the tools we, as a peacemaking church, have consistently employed throughout many decades. Our use of such tools precedes any recent global movement called for by an oppressed society at any given point in time. Simply because a movement takes place that calls for these nonviolent tools to be used, this does not mean that the church as an organization, or its individual members, are automatically aligned with all that goals and objectives of any particular movement. When our time honored practices for peacemaking coincide with such movements, however, there is no need to deny this reality. To do so would deny that our church tradition has been on forefront of peacemaking and nonviolent movements throughout the world for a long time. As those called out by Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace, it is always our

obligation to partner with those who do, along with us, embrace Christ's values of nonviolence and ask us to join with them in the hard work of peacemaking in this broken and hurting world.

The promise of the Kingdom of God fulfills our hopes beyond the secular expectations of history. Our hope is in the Kingdom of God and not in any particular political system or solution. That hope, however, invigorates us for the particular political struggles in which approximations of justice can be achieved. By trusting in the Kingdom of God, we know that the final fulfillment is not ours to realize. We also know, however, that the displacement of those arrangements and institutions that are antithetical to the realization of God's Kingdom is part of the historical process over which God is sovereign and that we are called to serve God in it. God redeems history; we do not. We must act as consistently with that redemption as our light and our power permit. (*Peacemaking: The Believer's Calling*, 1980)

ACSWP ADVICE AND COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-05

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-05—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the assembly approve Item 12-05.

The presbyteries proposing this overture have done their homework. The policy base they present is accurate and would provide an advanced starting point for bringing together the resources they request. Commissioners may consider that this item would also help in answering Item 08-07, though that item is focused on nonviolent change specifically in Israel-Palestine. We note that the Reformed Christian preference for nonviolence is not absolute, but the methods they cite, as well as corporate engagement by shareholders, electoral efforts as citizens, diplomatic efforts, and public protests are all part of our historic efforts to work and witness for justice. Their overall framework, connecting peacemaking with nonviolent economic witness, is helpful. On the international political level, also, sanctions are much preferred to "hot" wars, and sanctions are increasingly targeted to try to minimize their impact on the poor in affected countries.

Item 12-06

[The assembly approved Item 12-06 with amendment. See pp. 66, 67–68.]

Risking Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

Convinced, despite years of war, that peacemaking is still the "believers' calling," drawing on the advisory votes and discussions of thirty-four presbyteries, and in fulfillment of the directions of the 219th, 220th, and 221st General Assemblies (2010), (2012), and (2014), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

- 1. Approve the five affirmations below (at Recommendation 10) as guidance for new directions in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s peacemaking witness in congregations, presbyteries, synods, and the Peacemaking Program of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.**
- 2. Receive the five-part explanatory *Rationale*, *Risking Peace in a Violent World*, with its concise summary and supplemental resources, to be posted on-line in downloadable form for individual and group study, with accompanying interpretation and availability at reasonable cost of print versions, as individuals and groups may prefer.**
- 3. Thank all those congregations and presbyteries that participated in the Peace Discernment process since its inception in 2010, including the Peacemaking and International Affairs committees of the General Assemblies in 2012 and 2014. Those committees tested and strongly approved the discernment study material, which after full assembly approval was sent out to the church and which, shaped by the responses received (from congregations in 2013 and presbyteries in 2015), became the basis of the current report.**
- 4. Commend the presbyteries, congregations, and individuals who have affirmed the "Commitment to Peacemaking" and faithfully supported the Peacemaking Offering for as long as thirty-five years, sustaining both the Peacemaking Program and countless creative congregational and presbytery practices and initiatives.**
- 5. Invite all presbyteries, congregations, and members to consider for themselves a new version of the "Commitment to Peacemaking" that includes the five affirmations from the Peace Discernment process (see Recommendation 11 below), and encourage congregations in particular to organize forums to engage with the five affirmations (see the Church of Reconciliation website: <http://www.churchrec.org/content.cfm?id=9037>) as they discern their own peacemaking callings.**

- 6. Urge the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to maintain a clear distribution of Peacemaking and Global Witness offering monies for peacemaking programmatic activities, including coordination with congregations engaged in peacemaking practices addressing matters such as gun violence, human rights and international law advocacy,**

moral injury and other veterans' concerns, racial violence in law enforcement and criminal justice, nonviolent accompaniment of persons and groups in danger zones, truth and reconciliation initiatives, nuclear disarmament, economic conversion of industries dependent on war fighting and preparation, and sharing or creating resources and opportunities for education and formation of youth and adults based in Christian social teaching and General Assembly action.

7. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy to develop other interactive processes of policy development using the on-line journal *Unbound* (www.justiceUnbound.org) as a platform for focused interaction with presbyteries and congregations, to consult with other denominations, to work with several presbyteries and synods in diverse regions to develop best methods and timelines for testing, receiving responses, and providing resources for study, and to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) with recommendations for updating processes of social witness engagement in light of the changed infrastructure and program capacity of the church.

8. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (a) to examine and report on best methods for working with international peacemakers and ecumenical partners from countries and churches in crisis, in cooperation with mission networks and World Mission ministries, (b) to consult with ACSWP and other ministries of Compassion, Peace, and Justice on effective means of witness for reconciliation, self-determination, and prevention of war, and (c) to work with congregations and other bodies of the church to develop new Commitments to Peacemaking in the 21st century, such as are outlined below.

9. Affirm the work and moral force of peacemaking to be an intrinsic part of the identity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and part of the mission work plan and broader vision of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. As part of this overall commitment to peace with justice, the church continues its pastoral support for our sisters and brothers who serve in the U.S. military, veterans, and their families, as well as for those who in conscience are compelled to seek release from that service. We are particularly called to advocate for veterans who suffer injury in body, mind, or spirit, and we are called to remember those combatants and civilians in other nations who have also suffered grievously.

10. Approve the following affirmations to guide the peacemaking witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

a. ~~[We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge evil and hatred, and who calls the church to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.]~~ [We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict evil and hatred, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence.]

b. ~~[We confess our complicity in the world's violence and our failures to stand with those who suffer, even as we pray for the Spirit's courage to unmask idolatries, speak truth about war and oppression, and respond with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.]~~ [We confess that we have sinned by participating in acts of violence, both structural and physical, or by our failure to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.]

c. We follow Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, and reclaim the power of nonviolent love evident in his life and teaching, his healings and reversals of evil, his cross and resurrection.

d. Learning from nonviolent struggles and counting the costs of war, we draw upon the traditions of Just War, Christian pacifism, and Just Peacemaking to cultivate moral imagination and discern God's redemptive work in history.

[e. We commit ourselves to studying and practicing nonviolent means of conflict resolution, nonviolent methods for social change, and nonviolent opposition to war. Even as we actively engage in a peace discernment process, we commit ourselves to continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the United States military, veterans, and their families. We promise to support materially and socially veterans of war who suffer injury in body, mind, or spirit, even as we work toward the day when they will need to fight no more.]

~~[e. We commit ourselves to practice the things that make for peace in our daily lives, families, and communities, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to take part in social movements for a domination-free order.]~~ [f. We place our faith, hope, and trust in God alone. We renounce violence as a means to further selfish national interests, to procure wealth, or to dominate others. We will practice boldly the things that make for peace and look for the day when "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."]

11. Based upon these affirmations, encourage congregations, presbyteries, and other bodies of the church to consider adopting or renewing public commitments to peacemaking. The original Commitment to Peacemaking developed in response to Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling (1980) came to include: (a) worship to let God open our hearts to the deepest experiences of peace, (b) spiritual disciplines, (c) teaching and training, (d) ecumenical and interfaith work for racial and economic justice, (e) international partnerships for human rights and reconciliation, (f)

study and support for cooperative security approaches, (g) lifestyle changes to connect peace and care for God’s creation, and (h) contributing to the Peacemaking Offering and other means of material aid.

Building on these, a Peacemaking Commitment for the 21st century would include continuing the work of discerning the chief challenges to peace and security facing each body (the “signs of the times”), a call to repentance and rededication, deeper study of Jesus and nonviolence in the early church and since, exercises of moral imagination to address moral injuries sustained in war (both personal and collective), and then identifying specific risks the congregation or body would be willing to take for peace. These might include acts of solidarity across still-tragic racial divides, hospitality to homeless veterans or asylum seekers, opposition to specific wars, questioning needs for additional surveillance, and other actions based in the Love that drives out fear.

[Financial Implication: Presbyterian Mission Agency \$78,100 (2017); \$77,750 (2018)]

Rationale

Risking Peace in a Violent World

Contents of this Study Paper:

Introduction

The Peace Discernment Process and Development of the Five Affirmations

Background on Presbyterian Peace Witness and Peacemaking

Five Affirmations for 21st Century Christian Peacemaking

Appendix A: Tabulation of Presbytery Responses to the Five Affirmations with Notes

Appendix B: Summary of Risking Peace Rationale Sent to Presbyteries

Appendix C: Analysis of the Presbytery Responses

Appendix D: Summary of Congregational Discernment Responses Behind the Five Affirmations

Appendix E: Brief Summary of Christian Approaches to War Prior to 1980, and Concluding Concern

Appendix F: Definitions

Appendix G: Several Examples of Methods of Violence Reduction

Introduction

“In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior; to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.” (Book of Confessions, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4, Lines 65–71)

Title and Purpose

The commitment of the church to peace and reconciliation has a central role in Christian vocation. For Presbyterians it is a matter of creedal standing, briefly yet powerfully set forth in the *Brief Statement of Faith* (1991) cited above, and outlined at greater length in The Confession of 1967. Wording from both confessions is echoed in the title of this report. We acknowledge not only a “fearful” but a violent world, even as we hear God’s call in our time to take new risks to challenge our country’s over-reliance on military might and underinvestment in “the things that make for peace.” Thus the title invokes The Confession of 1967’s prophetic phrase: “This search [for peace] requires that the nations pursue fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at the risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.45).

The Peace Discernment Process and Development of the Five Affirmations

In 2010, on the 30th anniversary of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* and the formation of the Peacemaking Program, the 219th General Assembly (2010) authorized a six-year discernment process to take a fresh look at peacemaking in the church’s life. The assembly’s action combined overtures seeking to review and strengthen the church’s policy and program after almost a decade of war, and to examine particularly the nonviolent understanding of Jesus’ call to discipleship. A steering committee was appointed to devise innovative opportunities for the broad membership of the church to explore both the effectiveness of the church’s peacemaking work and threefold offering, and the nature of the Gospel’s overall mandate for peacemaking in the current time.

The 220th General Assembly (2012) authorized study materials to be distributed (after testing in committee) and approved a two-stage process of face-to-face discussions in both congregations and councils, and then of presenting a set of concise affirmations to the presbyteries. Appendix D to this report provides a summary of the responses from the congregations and presbyteries in that first stage that was presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014). Those responses helped shape what became the Five Affirmations. The Five Affirmations were meant to build upon each other, and to be voted upon separately to show degrees of support.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) received the Five Affirmations, made several changes, and approved them. Although they had received unanimous support in committee, in plenary they were removed from the consent agenda and received a

very clear majority hand vote. The Stated Clerk sent out two letters to presbyteries encouraging consideration of the Five Affirmations, and the Office of the General Assembly also developed an on-line response form and posted summaries of the sections of “Risking Peace” supporting each affirmation. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Peacemaking Program were grateful to receive the strongly positive votes of those presbyteries that responded, but do *not* claim that the thirty-three presbyteries were taking a vote such as on amendments to the *Book of Order*. By the use of the word, “advisory,” the assembly was clear that the presbyteries were being asked to respond as they wished to a second stage in a policy development process. What those presbyteries contributed was an innovative kind of testing and confirmation received by few other statements of social witness.

We believe the engagement of thirty-three presbyteries is substantial and list them in Appendix A. The support of almost all for the Five Affirmations is important confirmation of this approach, but the critiques and alternatives provided are also important and respected. Many comments, as in the case with congregations, are also personal. They show how much many of us have been tested or touched by war and violence and how that experience affects our faith. We also summarize conversations with leaders of presbyteries that did not respond due to other pressing matters, rather than opposition to the Five Affirmations. Recommendation 7 proposes ways to strengthen the conversation and education dynamic around ethical issues and social teaching. That recommendation calls us to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of our internal systems, and to recognize as well that a solid majority of Presbyterian members as well as ministers support the church’s commitments to peace, justice, and compassion.

The results from the presbyteries were reviewed by the Peacemaking Program and ACSWP, as well as by an independent academic consultant whose review is Appendix C. The guidelines for social policy formation in *Why and How the Church Makes a Social Witness* mandate the circulation of an initial study document in the cases of large-scale policy development, and this was fulfilled in the first stage of Peace Discernment. The use of a discussion and voting format for presbytery response was a new method, modeled on peace-related votes described later in this introduction. Most social witness statements by the assembly are resolutions based on short-term studies and guided by principles established in larger past policy statements, or overtures from presbyteries whose approval does not require longer study. “Risking Peace” is a larger policy to guide the church in considering future, more specific programs and statements. It also shows how the affirmations are based on Reformed biblical and theological interpretation and how they respond to both violent and hopeful realities in the world today.

Most of the presbyteries responding supported all five of the affirmations, though in several cases after extensive and generally supportive discussion, the presbyteries declined to take an actual vote (New Castle and Elizabeth would be examples of this). In several other presbyteries, the desire to provide an informed response led to the delegation of the Five Affirmations to a specific study team (Denver and National Capital would be examples, one strongly positive, one more critical). More analysis is provided in the appendices. Overall, however, the impact of the presbytery responses was to simplify the wording. The key elements of renewed commitment, confession of complicity, more attention to Christ’s nonviolence, more understanding of nonviolent strategy and Just Peacemaking, and the need to take risks for peace—to these five, the presbyteries said, yes.

Background on Presbyterian Peace Witness and Peacemaking

We include a short survey of Christian and Presbyterian approaches to peacemaking prior to 1980 in a brief appendix (E), and definitions of Just War, Just Peacemaking, and active nonviolence principles (F).

A key understanding from the later twentieth century is that peacemaking has come to be seen as central to Christian witness and as a large enough concept to unite both those tending toward nonviolence or pacifism and those operating within the Just War or justifiable war tradition. Most Presbyterians, in fact, are not absolutists and hold values from both main Christian approaches to war and physical violence. Peacemaking emphasizes common ground. Former Chief of Chaplains Kermit Johnson believes that both Just War and pacifism are “rooted in the commandment: “Thou shalt not kill.” It is a presumption against violence, “the presumption in favor of peace and against war.”¹ He then went on to consider whether there could be cases of “tragic necessity” when nuclear war could be considered a “lesser evil” and meet the Just War criteria.

This is the kind of prayerful thinking that is not always easy, but that thousands of thoughtful Presbyterians have engaged in through the Peacemaking Program and now most recently in the Peace Discernment process. Our church has been gifted with theological ethicists of the first order helping shape public responses to war within and well beyond the church itself. Other Presbyterians in the military and military contractors—and probably all Christians at one time or another—have also grieved the impact of war and simply asked God, “why?” and “for what?” For us as peacemakers, though, that is not the end of it. We believe God answers and calls us to love our enemies and—in whatever our situation—to live for that Peaceable Kingdom where all the tears are wiped away.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) thinking about peace not only considers the impacts of major wars in which Presbyterians have fought, but notes the tolerance that has grown since the 1940s for conscientious objection to all war (pacifism) and to specific wars perceived to violate Just War and other criteria. This acceptance may have at first recalled the votes in 1936 and 1938 when majorities of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. voted to remove just war language from

the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was then the church's only confessional standard. Those votes did not reach the supermajorities needed for constitutional change. Then World War II received strong support from the churches, but the Cold War, the nuclear threat, the Civil Rights movement, and Vietnam led to a new wave of individual conscientious objectors and more understanding of Eisenhower's "military-industrial complex." It was in that context that the church adopted The Confession of 1967 with its inclusion of strong social ethics concerns for economic and racial justice, family life, and peace:

God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the ground of the peace, justice, and freedom among nations which all powers of government are called to serve and defend. The church, in its own life, is called to practice the forgiveness of enemies and to commend to the nations as practical politics the search for cooperation and peace. *This search requires that the nations pursue fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding.* Reconciliation among nations becomes particularly urgent as countries develop nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, diverting their [hu]manpower and resources from constructive uses and risking the annihilation of [hu]mankind. Although nations may serve God's purposes in history, the church which identifies the sovereignty of any one nation or any one way of life with the cause of God denies the Lordship of Christ and betrays its calling (*Book of Confessions*, Section 9.45, emphasis added).

That bold declaration grounded the idea of a shared church calling that was developed in *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*. That document offered a broad biblical, theological, and ethical basis for Christian peacemaking but also identified specific directions for that mission: efforts to reverse the worldwide arms race; "conversion of the economy from military to civilian production"; and continuing attention to how justice relates to peace. Because we are asking presbyteries to affirm the church's work of peacemaking in the first affirmation, we note key developments in that peace witness in the first of the five rationales.

Five Affirmations for 21st Century Christian Peacemaking

Affirmation #1: We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge evil and hatred, and who calls the church to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.

The 192nd General Assembly (1980) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) adopted *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling*, the denomination's most comprehensive policy on matters of international violence and war. It declared that:

- "The church is faithful to Christ when it is engaged in peacemaking" (*Peacemaking: The Believer's Calling*, p. 6)
- The church is obedient to Christ when it nurtures and equips God's people as peacemakers (Ibid.).
- The church bears witness to Christ when it nourishes the moral life of the nation for the sake of peace in our world (Ibid., p.7).

Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling broadened the concern for individual conscience to affirm that peacemaking was the calling of all believers, particularly in the face of nuclear and other Cold War dangers. Invoking Isaiah's vision, it emphasized our global interdependence and international connection. With New Testament themes, it presented a holistic understanding of peace and encouraged a wide range of church engagement. It affirmed that "peacemaking is an indispensable ingredient of the church's mission. It is not peripheral or secondary but essential to the church's faithfulness to Christ in our time" (Ibid., p. 17). Since that time, peacemaking has become broadly accepted, integral to our prayers and hymns, and evident in our preaching, teaching, and public witness.

Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling led to the creation of the influential Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and established a special offering to provide funding for it. The Peacemaking Offering, traditionally received on World Communion Sunday, until recently raised at least \$2 million each year, providing support for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and part of the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, as well as peacemaking ministries in local congregations, presbyteries, and synods. The innovation of having the offering go to three levels of the church speaks to the wisdom of developing institutional capacity not only in what is now the Presbyterian Mission Agency, but also bringing together resources for intentional creativity at the regional and community levels.

For more than thirty years, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has provided a variety of opportunities and resources to the church, including holding annual peacemaking conferences, publishing curricula for all ages, itinerating international peacemakers around the denomination, organizing international study tours, and supporting UN seminars. Over this period, approximately 50 percent of Presbyterian congregations have affirmed the Commitment to Peacemaking. A majority of Presbyterian congregations have received the Peacemaking Offering at some time, with approximately 20 percent providing a steady funding base.

Engaging Church, Society, and the World as Peacemakers

Presbyterians engage in peacemaking in a variety of ways. Through worship, prayer, and Bible study, they point to the reality of God's peace-giving, nurture the spiritual life of their communities, and equip people to share the gospel message of peace throughout the world. Presbyterian peacemakers foster respectful communication using resources such as "Seeking to

Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement.” They fight for affordable housing, better schools, and funding for social services through faith-based community organizing campaigns. They work to reduce gun violence in the United States. They join with ecumenical and interfaith partners in struggles for human rights and economic justice in countries around the world. Presbyterian peacemakers risk nonviolent accompaniment, walking alongside church leaders threatened with political violence in Colombia. They seek to make peace with the earth by living more sustainably themselves, and challenging legislators to resist the pressures of special interest lobbies and instead support forward-looking policies that reflect wise stewardship of the planet. Countless additional examples of faithful peacemaking could be cited. We have much good peacemaking work to celebrate in our church!

Presbyterian Peacemaking Witness and Just Peace

Since 1980, careful studies and prophetic statements have addressed the nuclear danger, particular military interventions and their rationale, and the relation of religion, violence, and terrorism. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), since 1988, has held a virtual “nuclear pacifist” position, opposing first use and retaliation and calling repeatedly for disarmament. That policy statement, *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age*, suggests that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a kind of “just peace” church, with its images drawn primarily from the Old Testament:

The church in the nuclear age must shift its energies from considerations of just war to the urgent and primary task of defining and serving a just peace. A nuclear stalemate or even the elimination of all nuclear arms is still far from God’s shalom. Shalom is the intended state of the entire human race. It involves the well-being of the whole person in all relationships, personal, social, and cosmic. Shalom means life in a community of compassionate order marked by social and economic justice. Peace without justice is no peace; that is why the Bible so often reflects God’s special concern for the poor and powerless.

The great biblical visions of global peace—swords into plowshares, every family under its own vine and fig tree—are fundamental to thinking about just peace. Such a peace is ultimately God’s gift; we need to avoid the proud illusion that we can create it by human effort alone. But Christian obedience demands that we move toward that peace in all possible ways: by extending the rule of law, advocating universal human rights, strengthening the organs of international order, working for common security and economic justice, converting industry to peaceful production, increasing understanding of and reconciliation with those we identify as enemies, developing peacemaking skills, constructing concrete manifestations of just peace across barriers of conflict and injustice, and other means. (*Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 450)

In 1998, the assembly approved a resolution on Just Peacemaking, which embodies the tension involved in endorsing military intervention as a method to prevent such things as genocide and seeks to move the church’s thinking beyond the traditional categories of just war, crusade, and pacifism. Along with a realism that has been characteristic of much Reformed ethics (and some liberation theologies), that resolution affirms a preference for strong peacemaking initiatives, noting of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- It has called for greater emphases on the use of non-violent means for conflict resolution and social change, and for the promotion of training toward this goal.
- It has stressed the importance of human rights, religious liberty, and the importance of democracy as a foundation for just peace. ...
- It has called for the abolition of nuclear weapons, limitations on the development of weapons, and restrictions on the sale or transfer of instruments of destruction. It has supported these restrictions on the understanding that traffic in arms raises the likelihood of conflict and raises the level of violence should conflict break out. ...
- It has recognized the critical importance of racial and gender justice in the achievement of social harmony and prosperity.
- It has called for independent and unilateral initiatives to reduce risks of conflict and to stimulate change. It has affirmed the importance of reconciliation even in the face of great risk. ...
- It has acknowledged the responsibility for international cooperation and leadership, and understands that the power and wealth of the United States require it to be part of international efforts to seek peace. At the same time it has recognized that the United States has and can abuse that power and wealth.
- It has supported international efforts, through the United Nations, at peacemaking and peacekeeping. ...

These church positions, together with background papers that support them, provide a complex legacy of important ideas. The Presbyterian church has not only made statements but has also encouraged participation in the ongoing tasks of peacemaking. Its peacemaking program has devised many strategies for helping to transform political and economic affairs in ways that promote just peace policies, whether in the domestic affairs of our own nation or in the world-at-large, whether through the use of civil authority or, if needed, resistance to it. ...” (*Minutes*, 1998, Part I, p. 463)

In keeping with these principles and policies, General Assemblies have also called for responsible withdrawals by the United States from Iraq (2004) and Afghanistan (2010); the 216th General Assembly (2004) prophetically and controversially termed the Iraq war “unwise, illegal, and immoral.” The resolution on “Religion, Violence, and Terrorism” (also 2004) endorsed a “policing” approach to terrorism and responds to the charge sometimes made that religion engenders violence. And, the 218th General Assembly (2008) “commended for study” a careful ethical assessment of the Iraq war entitled “To Repent, To Restore, To Rebuild, and To Reconcile,” which includes the concepts of public forgiveness and “honest patriotism” as developed by Donald W. Shriver.

One of the key questions wrestled with by Peace Discernment participants was whether the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) could consider becoming a “peace church” on the model of the Mennonites or Quakers, who have long held pacifism to be a key expression of Christian love and part of the nature of the church itself. A variant of this question was whether an individual congregation could declare itself a “peace church,” going beyond the Commitment to Peacemaking. Some recent

theological discussion has proposed nonviolence for the majority of Christians as well, deliberately challenging the compromises seen to accompany public responsibility.²

The wording of this first affirmation does not propose that nonviolence necessarily be an essential mark of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as it is for the traditional peace churches. Rather, it proposes that we have: “a mission to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.” Edward Long, a leader in Presbyterian peace thinking, notes how today’s pervasive acceptance of war’s inevitability often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.³ How does the church resist being transformed by that world of nations that is in constant overt and covert military struggle? This is where our peacemaking approach must go beyond words and engage in transformative worship and action, creating needed alternatives for our society as well as ourselves.

An updated Reformed approach was explored by a large number of congregations in the mid 1980s using the study guide, “Presbyterians & Peacemaking: Are We Now Called to Resistance?” by Ronald Stone and Dana Wilbanks. That congregational process (and a parallel conversation among scholars virtually unique among denominations) generated some of the thinking about resisting violence that went into *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age (1988)*.⁴ In the case of the Peace Discernment participants, some held to fully nonviolent positions while a larger number argued that responding to injustice sometimes requires actions on the spectrum of force that include physical violence. The overall consensus was to choose nonviolent alternatives whenever possible without making nonviolence an absolute position.

The Peace Discernment steering team (as noted below) thought it important to consider nonviolence in relation to the example of Jesus and the witness of much of the earliest, pre-Constantine church. This is not to deny our traditional Presbyterian appreciation of how justice and love, like Old Testament and New Testament, must always go together. Biblical scholars Donald Gowan and Ulrich Mauser address this relationship of love and justice:

In view of the fact that Jewish thought and practice alike reserved the incorporation of all nations into God’s world of peace for the world to come in which idolatry has ceased and one law of one God is universally acknowledged, there can hardly be any doubt that the Pauline mission... regarded the powers of the eschaton as driving forces which call forth historical realization. The prince of peace is in the Pauline mission not only the historically identifiable person Jesus of Nazareth, nor only the meta-historical redeemer, but also the continuous presence of God’s ultimate peace in the stream of time.⁵

Given this rich history of peacemaking and the vital ongoing work of making peace, it seems only fitting that we re-affirm the centrality of peacemaking, and renew our dedication to this central calling as followers of Jesus Christ. At the same time, as an integral part of honest and authentic peacemaking, we must confess our complicity in the violence of our world.

Affirmation #2. We confess our complicity in the world’s violence and our failures to stand with those who suffer, even as we pray for the Spirit’s courage to unmask idolatries, speak truth about war and oppression, and respond with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Confessing Our Complicity in Violence

Making peace means engaging the critical issues of our times. Yet, as those who are deeply immersed in peacemaking know so well, faithful peacemaking must be spiritually rooted and sustained by the Holy Spirit. The heart and mind of the peacemaker must be liberated from conformity to culture and renewed in the mind of Christ (Rom. 12). This transformation is itself peacemaking work. John Calvin reminds us that the human heart is “a factory of idols.” Therefore, healing the violence in our lives—not only the violence we do and the violence that is done to us, but our sinful capacity to countenance violence and to accept it as normal—must be integrated into a holistic theology of peacemaking. The peacemaker must even confess the kind of complicity that comes from failing to avert violence even after great effort, a feeling shared by many who opposed the second Iraq war. Such awareness that we are all responsible for some measure of violence is an important admission of imperfection.

In this section we move from an overview that looks at violence in our culture and its structures to a closer look at the factors at work in the Iraq and Afghan wars in particular. The inclusion of structural violence gives violence an admittedly broad definition. A strict definition of violence, for example, is suggested by Mark Douglas: “a forceful action that intends to cause unwanted injury to another.”⁶ The adjective, “structural,” would modify this definition to “the operation of institutions and social structures that causes injury or deprivation to others.”

The commitment to peace that stands at the heart of Christian obedience requires that Christians take an honest look at the extent to which they are complicit in the violence that characterizes the society of which they are a part. This complicity is present despite good intentions to avoid it and worthy efforts to live by the ideal of peace. Identifying and confessing this complicity is difficult and painful work—one that is often side-stepped or ignored. This complicity has not necessarily come about through deliberate malice, but inheres in the very course of living in an imperfect and fallen world, a world in which the human condition is marked by sin. No matter how much we as Americans can be proud of our ideals, if we fail to acknowledge our shortcomings we only increase the probability we will perpetuate them.

As the church engages in its discernment process, it must look honestly at our society and its history. It is hard to admit that violence has characterized much of our history and continues to dominate much of our current behavior. The land in

which we live was frequently taken from native peoples by force. The independence we value so proudly was achieved by a violent revolutionary war. Our national wealth was advanced with the brutality of the slave system that was abolished only with a civil war. We have profited from violence used to subdue workers and to control access to natural resources.

We are addicted to violence for purposes of entertainment. Bullying is common in our schools, and violence in video games. The most popular sports often inflict injury, concussions, and trauma. More than 30,000 people are killed each year by guns, many of them suicides. In the U.S., one in every four women experience domestic violence during their lifetime. We have stationed armed forces throughout the world on a quasi-permanent basis and defend ourselves with weapons that are used in the places where others live—often striking the innocent in the effort to destroy the guilty. A large segment of our economy involves the production and sales of armaments. And for many in politics, to apologize is blasphemy or betrayal.

Much of the hurt that is experienced in our society is produced by what is termed “structural violence,” what the second affirmation calls “oppression.” Our social and economic systems seem to condemn a growing number of people to lives of poverty or fear—even when public investment and other measures could boost unemployment and raise wages. Concentration of ownership and regressive taxes have enabled 1 percent of Americans to reap almost a quarter of our nation’s income every year and to control more than 40 percent of our nation’s wealth. Workers overseas are paid much less and often endure far worse conditions to keep our prices low and top salaries high. An economy dependent on the burning of carbon fuels threatens, not only our future, but that of others. The purchasing of influence by corporate power undercuts our democratic system. Physical assaults may not be involved or necessary in these processes, but they are nevertheless forms of violence.

It is not this report’s purpose to make a complete inventory of the extent to which we are complicit in violence. This is a task of ongoing prophetic scholarship, educational thoroughness, and moral inquiry to which the discernment being commended by this report must address itself. The task must be ongoing; subtle forms of coercion will always emerge, carried by “sanctioned ignorance,” “false polarization,” and the confusion of “virtual” reality with actuality.⁷ Most of all, as we know through our prayers of confession, this kind of disciplined self-searching requires the capacity of the Church and its members to transcend our own confining self-interest. Yet it is an essential aspect of being redeemed, of being transformed by grace. Society tends to honor the team player, the person who with excitement and verve cheers on whatever is being done. When we affirm the need for confessing our complicity we may prompt denial and hostility. To counter that normal human tendency is a vocation to heroic and prophetic humility without which the culture around us will never be healed.

It is not easy to unmask the powers. We all wear masks to some extent and therefore need others to help us take them off. Those who embrace idolatries usually believe they are defending the truth. They—and we—need to dialogue with those who differ from us—listening to them and hearing even the unspoken challenges to our views and unconscious ideologies. Discernment means prophetic criticism even of our so-called prophetic criticism. Yet confession and apology and repentance can unlock the enormous powers of truth and love.

With regard to that unconscious complicity, theologian Walter Wink believes we have embraced “the Myth of Redemptive Violence,” the widespread belief that violence saves, that war brings peace, that might makes right. “The belief that violence ‘saves’ is so successful because it doesn’t seem to be mythic in the least,” Wink writes. “Violence simply appears to be the nature of things. It’s what works. It seems inevitable, the last and, often, the first resort in conflicts. If a god is what you turn to when all else fails, violence certainly functions as a god. What people overlook, then, is the religious character of violence. ...”⁸

From this perspective, violence is an idol, a false god. Violence does not save us from evil, sin, and death. It only adds to evil, sin, and death. As the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., put it: “The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. ... Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”⁹

To the extent that we have put our faith in violence instead of God, we must repent of our idolatry, for we cannot serve two masters. As Christians we confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, no other. Our security does not rest in violence, but in God. On a deep level, anthropologist Rene Girard argues that the saving power of Jesus’ life comes from his unmasking the way that spirals of violence create and condemn victims who are in fact innocent.¹⁰ Our discipleship, instead, commits us to an upward spiral that weakens the powers of domination.

Structural Violence

The descending spiral of violence to which King referred often begins with “structural violence”—the social and economic structures that oppress and impoverish people, preventing them from meeting their basic needs and realizing their full potential. The structural violence of injustice and oppression can lead to the violence of revolt and rebellion that then leads to the retaliatory violence of government repression, which then only compounds the structural violence of injustice and oppression and leads to further revolt followed by yet more repression.¹¹ This is not to say that all violent crime in poor areas is a form of revolt, but to say that those neighborhoods themselves are a form of crime against their inhabitants.

While direct physical violence is more visible and attracts more media attention (“If it bleeds, it leads”), structural violence is far more widespread and arguably does much more harm over time. We see it manifest in hunger and homelessness, poverty and disease. The processes of oppression noted above include patterns of inequality and exclusion called the “isms” of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ethnocentrism. These patterns operate at interlocking levels—institutional (policies and practices), interpersonal (group and individual) and cultural (social norms and valuing). Most Americans know that the “isms” exist, but the common discourse in our country narrowly addresses discrimination that happens at the interpersonal level—when someone makes a blatantly derogatory comment or is accused of doing so. But even when a white police officer shoots an unarmed black teen, it is partly the conditioning of white privilege that heightens suspicion and pulls the trigger. Most Americans may be unfamiliar with how the isms operate on this more insidious social level and unaware of their exacting toll. Yet, millions of “lives of quiet desperation” are reflections of coercive inequality. We dehumanize ourselves and degrade others by unconsciously supporting patterns that pin our opportunities for well-being on our neighbors’ marginalization. Structural violence militates against our Christian calling to be in authentic loving relationship with our neighbors, near and far.

Violence Against the Earth

We are also doing violence to the earth and its creatures. The globalized economy is built on the untrammled extraction of finite resources, the exploitation of cheap labor, and a no-limits-to-growth ideology, resulting in dangerously compounding climate change. We are destroying ecosystems, depleting precious natural resources, melting glaciers, raising sea levels, and causing a massive extinction of species as our greenhouse gases alter the ecology of the entire planet. Severe weather fluctuations are already causing tragic increases in hunger. In *Tropic of Chaos* (2011), Christian Parenti warns that climate change is creating desperate refugees and the potential for serious violence in many regions.

The Global Context for the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars

To confess our complicity in general without grieving for the two significant wars of the last fifteen years would be fairly painless. Yet to confess without addressing the underlying dynamics is too sentimental. Here we look briefly at the context for the Afghan and Iraq wars, which is partly international structural violence, and then address the somewhat differing tragedies they involve. We return to the issues of U.S. superpower status in discussion of the fifth affirmation.

From a global perspective, we who live in the U.S. are among the richest 20 percent of the world’s population. (Consider that 40 percent of the world’s people attempt to live on less than two dollars a day.) The world’s income distribution resembles the shape of a champagne glass, with the top 20 percent of the world’s people who live in the world’s wealthiest countries receiving 83 percent of the world’s income. The next 20 percent receive 10 percent of the world’s income. The remaining 60 percent of the world’s people share the remaining 7 percent of world income.¹²

Global economic inequality is nothing new. As far back as 1948, George Kennan, head of the U.S. State Department planning staff, wrote in a secret policy planning study: “We have about 50 percent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population. ... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity. ... To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. ... We should cease to talk about vague and ... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.”¹³

How do we “maintain this position of disparity”? What does it mean to “deal in straight power concepts”? Thomas L. Friedman, the foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times*, explains it this way: “The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.”¹⁴

Though there were multiple sources of our country’s original wealth, our privileged economic position is preserved through U.S. military power, as well as through military aid and weapons sales to governments around the world. Even though it is a violation of U.S. law, the weapons we sell to foreign governments are sometimes used by their militaries against their own people in order to maintain a stable environment for corporate investments. Militarization makes corporate-led globalization possible. Whether militarization itself is finally profitable is one of the questions that Afghanistan and Iraq raise.

The Iraq and Afghanistan Wars (This section also supports Affirmation 4’s “counting the costs of war”

Since the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, involving four hijacked civilian airplanes and approximately 3,000 civilian casualties, the United States has been engaged in two significant wars and a limited intervention in Libya. The war in Afghanistan has been a joint operation with NATO member armies, as was the military intervention in Libya. The war in Iraq was initiated without United Nations authorization and involved a “coalition of the willing,” with Great Britain most notable among the U.S. allies. The General Assembly’s calling the Iraq War “unwise, immoral, and illegal” clearly invoked Just War

teaching: preemptive war was seen as antithetical to last resort; nonexistent weapons and regime change were not seen as just cause; unilateral action spurned the legitimate authority of the UN; and while military success was assured, a military occupation seemed unlikely to create democratization or a just peace.

The Iraq and Afghanistan wars have been extremely costly in both human and economic terms. The numbers of Afghans, Iraqis, and Pakistanis who have died in the fighting are estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. Our repentance must include the long refusal of our occupation forces to count those deaths. Their survivors face many of the same issues that U.S. war veterans do, but without the medical and social support. War refugees and internally displaced persons number 7.8 million. More than 6,100 U.S. soldiers have been killed and more than 46,000 have been injured. Multiple deployments have put enormous stress on U.S. soldiers and their families, whose lives have been changed forever by the experience of war. Even after soldiers return home, war continues to take its toll through unemployment, domestic conflict, depression, alcohol and drug addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), moral injury, and/or suicide.

The Iraq and Afghanistan wars will cost the United States alone an estimated \$3–\$4 trillion when current and future veterans' costs are added up; the costs of reconstruction, rehabilitation, and military activity by other countries involved is estimated to be another \$3 trillion. Most Americans now question whether these military interventions have been worth the enormous cost in lives, national treasure, and reputation, particularly as it is not at all clear what they have achieved. This adds to an “increasing sense of the impotence of military might” (p. 11) and the belief that “the main problems of the world will not yield to military solutions,” as *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* (p. 15) put it.

A case can be made that disproportionate militarization is bankrupting the U.S. economy and creating additional structural violence or oppression. While weapons manufacturers continue to post record profits during a deep recession, our nation's cities and states are in a state of fiscal crisis, public services and welfare programs, especially for our more vulnerable citizens, are being slashed, and the federal debt due to war remains high.

The money we use each year to prosecute the war in Afghanistan could fund the Head Start program for the next fifteen years, but instead many children will grow up with an inferior education. With the money we spend in Afghanistan, we could provide health coverage to every American, thereby, according to a Harvard study, saving 45,000 American lives in one year. The budgets for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could fill the budget gaps in all the states, preventing deep cuts in programs to the poor, the sick, and the uneducated. Furthermore, by some reckonings, the number one source of our nation's debt, about which we hear so much these days, is military related. Joshua Holland writes, “It's a tragic irony that so much of the discussion surrounding the public debt centers on ‘entitlements’ like Social Security (which hasn't added a penny to the national debt) when we're still paying for Korea and Vietnam and Grenada and Panama and the first Gulf War and Somalia and the Balkans and on and on.”¹⁵

Choices between the ability to kill militants and civilians on the other side of the globe and the ability to provide for the health and education of our children, choices to spend \$700 billion over the last decade on new weapons (which by the Secretary of Defense's own admission have been marginal in enhancing military capabilities) instead of spending that money on green energy or infrastructure—these are moral choices, and we are arguably making the wrong ones. The U.S. is in danger of what Paul Kennedy, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, calls “imperial overstretch”—when a nation commits so many resources overseas to maintain its empire that the nation implodes from within.

In the 2010 General Assembly debate over the resolution to call for withdrawal from Afghanistan, six years after the church had called for an end to the Iraq war, it was claimed that the strategic goals for the 2001 invasion had been met with the dispersal or death of Al Qaeda leaders and downgraded military capacity of the Taliban. To stay longer was to accumulate enemies and support a corrupt government without adding much to regional or global security. Those judgments may be criticized, but they accepted a stronger initial justification for war than was the case in Iraq. Yet our moral accountability as a nation in both countries has to do not only with the invasion and occupation but the final ceasefire and the future prospects for those nations. If Iraq is any indication, those prospects are not good. While our preeminent military role in the world does not make us accountable for all world problems, these two wars will be very hard to defend before the bar of history and history's Judge.

To approve this affirmation is to acknowledge the interlocking web of violence in our lives, our society, and the world, and to call the church to confession. War and oppression are closely intertwined. Engaging violence in ourselves and in the structures of our society and our world is essential to the integrity of our faith, yet daunting, complex, even overwhelming. With a spirit of repentance, then, we turn back to the heart of our faith.

Affirmation #3. We follow Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, and reclaim the power of nonviolent love evident in his life and teaching, his healings and reversals of evil, his cross and resurrection.

The Life and Teachings of Jesus

Since *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* was adopted in 1980, there has been another kind of explosion: in historical scholarship about Jesus of Nazareth. While this scholarship is enormously varied, and involves a wide range of early

Christian texts, it offers the church much rich reflection on the interaction of Jesus, the peasant population, the Jerusalem authorities, and the Roman army. Many of the participants in the discernment process were familiar with works by Marcus Borg, N.T. Wright, Walter Wink, Elizabeth Schlusser Fiorenza, Elaine Pagels, John Crossan, John Meier, Richard Horsley, to name some of the best known. Jewish and Muslim scholars have added their volumes to this mix. It is safe to say that most of the discernment participants—like our steering team members—see a clear predilection for nonviolence in the example and teaching of Jesus. Scholarly opinion is more divided, but even those who emphasize Jesus’ engagement in confrontation and conflict rarely link him to violent revolution.

In this section we will look first at recent interpretations of Jesus, and then propose ways that new emphases and learnings may be considered in future Presbyterian peacemaking theology and formation. We use the word “reclaim” because, along with greater emphasis on Jesus’ nonviolent movement and methods, comes the example of the early church. Whether or not we are in its persecuted and socially marginal position, we need to be a lot clearer about who we are and with what weapons we fight.

Let us first heed Luke Timothy Johnson, however, who warns that our faith is not in the result of any scholar’s historical-critical reconstruction.¹⁶ Johnson insists that for the church the canonical collection of literary texts called the New Testament is united in witnessing to the meaning of the Jesus story, and that meaning is found in a pattern consistent with the cross and resurrection. For him: “Jesus’ existence as one of radical obedience toward God and self-disposing service toward others forms a pattern for all humanity that can be written in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is this pattern that Paul designates as the *nomos Christou* (‘the law of Christ,’ or, better, ‘pattern of the Messiah’).”¹⁷ The first question, then, is whether peacemaking or nonviolence is part of that basic pattern.

Without attempting a survey, we choose very different scholarly positions from which to look at Jesus and violence, beginning with the work of Richard B. Hays in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (1996).¹⁸

Our exegetical investigation of Matthew 5: 38-48 has led to the conclusion that the passage teaches a norm of nonviolent love of enemies. ... Do the other texts (than Matthew) in the canon reinforce the Sermon on the Mount’s teaching on nonviolence, or do they provide other options that might allow or require Christians to take up the sword? When the question is posed this way, the immediate result—as Barth observed—is to underscore how impressively univocal is the testimony of the New Testament writers on this point. The evangelists are unanimous in portraying Jesus as a Messiah who subverts all prior expectations by assuming the vocation of suffering rather than conquering Israel’s enemies. ...

When Hays turns to Paul, he lifts up Romans 12, noting “though the governing authority bears the sword to execute God’s wrath (13:4), that is not the role of believers.” As Paul’s military metaphors make clear, “the weapons of our warfare are not merely human” (2 Cor. 10:4). Hays carries through a review of the New Testament and considers Revelation as a counsel to endurance. He considers texts that are cited to allow for violent or military action, seeing in the Temple cleansing a prophetic confrontation, and the references to soldiers “dramatize the power of the Word of God to reach even the unlikely people” (like tax collectors). His summary: “from Matthew to Revelation we find a consistent witness against violence and a calling to the community to follow the example of Jesus in accepting suffering rather than inflicting it.” The challenge for Hays is the disjunction between this interpretation of nonviolence in the New Testament and the witness of the Old Testament, which he sees providing the only possible scriptural bases for the Just War and Holy War traditions.

For contrast, we turn to a biblical scholar with a sociological starting point, who sees Jesus more focused on achieving justice than peace, per se, and leading a social movement that challenged the social order as much as it sought to reform Israel’s religious life. Nonetheless, Richard Horsley states:

Jesus, while not necessarily a pacifist, actively opposed violence, both oppressive and repressive, both political-economic and spiritual. He consistently criticized and resisted the oppressive established political-economic-religious order of his own society. Moreover, he aggressively intervened to mitigate or undo the effects of institutionalized violence, whether in particular acts of forgiveness and exorcism or in the general opening of the kingdom of God to the poor.¹⁹

Analytically, Horsley considers injustice to be a form of structural violence and sees, particularly in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus’ nonviolent resistance to a host of malevolent powers. He considers his own work, including *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (1987), to provide a broader basis for nonviolence than selected quotations from Jesus and Paul, as he sees a first-century cultural context where religious and political allegiances are deeply entwined.²⁰ Horsley’s Jesus is primarily a prophet out to renew a religious and social covenant; his interpretation, like many recent readings of Jesus, does not emphasize eschatological or apocalyptic themes, but does stress the dramatic importance of the crucifixion.

Walter Wink sees in Jesus “a third way” that resists evil through nonviolent means, an approach that outflanks and subverts aggression, sometimes by choosing to suffer. From this perspective, turning the other cheek, offering more clothing than a coat, and going the second mile are examples of the “weaker” party taking the moral initiative and humanizing the opponent, “forcing” him or her to recognize one’s own humanity without resorting to violence. This is a strategy with social and cultural implications, potentially breaking cycles of subjugation and humiliation, exposing injustice in power dynamics, and neutralizing and undermining the threat of violence.²¹

Wink’s interpretation is a way of accounting for a prophetic and nonviolent life that posed a clear alternative to the domination systems of his time. It does not deny the violent imagery in some of Jesus’ parables, though Margaret Aymer has

shown how deep those images go.²² It presents a Jesus of inner power who, when a Samaritan village refused to host him, refuses his disciples' idea "to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them" (Lk. 9:54). Jesus rebukes them, saying, "You do not know what spirit you are of, for the Son of Man has not come to destroy the lives of human beings but to save them" (Lk. 9:51–62). Similarly, images of Jesus' exorcizing evil can also be seen as his engaging with violent forces, but in peace scholar Andrea Bartoli's words, they are not so much nonviolent as "de-violencing." That kind of healing can involve spiritual convulsion, as it undoes or disarms the violent spirits from those possessed. This suggests that Jesus may not fit a specific "nonviolent" definition, but maintains that his willingness to face conflict was never a choice for violence.

Of Jesus' death on the cross, Martin Luther King Jr., said: "Jesus eloquently affirmed from the cross a higher law. He knew that the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy would leave everyone blind. He did not seek to overcome evil with evil. He overcame evil with good."²³ "Those who want to save their life will lose it," Jesus says, "and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mk. 8:35). Following Christ involves sacrifice. It leads to the cross. But it also holds out the promise of resurrection and new life.

The example of the Early Church

Following on from the life and example of Jesus Christ is the witness of the early church. While most Christians embraced nonviolence, there is some diversity of witness.²⁴ Most early Christians in Rome refused to engage in violence, trusting that their love for fellow citizens would point people to the new day dawning in Jesus Christ. Some, like Tertullian, seemed to have more trouble with the fact that soldiers were required to participate in the Emperor cult than with violence itself. Others, like Clement of Alexandria, noted that when soldiers converted to Christianity they did not ask them to change their profession. Still the early church largely made a nonviolent witness and suffered frequent martyrdom.

Those early Christian theologians who made a strong, nonviolent witness, read the Hebrew Scriptures through the lens of Christian faith, took with utter seriousness the prophecies of Micah and Isaiah, asserting that the Messiah had indeed come, and that the time had come to enact their prophecies of beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. They did not interpret the violence in their Scriptures (our Old Testament) as giving them license to kill. Indeed, there is no affirmation of killing or war in the writings of the early Church, nor is there the idea that Christians making war would make the world a better or safer place. Thus we find prohibitions against killing of any sort, some of which even denied the Eucharist to persons who engaged in such acts. The early Christians would not watch killings, either by viewing legal executions or by attending gladiatorial games. In sum, then, while there is some scholarly debate over why the early Christians avoided violence and whether it reflected their marginal social location, and some Christian soldiers' graves from that period have been identified, the general witness is clear.

In the fourth century, the church's relationship to the Roman Empire and to violence changed. The Roman emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312 CE and began promoting the faith instead of persecuting it. By 380 CE, Christianity had become the state religion. During this period, Christians started to take up arms. The change was such that while in 303 CE it was generally forbidden for Christians to serve in the military, by 416 CE only Christians were allowed to serve.

During this period Christian reflection on the wars of the Roman Empire contributed to the creation of the Just War doctrine, which was initially articulated by Bishop Augustine of Hippo based on ideas from Bishop Ambrose of Milan and Cicero. The Just War theory established the ground rules under which a Christian might be understood to be acting morally—out of love and hence sorrowfully—even when killing other human beings. Ronald Stone sees Augustine's motivation to protect civilian populations in a time when the Roman Empire was falling into disorder as contributing to the tradition's emphasis on defensive war and on what is often lost, right intention. "Peace as the harmony among people is the theme of Augustine's great philosophy of history in the *City of God* . . .," and order more than power is what is desired from the Empire or its representatives.²⁵ Later Just War theories, such as that of Thomas Aquinas, are based more on reason and justice concepts such as "natural law" and, for good or ill, can function apart from Christian faith.

Implications of Jesus and Early Christian Nonviolence

It makes a difference whether one sees Jesus as nonviolent or not, but does not automatically imply that our discipleship should or could be the same as his calling, nor that we should seek martyrdom or withdrawal following a model from the earliest centuries of our faith. This is because some see Jesus as laying down an absolute rule and others see him upholding an ideal. To approve the third affirmation is to say that it is important for faithful Christians to wrestle with or discern personally where they stand on nonviolence in relation to Jesus Christ. The witness of the first Christian centuries is important as well, both to help interpret Jesus Christ and illuminate our current context.

The Old Testament is the larger guide to our understanding Jesus and, indeed, to our reading human history. Drawing on hundreds of years of Hebraic experience with God, it develops a moral vision that shaped the Rabbi Jesus and many of the New Testament writers. For the Christians of post-Constantine centuries, the Old Testament's depiction of the exercise of power in families, tribes, nations, and empires lays the foundation for what philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff calls "world-formative Christianity." For Reformed Christians, in fact, his early book, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (1983), has been seen as a counterpoint to John Howard Yoder's, *The Politics of Jesus* (1972), a ground-breaking Mennonite case for the

relevance of a pacifist Jesus and a pacifist church to the world. The difference in focus and scope of argument illustrates the difference in approaches. In Wolterstorff's words:

If the Bible were to be a comprehensive guide for our social activities, it was essential that the Calvinist take the Old Testament seriously. Appeals to the Old Testament in Calvinism have a function similar to appeals to nature in Thomist Catholicism (and in Lutheranism). It is fascinating to observe, in his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, that as Bonhoeffer moves toward world-formative Christianity and away from a formative version of Christianity based on inwardness and religious practices, he also begins to emphasize the importance of the Old Testament. He saw, as did the Calvinists, that the New Testament in isolation gives insufficient guidance for the new praxis.²⁶

With the Old Testament comes the need to interpret the violence attributed to God and that attributed to human beings, and to do that in relation to newer views of Jesus. Those views, as we have seen, show him avoiding violence but not conflict, seeking reconciliation with justice, and resisting evil by yielding to God in such a way that Albert Curry Winn called him the original "reverse fighter."²⁷ The third affirmation proposes new thinking for the church, such as Jerome F.D. Creach's *Violence in Scripture* (2013), which wrestles with the bloodiest texts about conquest, holy war, vengeance, hell, and judgment, and does so in response to portrayals of Jesus like that of Richard Hays' above.²⁸ The challenge for those of us influenced by Christian Realism is not to use the Old Testament only to confirm Reinhold Niebuhr's famous quip, "original sin is the only empirically verifiable doctrine of the Christian faith." This is untrue to the Old Testament, which gives us visions of shalom, rules to restrain evil, and prophets of a new covenant, and unfair to Niebuhr, whose senses of paradox and irony always helped him move "beyond tragedy."²⁹

Much of the traditional Reformed reading of pacifism was that it was impossibly perfectionist and entailed renunciation of power (as in priestly vows) or withdrawal from the world (in monasteries or in sectarian communities like those of the Anabaptists). It may have worked for the early church, so that thinking went, but they were not powerless and on the margins by choice. Jesus' teachings were sometimes considered impossible ideals, or to be a short-term ethic in anticipation of an imminent end of the world. Here we have suggested that better argued interpretations of Jesus' mission and his "reversals of evil" can help renew our peacemaking witness.

At the same time, it is clear that faithful resistance has a force to it, and thus that nonviolence itself can be a form of coercion. Daniel Ott states this explicitly in his argument for "A Realistic, Public, Christian Pacifism," arguing that "A realistic pacifism must be a pragmatic pacifism that acknowledges that even physical coercion may in a few instances be necessary as a result of our 'responsibility to protect.'" Yet for Ott, even in policing, "nonviolent strategies are morally superior ... through the ability of nonviolence to engage in conflict while honoring the moral primacy of human life."³⁰ This is to anticipate the next affirmation and its supporting background rationale.

Two final observations may help us in reclaiming or renewing our understanding of Jesus the Peacemaker. The first has to do with the context for most of the Old Testament and for the early church. That context was empire. The Hebrew people were first enslaved by and then liberated from the Egyptian empire. The nation of Israel was conquered first by the Assyrian empire, and later by the Babylonian empire. Eventually, the Judeans living in exile in Babylon were allowed to return to Jerusalem as a result of the expansion of the Persian Empire. And the entire New Testament takes place in the context of a Roman Empire supported by conquest and slavery. Both John the Baptist, for us the last of the great Hebrew prophets, and Jesus of Nazareth, the One to whom he pointed, called for repentance, proclaiming the Reign of God. They spoke of the Reign of God as an alternative social order based on a rival set of values to those of the Roman Empire. Here is the choice put before the early Christians, imagined in contemporary preaching style:

For all its monumental cultural achievements, the Roman Empire was a system of domination; the Reign of God on the other hand, is a domination-free order. The Roman Empire was based on economic exploitation; the Reign of God is based on economic justice. The Roman Empire was based on violent pride; the Reign of God on nonviolent love. The Roman Empire projected a matrix of iron-fisted control; the Reign of God sings the songs of freedom. The Roman Empire was built on layers of oppression; the Reign of God is founded on the hope of liberation. The Roman Empire's brutality struck fear in its subjects; the Reign of God offers the balm of healing. The Roman Empire promised peace through victory; the Reign of God promises peace through justice.³¹

The fact is, the Roman empire continued in several forms after its "fall," and empire continued as a sometimes aspirational category in Europe even after the Treaty of Westphalia 1648 began to formalize nation-state sovereignty.³² More will be said about "empire" as a tendency or temptation in the final background section.

The second observation has to do with the social and cultural location of the mainline Protestant church today. In comparison with past levels and positions of influence for ecumenical Protestant leaders in the culture, many see a trend toward "marginalization." Another word used is "dis-establishment." Our numbers are smaller, and although many office-holders—including President Obama—are practicing mainline Christians, secularization consigns religious institutions to the private sphere of values. Thus the church's public voice is taken less seriously, and is distinctly unwelcome in some quarters, including much of the academy. This is not to argue that religion or Christianity is without influence in what is still a highly religious country, but it suggests that we are in a pluralistic situation somewhat closer to that of the early Christians.

While our relative minority situation may well be cause for lament and deep concern, it may, paradoxically, free the church from the burden of straddling two worlds and serving two masters. From this standpoint, for centuries the church has spoken in a "Constantinian dialect," that is, speaking both as followers of Jesus Christ grounded in his message and values

and as stewards of the social order caring for the interests of the nation or empire. This is an opportunity—still in service to the common good—to make sure we witness to God’s “uncommon good,” which we see in “the power of nonviolent love” in the Christ story.

The early Christians, if Paul and the Pauline communities can be taken as guides, focused on the distinctive practices and values of their faith first, but with a genuine concern for their larger communities. As interpreted by New Testament professor, Victor Paul Furnish, Paul wanted people “not conformed to this world, but transformed,” yet still to behave “honorably in the sight of all.”³³ The world was passing away—an apocalyptic element is there in Paul’s letters, and Christians are already citizens of a “heavenly commonwealth.” But they are not “transients” or “resident aliens,” not in Paul’s language. The early churches are not concerned about institutions, per se, but they are to discern what is moral in the places they are set and “work for the good of all” (Gal. 6:10) and “live peaceably with all” (Rom 12:18).

The challenge, then, is not to be compromised in maintaining structures that perpetuate violence, as can happen when we imagine more influence than we have. Our call is not to preserve privileges, but in the area of peacemaking, to resist pressures that would make the church a junior partner to nationalism. In fact, the mainline churches have been influential when they have taken prophetic positions. The charge that ecumenical Protestantism is “irrelevant,” in fact, often reflects an effort to weaken its voice when we argue that patriotism does not mean automatic approval of military ventures.

Affirmation #4. Learning from nonviolent struggles and counting the costs of war, we draw upon the traditions of Just War, Christian pacifism, and Just Peacemaking to cultivate moral imagination and discern God’s redemptive work in history.

Along with new insights from Jesus scholarship, Reformed Christian thinking about peacemaking must take into account the series of substantially peaceful transitions that have occurred since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. These include other transitions in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself, a cessation of terrorism alongside the implementation of power sharing in Northern Ireland, the massive demonstrations that led to the end of the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines (after the killing of Benigno Aquino), the still-surprising end of apartheid in South Africa, including the Truth and Reconciliation process, and the initial successes of the Arab Awakening in Tunisia and Egypt, where dictatorships collapsed with great speed. As continuing developments in Egypt underline, in no case does justice or democracy simply fall from heaven. Indeed, one can ask whether the Egyptian people had developed the habits of the heart and thought, as well as the mediating institutions to enable a democracy to succeed. Yet these notable cases are part of a larger picture presented by scholars in which nonviolent regime change is approximately twice as successful as violent government overthrow.

The counter examples of Syria, and weakened or collapsed states such as Somalia, Mali, and parts of Congo, illustrate the combined powers of disorder, sheer repression, climate change impacts (all around the Sahara desert) and cross-border extremism, sometimes funded by neighbors more interested in proxy wars than collective security. Certainly the pictures of tortured bodies and videos of beheadings show the depth of evil and dehumanization. The continued violence in Iraq and Afghanistan reflects, in part, the failure of military intervention to ensure either democratic institutions or equitable development. In Syria, the 2013 decision of the United States and other Western powers to pull back from airstrikes on the regime in exchange for chemical weapons disposal and peace talks was initially claimed as a triumph both for threatening intervention and for multilateral negotiation. Russia’s intervention in 2015, partly to protect the Christian minority in Syria, and the so-called Islamic State’s threat to dictatorships and democracies alike, point to the need for peace negotiations with all nations involved, across ideological and sectarian divides. Such negotiation in relation to Iran’s nuclear program bore fruit in a well-structured agreement in 2015, allowing Iran to participate in efforts for a Syrian peace agreement.³⁴

The point of these illustrations is that international relations are complex and that the churches, to offer credible witness, need to have capacity for analysis as well as passion for peacemaking. In this section we present first emerging nonviolent strategies that are clearly preferable to continued dictatorships protected by short-sighted alliances, commercial interests, and massive weapons sales. We note the contributions made by Just War and Just Peacemaking categories, and their limitations. (See Appendix E for brief listings of Just War, Just Peacemaking and nonviolence principles.) This section concludes with the claim that the church’s capacity to “[nourish] the moral life of the nation” (to quote *The Believers’ Calling*, p. 7) depends on its ability to nurture a moral imagination willing to take risks for peace and envision new relationships.

Nonviolent Direct Action and Nonviolent Ethos

Nonviolent direct action, best known from the work of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., has proven to be an effective means of wielding power in a variety of conflicts. It’s the source behind the earlier examples: the nonviolent “people power” that freed the Philippines; the pro-democracy movements in Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia that ousted communist regimes in 1989; the antiapartheid movement in South Africa, supported by international economic pressure, that brought an end to white minority rule. Lesser known cases are the nonviolent student movement in Serbia that ousted a weakened Slobodan Milosevic in the year 2000 and the peace achieved in Mozambique with the assistance of Roman Catholic mediators.³⁵ Christians participated in these movements for social change, using methods of nonviolent action reminiscent of the civil rights movement that changed the United States.

Nonviolent direct action—the use of protest marches, strikes, boycotts, sit-ins, and more—is a means of wielding power, a technique for waging conflict, just as guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, and terrorism are also means of waging conflict. Nonviolent direct action is distinct from some methods of conflict resolution in that it seeks to surface, escalate, or intensify conflict. It does not require its practitioners to be committed to a philosophy or ethic of nonviolence, so long as they follow the methods and stay united. Indeed, people often choose nonviolent action for pragmatic reasons rather than religious, moral, or ethical ones. In this way, strategic nonviolence counters one argument sometimes made against religious nonviolence or Christian pacifism, that it fosters a non-engagement or withdrawal, a search for uncompromising purity, in the manner of Amish communities, Jehovah’s Witnesses, certain Catholic orders, or some forms of Buddhism or Jainism. Strategic nonviolence may call for withdrawal, but on a scale that can immobilize cities; its witness is not for purity’s sake, but to show how injustice is always unstable.

Nonviolent people power movements have shown themselves capable of overthrowing dictators, thwarting coups d’état, defending against invasions and occupations, challenging unjust systems, promoting human rights, and resisting genocide. A recent study, “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,” by Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, compared the effectiveness of violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns in conflicts between non-state and state actors between 1900 and 2006.³⁶ The study found that “major nonviolent campaigns have achieved success 53 percent of the time, compared with 26 percent for violent resistance campaigns.” Jesus’ third way of nonviolent action may not work in all circumstances, but the historical record shows that its contemporary analogues are a powerful means of engaging in conflict and can be used successfully in struggles for justice, human rights, and self-determination.

The work of nonviolence theorist Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, was widely used as a manual during the Arab Awakening. Widely translated and reprinted, it contains practical guidance for assessing the weak points of repressive governments and building movements, along with a list of 198 nonviolent methods.³⁷ Sharp’s strategy would suggest, for example, that though the Syrian protesters were right to try nonviolent means at first, they had not prepared enough of the population for the regime’s response and the influx of extremists pursuing a proxy war. Though Sharp (himself a minister’s son) stresses the pragmatic applicability of nonviolent strategies to struggles anywhere, we are particularly interested, as Christians, in relating them to our “world-transformative” ethos and motivating hope.

Nonviolence may be thought of as both an end and a means. It is an end insofar as it refers to the future world we long for—a world free from violence and war, free from hunger and poverty, free from injustice and oppression, and full of God’s love, justice, and healing. We may understand it as Jesus’ “kingdom of God” or Martin Luther King Jr.’s “beloved community,” or Walter Wink’s “domination-free order.” Leo Tolstoy’s reading of Jesus in the Gospels influenced Gandhi in finding the *satyagraha* (truthforce) in his religious tradition. Henry David Thoreau’s civil disobedience is an example of nonviolence as an ethic or applied philosophy of life. As an ethic it has often been disparaged as a form of withdrawal or an attempt to escape complicity in life’s power struggles. Certainly parts of the Mennonite tradition reflect that withdrawal, while Quakers often represent deep and tenacious engagement, even with powers they oppose. Yet the paradigmatic Mennonite story of Dirk Willems—escaping imprisonment for his faith, yet turning back to rescue a persecutor from drowning, and then being burnt at the stake—is not about withdrawal. It is about being willing to suffer out of love.³⁸

These alternative visions and actions can contribute to the church’s embodied witness by helping it become a “contrast model” to more violent, hierarchical, or competitive social relations. Nonviolence and pacifism need not be based solely on a personal ethic of imitating Jesus. A nonviolent communal ecclesiology can involve clear beliefs about every member sharing in the gifts of the Spirit which include peace. This grounds peaceful resistance to evil both in God’s interaction within individual human conscience and within dedicated, worshiping communities. Personal and collective forms of nonviolent action are described later in the report under the heading of “things that make for peace,” but they are ideally rooted in the life of the church.

Thus we wonder and ask the church to wonder with us: What would it look like if the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reoriented more of its common life around the Prince of Peace and re-emphasized the nonviolent example of his life and witness in our preaching and teaching, our spiritual formation and worship, and our public witness in our violent world?

Many Presbyterians have rarely given serious attention and reflection to questions of violence and nonviolence, war and peace. They have not heard these subjects addressed in sermons, nor have they talked about them in Christian education classes. We heard from many participants that the Peace Discernment process was their first introduction to the ideas of Christian nonviolence, and Presbyterian Panel survey data bear that out. At the same time, many were also unfamiliar with the actual content of the Just War and Just Peacemaking approaches. As a denomination, we need to do a much better job of teaching peace to people in the pews.

Just War Principles and Just Peacemaking Initiatives

These background sections have mentioned the just war tradition at various points, starting with the quote from Chaplain Kermit Johnson, who applied its categories of ethical decision to nuclear war. He concluded that even various “tactical” nuclear war scenarios could not be justified.³⁹ In light of Augustine’s insistence on right intention, Ronald Stone argued that the threat of “mutually assured destruction” could not be justified, even though the Roman Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter,

“The Challenge of Peace,” accepted deterrence conditionally, saying it was not “adequate as a long term basis for peace.” That was in 1983. The General Assembly’s opposition to nuclear war in *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age* (1988) is also based partly on Just War criteria, as was its stand on the Iraq war (2004). The clear implication of the church’s stand against the Iraq “war of choice” is to rule out the purported doctrine of pre-emptive war practiced by the second Bush administration in the absence of a real or imminent threat. Indeed, if the discernment discussions revealed any consensus on a specific policy, it was to oppose preemptive war.

The Just War tradition is intended to serve as a constraint on the use of military force—to minimize the violence used in achieving a particular objective. All five criteria must be satisfied if military action (*jus ad bello*) is to be considered morally justifiable: just cause, right intention, proper authority, last resort, reasonable hope of success. Once a nation has committed to military action, that conduct (*jus in bello*) must adhere to two additional criteria—proportionality and discrimination (avoiding noncombatants).

Though we have seen the utility of Just War criteria as a means of assessment, their flexibility is often exploited by those seeking war or defending the necessity of certain war practices. Critics question the practical value of Just War criteria if they do not give clear direction to decision makers about which course of action is more moral. Some in the Christian Realist camp challenge the “natural law” bases of Just War (such as the right to self-defense) and doubt that war can ever be a rational or fully rule-governed activity.

A case in point: World War II, the so-called “Good War,” is widely considered to have been a “just war.” However, it did not meet all of the criteria of a just war. U.S. involvement in the war was certainly prompted by just causes—responding to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and countering the aggression of Nazi Germany in Europe. But the conduct of the war devolved into “total war” with both sides bombing cities indiscriminately, killing hundreds of thousands of noncombatants, culminating in the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in pursuit of unconditional surrender and possibly to signal Russia. The 158th General Assembly (1946) responded: “Christians know that war is evil. The use of the atomic bomb means that war reaches a degree of destruction which multiplies this evil beyond human concept.” The assembly went on to call for “... immediate cessation of the manufacture of atomic bombs.”⁴⁰

Despite the elasticity of just war criteria, as long as U.S. military actions are presented as morally justifiable based on those criteria (whether or not there is a declaration of war), it is important that Presbyterians be well-versed in this tradition so that they can participate intelligently in the public debate and not be deceived by national leaders bent on using military force. The 1988 *Christian Obedience in a Nuclear Age* statement recognized that most acceptance of war is based not on Just War thinking, but on unthinking obedience to the state and political forces; hence various means of resistance were seen as consistent with Reformed teaching.

The most important approach to the Just War tradition that has evolved in post-World War II ethical thinking is to emphasize how the presupposition or grounded preference for nonviolence can orient the Just War criteria. This understanding is augmented in the Just Peacemaking preventive measures that build on the principle that war is a last resort. Resort to violence in war, as many in the military know as well as civilian victims, is inevitably tragic and frequently means suspending moral criteria in the name of survival. Christopher Hedges, a former war correspondent, has also illuminated the virtually addictive thrill of combat violence.⁴¹ This is far from the right intention enjoined by Just War proponents.

The ten Just Peacemaking practices were put together by an ecumenical team of ethicists coordinated by Professor Glen Stassen of Fuller Theological Seminary.⁴² Based on many lessons from peacemaking involvements and perceived limits of Just War thinking, these practices focus most on how conflicts can be avoided—not least by taking what are called independent initiatives to reduce tensions and thus avoid overt hostilities. (See Appendix G for examples of methods used to reduce violence.) An interfaith application of the principles has been published as well.⁴³ The Just Peacemaking practices do not presume a pacifist basis, and hence are not an alternative to Just War principles, even though they seek to “abolish war.” They underline how much war often results from specific failures of leadership and diplomacy, and from predictable weaknesses of international institutions. Just Peacemaking criteria suggest that international institutions like the United Nations lose legitimacy when any single superpower can frustrate moral consensus, though getting Security Council members to give up their vetoes may seem utopian. The concern for human rights that is part of Just Peacemaking also shows how the international justice system is kept weak, partly by a United States that refuses jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and stands outside of basic treaties, and partly by low membership standards for nations that abuse their citizens.

Just Peacemaking, like active nonviolence, thus illuminates how much the Just War approach is tied to nation states and their sovereignty. Citizenship in nation states is a basis for grounding much of human rights law, but human rights law also points beyond and within states, which typically resent interference. A searching critique of the Just Peacemaking construct by one of its ethicist participants points both to its antecedents in the “Six Pillars of Peace” of the Federal Council of Churches and the limitations of putting too much weight on alternatives to national policies: “Until just peacemaking incorporates more attention to power, national definitions of purpose, diplomacy, and biblical realism derived from the prophets, it will remain too idealistic.”⁴⁴

What Just Peacemaking does well is to introduce a whole new body of practical measures for conflict resolution and reconciliation forged in some very difficult circumstances, often with strong Christian inspiration. We look more at “the things that make for peace” in the next section, but they include things like Just Peacemaking practice 4: “Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.” This partly reflects Donald W. Shriver’s *An Ethic for Enemies* (1995), which applied forgiveness in political and social situations. Among the groups explicitly focusing on forgiveness are Fr. Leonel Narvaez’s Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America, seeking to help heal the effects of “dirty wars,” and the work of Donna Hicks on ways to restore dignity to victims of violence and humiliation.⁴⁵

What the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other U.S. Christian bodies have not done fully or effectively is to provide a moral analysis of certain major developments in war-making. These would include what is close to the abdication by Congress of its power to declare war; the movement of many combat functions to private contractors and voluntary enlistees which has the effect of making it more and more a profitmaking enterprise (often financed by borrowed money); and the development of incredibly sophisticated weaponry in robotics, nanotechnology, drones, and more. (The 221st General Assembly (2014) resolution, “Drones, War, and Surveillance,” addresses some of this.)

The Church and the Military

As long as Presbyterians continue to serve in the U.S. military, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a responsibility to care for active duty soldiers, veterans, and their families. Our denomination does this by providing chaplains to the military through the Presbyterians Caring for Chaplains and Military Personnel (PCCMP). An influential essay by a current chaplain, Captain Mel Baars, discusses her ministry in Afghanistan as of September 11, 2012: The mission of these ministers is “to provide military personnel with a visible reminder of the HOLY in the midst of combat and chaos.”⁴⁶ Chaplains serve as noncombatants; they are prohibited from carrying firearms. They offer worship, prayer, and Bible study, and spend much of their time providing pastoral care and counseling to the soldiers in their units. Chaplains also may serve as a moral voice on the battlefield, where life and death decisions are being made on a daily basis. Chaplains are often the only ones in the chain of command who can hear and hold the terror of young soldiers facing death, and hear and hold the remorse in taking the life of another human being. Chaplains themselves carry a large burden in being present in war as enemies also made in the image of God are objectified and killing becomes routinized. This last task is especially critical given the decades-long decline in mainline participation in the military chaplaincy, especially since many who have been drawn to military chaplaincy have been influenced by syncretistic theologies that combine God and American exceptionalism. Indeed, military training is designed to break down the innate reluctance to take the lives of our fellow human beings, to make killing, even under limited circumstances, normative, and necessary. Furthermore, war doesn’t end when the deployment is over; its lingering effects continue long after veterans return home.

Our congregations also have a role to play in supporting military families while their loved ones are deployed overseas and after they return home. Multiple deployments put enormous stress on soldiers and on the spouses and children they leave behind. Even when soldiers return physically unscathed, parts of the soul can remain on the battlefield. This can mean depression, suicidal thoughts, post-traumatic stress disorder, sometimes augmented by serious doubts or lack of support for the wars. Veterans need the love and care of congregations who will welcome them home and listen to them with wisdom. The Church has a special responsibility to help heal the moral and spiritual wounds of its sons and daughters who have been scarred by war. For instance, in the Greek Orthodox tradition there is a ritual cleansing from the spiritual defilement of violence. A new approach to the “moral injury” of war has been pioneered by Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, working with retired Army Chaplain Herman Keizer.⁴⁷

The PC(USA) also has a responsibility to our youth and young adults to help them examine their own consciences and to work through the ethical arguments for serving in the military versus declaring oneself a conscientious objector to war. Young people are presented with these important decisions early in their lives. We fail them if we do not equip them to make these decisions faithfully and wisely. The 1969 General Assembly report on *War, Peace, & Conscience* is still relevant here, even though there is no current military conscription. The major report *Ministry to Persons in the Armed Forces*, adopted by the General Assembly in 1975, contains valuable analysis of both chaplaincy work and short-term programs like the Emergency Ministry on Conscience and War of the late 1960s.⁴⁸

Inviting in the Moral Imagination

In our peace discernment process, we were inspired by the writings and the grassroots peacemaking work of John Paul Lederach, a Mennonite veteran of “peace-building” who has mediated conflicts for the last thirty years. Others, like Andrea Bartoli in the Roman Catholic tradition, and the emerging “forgiveness school,” also introduce imagination in cultivated ways. Lederach identifies the moral imagination as the capacity to imagine and design processes within the real-life challenges of violence without being caught up in destructive patterns. Lederach maintains:

If we are to survive as a global community, we must understand the imperative nature of giving birth and space to the moral imagination in human affairs. We must face the fact that much of our current system for responding to deadly local and international conflict is incapable of overcoming cycles of violent patterns because our imagination has been corralled and shackled by the very parameters and sources that create and perpetuate violence.⁴⁹

The moral imagination is activated when “politics as usual” fails to deliver. The moral imagination requires the capacity to risk a new world. This risk is embedded in three related capacities: to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships in which all parties are knit together, to embrace the complexity of every conflict, and to act creatively, especially given the risks it takes to imagine peace. Peace-building requires that people be able to envision their interconnectedness and mutuality. Daniel Ott, in his adaptation of Christian Realism, emphasizes how peacemakers must see that real change is possible and not be stuck in fatalism or determinism. Without the inner strength of hope, Christians would not have led in the struggles to abolish slavery, honor women’s equality, pay workers fairly, protect the rights of children, or fight global warming today.

Moral imagination also involves the capacity to rise above polarities of “us and them” and divisions of “with us or against us” and reach beyond accepted meanings. “Paradoxical curiosity” is the gift of respecting complexity, searching beyond the visible and discovering unexpected potential. To risk is to step into the unknown without guarantee of success or safety. For many people caught in conflict, violence is known, and peace is a mystery. Because peace-building typically requires people to move toward a new, mysterious, and unexpected future, it is a difficult journey. And yet, Christ clearly calls us to join him in risking peace and transforming conflicts by boldly practicing the things that make for peace.

Affirmation #5: We commit ourselves to practice the things that make for peace in our daily lives, families, and communities, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to take part in social movements for a domination-free order.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to seek first the kingdom of God. Peacemaking is part of our seeking that reign or commonwealth where God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Until that day, prophetic discipleship involves risk, and we hope this affirmation is faithful to the risk involved. This section begins with our Christian vision of “things that make for peace,” then outlines the scale of those “practices of empire,” and concludes with ideas for scaling up our peace practices.

This affirmation does not seek to put our country’s national security at risk, but to enable the Church to challenge the way our nation has extended its understanding of national security into all its relations with the rest of the world. More than fifteen years of wars (since the relative peace of the 1990s), there has been a regression from real leadership in creating world order. Between the reptilian social brain of empire thinking and idea of a “domination-free” order modeled on the kingdom, there is a distance that communities of faith must help our country navigate. When fears of the Other are stoked, when national glory is seen primarily in power, when terrorism is magnified, when presidential candidates compete in threatening war crimes, then the church (like the prophets) must call the nation-state “back,” in our case to liberty and justice for all, and hopes that America would be an exception to old world *machtspolitik* (power politics). Even though the church itself will never become that “domination-free order,” that remains our vision for measuring all the orders in which we live.

To practice the things that make for peace first in our daily lives is, for most of us, a matter of love, consideration, and respect for others and the laws that keep our communities peaceful. We count on the disciplines of faith: prayer, worship, and self-awareness in relation to Christ’s Spirit present with us. There are disciplines of personal and communal life that we learn above all in the church, from not letting the sun go down on our anger to understanding that we all have different gifts to use for the common good. All of us at times argue and face conflicts, with violence is a very distant last resort, yet our previous affirmations propose a consistency between the character of our families and communities and the nature of our citizenship and international relations. Certainly when we recognize complicity and structural violence, we recognize that nations do not behave as individuals, and that we are beneficiaries of past inequality and continuing privilege. Yet one of our deepest hopes is peace, with justice, and our dispositions and our disciplines can be much strengthened in this direction.

Our confirmation and adult education classes can teach forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution as practical strategies, and our public witness can look more wisely and critically at the national interests we are called to fund or defend. To support this recommendation is not only to seek to be nonviolent in our own lives, but to seek to reorient our society away from the lure of empire and its structures of domination toward the promotion of a sustainable global community in which basic human needs are met and security assured. That goal is not utopian; in environmental terms, it may be beyond time to end the waste of war.

It is clear, after more than fourteen years of war, that a majority of Presbyterians are deeply concerned about the enormous human and economic costs of war—the hundreds of thousands killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the millions of people displaced by the violence, the thousands of U.S. soldiers killed or injured, the trillions of dollars spent, and the damage done to our economy. This report has noted that a majority of Presbyterians are also deeply worried about the pervasive violence in U.S. culture—in gun violence, sports, entertainment, and in our tolerance for hunger, poverty, abuse, and neglect. Just as we seek to be just and loving in our own lives and in our congregations, so as Reformed Christians we believe the church is called to invite the nations of the world into new understandings of how to respond to violence in our time. To many, the church is called by the scriptures to be a counter-cultural community, as it was in its first three centuries of growth, pointing the world to God’s coming reign in Jesus Christ. The times cry out for the church to bring forward the Spirit’s healing and transformational gifts in new ways.

In this section we look at the concept of empire, opposed by some in the presbyteries that responded to an earlier version of this affirmation.⁵⁰ We understand that definitions of empire differ, that the U.S. is not the only empire, and that empires

come in several kinds. For some, empire is another word for “hegemon.” For others empire is a pejorative term for “Babylon” which in Revelation bears “the mark of the beast,” that is the stain of evil. It names the misuse of power, the use of other people and nations for our benefit more than theirs. Others, such as John Ikenberry, maintain that America does not generally relate to the world as an empire (that is, a sole power with client states), but when it does (as in the recent Iraq war) and it acts outside of international institutions, it loses moral legitimacy. For still others, empire is not a pejorative term. This is because humans require some system of international order or the world will devolve into a global failed state. Rather than immediately considering empires are evil, they believe empires should be judged by their approximation of Christian and human values. Consider the Roman Empire, for example. For all its faults, after the Roman Empire fell literacy virtually disappeared and it would be another 1,000 years before one could freely travel from Great Britain to Egypt.

In this affirmation, we use empire to address the purposes of power and the differences between national or homeland security and human security (both safety and sustainability of life provided through cooperative action to meet human needs). We propose that our peacemaking calling means helping our nation change its orientation to the world, from superpower to something less grandiose. No one sees the U.S. losing its military preeminence any time soon or can yet articulate a realistic alternative ordering of international security, but true national strength would have our country be “number one” again in some other measures of national achievement than military strength.

Thus this affirmation lifts up a vision of God’s Reign of justice and peace as an alternative to power relations predicated *primarily* on force. The United States does not stand above the inevitable competition among nations seeking their own interests. China, Russia, and other major powers maintain empires through trade, alliances, and force. Ethnically different sections of some countries may be controlled by majorities and even internally colonized. Our role remains dominant, however, despite the tragedies of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the interests for which we sustain our massive military presence around the world remain largely unquestioned. On one level, it is honest patriotism to challenge U.S. foreign and military policies that seek to dominate the rest of the world in order to maintain our “American Way of Life” at the expense of others. But it is also a matter of Christian discipleship to minister to those who are dominated by any power, and this requires us always to be clear who “we” are: Christians and citizens who do not confuse the cross with the flag.

Colonialism, Empire, and Post-Colonial Empire

The early church stood largely in opposition to the Roman Empire, though they could also be grateful for the way Roman roads and free travel allowed evangelists to carry to the gospel to distant locales. But then, beginning in the fourth century, the church and Roman Empire arguably began a long symbiotic relationship.

The Peace of Westphalia, which followed the repeated breakup of would-be successors to the Roman Empire, created a system of nation states that recognized one another’s sovereignty. These European states later expanded into global empires and colonized other lands. They often did this with the blessing of the Church. Explorers and conquistadors conquered lands and peoples with Christian missionaries in their wake. This was true of the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the French, with some variation for the reconfigured Protestant monarchies of the British and the Dutch, shown in the range of New World settlements starting in the sixteenth century. Elsewhere in the world, powerful nations, such as the Ottomans, exercised their power to control the land and resources of others in a variety of ways, often settling regions, dispossessing native inhabitants, imposing new languages, cultures, and religions. Following the disruptions of World Wars I and II, newly independent colonies sought to join the Westphalian community of nations as instituted in the United Nations. Even after independence, though, many nations maintained relationships of dependency with the former colonizers.

In the case of the United States, original hopes of being a New Israel took new forms on the frontier, and manifest destiny led to wars of conquest, however rationalized. Following World War II, the United States led the way in creating numerous international institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, the World Bank, and the Bretton Woods Agreement. These institutions were to follow the rule of international law and enhance human rights. The high ideals of these institutions were soon overtaken by a Cold War that pitted the forces of global communism against the free world under the leadership of the United States. In this bipolar world, the U.S. dominated countries indirectly by supporting military dictators, such as Marcos in the Philippines, the Somozas in Nicaragua, and the Shah in Iran. We extended our influence and leverage by providing governments with military and economic aid. With military equipment came training and enduring relationships with foreign militaries, whatever their human rights records. Where there has been resistance to U.S. hegemony—whether it be the Cuban Revolution, or the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, the Iranian Revolution in some respects—the U.S. has reacted with military and economic force.

The collapse of the bipolar world created by the Cold War, left a unipolar world with America possessing the strongest military and largest economy, unchallenged anywhere in the world. Shortly after the collapse of communism, America, working on concert with NATO, helped to bring peace to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Then, working apart from international institutions, in violation of international law, and ignoring the counsel of many allies, America invaded Iraq, a move that greatly undercut America’s moral legitimacy even among those who supported us. Although we have recently faced limits in the projection of American power, not only by our inability to influence the direction of countries we invaded, but by the rise of regional powers (China, Russia, or the region-wide influence of Islamic extremism, as in the so-called, Islamic State) that challenge America’s position as the sole global hegemon, it is fair to say that Pax Romana has become Pax Americana.

Difficult as it may be for Christians living in the U.S. today, it is incumbent upon us to recognize that we live in what many consider the heart of empire (in the pejorative sense). Even in our own faith community, the World Communion of Reformed Churches issued a declaration containing a careful definition of empire that challenges us, even if it is also subject to debate. The Accra Assembly (2004) said: “In using the term ‘empire’ we mean the coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power that constitutes a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their own interests.”⁵¹ The Accra declaration (often called, Confession) criticized the unregulated or “neoliberal” market system in ways that were prophetic in light of the credit crash of 2008, but its larger claim was that economic globalization was strengthening inequality among and within nations, to the benefit of those at the top of a hegemonic order. We may not think easily about “hegemony,” but that’s part of the point. As Americans, we don’t think twice about the U.S. maintaining approximately 750 overseas military bases in 130 countries. But imagine some other country wanting to operate a military base on U.S. soil!

Given the freedom and prosperity most Presbyterians experience inside the U.S., we don’t often challenge the status quo. If we raise our voices in opposition to U.S. Empire, we may not speak very loudly. But like Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Hebrew prophets before them, the Church today has a prophetic calling. As the Body of Christ, the Church continues the work of Christ in the world. We have a responsibility to speak truth to power, to challenge the status quo, to be a voice of conscience to our nation and to the world.

Aspects of “Empire” in U.S. Policy Today

Three crucial statements of U.S. foreign and military policy have been made since 1980: the Carter Doctrine, the Powell Doctrine, and the Bush Doctrine. The Carter Doctrine says that the U.S. government reserves the right to use military power to guarantee access to Middle East oil. The Powell Doctrine expressed the U.S. aspiration to “full spectrum dominance,” that is, the ability of the U.S. military to bring dominating military force to bear on any situation anywhere on the planet. The Bush Doctrine of “preventive war” claims that the U.S. government has the right to “defend” itself against putative or imagined threats by striking adversaries preemptively. All three of these foreign policy strategies rely on a military role and can be termed “militarism,” though the Obama administration has criticized the Bush doctrine and not stated a doctrine for its own increasing reliance on drones and special operations forces.

It is important for us to recognize how far these developments depart from the Constitution’s opposition to a standing army and from historical practice where the size of the U.S. military corresponded to the immediate threat or task to which it was directed. After the end of the Cold War, the size and capability of our military has taken on a life of its own, independent of any specific threats. Americans had grown to see it as their right and responsibility to police the world, and powerful interests benefited. Then the terror attack of 9/11 occurred, prompting a virtual doubling of military and surveillance expenditure even independent of the two wars, which were funded by debt.

Today our nation’s ability to project armed force beyond our borders is second to none. We have the best-trained and equipped armed forces in the world, and we spend more on our military than do the countries with the next ten highest military budgets combined. The United States is by far the largest arms dealer in the world. U.S. foreign military sales surged in 2014 to a record high of \$36.2 billion, accounting for more than 50 percent of the global arms market.⁵² The U.S. military budget is larger than all other federal programs except Social Security. The U.S. retains a web of military bases around the world from which to project force, carry on surveillance, and protect oil and other resources. U.S. military intervention had become relatively normal since the end of the Cold War—in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Persian Gulf, and then Afghanistan and Iraq II opened new horizons, including Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, and various military assistance operations in the western hemisphere. Hardly a year or two has passed without a significant military action. Living in a state of war has become the rule rather than the exception.⁵³

National Security has become the overarching interest with which the United States approaches the world. Since “the war on terror” began, covert operations, surveillance, and drone missiles have taken on a central role. The growth in the U.S. intelligence community has been staggering. According to a July 2011 series in *The Washington Post*, some 1,271 government organizations and 1,931 private companies then worked on programs related to counterterrorism, homeland security, and intelligence, with an estimated 854,000 people holding top-secret security clearances. The threat of terror is not to be dismissed, but that label may conceal the way that globalization creates cross-border networks of grievance and covert operations kept secret to us (such as providing arms, training, surveillance data) that de-stabilize traditional societies.⁵⁴

Perhaps more importantly, the entire spectrum of our nation’s engagement with the world is becoming more militarized. U.S. military forces are increasingly being used to do things that have not usually been considered part of their job—things like nation building, which had been handled by international diplomacy and the State Department. The extent to which our nation’s priorities have been skewed toward the military is illustrated by the resources we invest in it compared to what we spend on diplomacy and development. The base funding of the Department of Defense is more than ten times that of the State Department and USAID. Rather than a once hoped for “peace dividend,” our military planning is still guided by the goal of “full spectrum dominance” and remains predicated on maintaining overwhelming superiority.

There are voices for change within the military itself. One of the more comprehensive comes from Captain Wayne Porter, USN, and Colonel Mark Mykleby, USMC, whose proposal for a new “National Strategic Narrative” was endorsed and summarized by Anne-Marie Slaughter, a professor of international affairs and briefly director of Policy Planning in the State Department. Their proposal is for five shifts in approach:

1. from a dominant position of control to credible influence in a more open geopolitical system;
2. from “containment to sustainment,” based on domestic redevelopment and better modeling of the behavior we seek in other nations;
3. from “deterrence and defense to civilian engagement and competition,” which would reemphasize trade and diplomacy, while still modernizing “a security complex that includes all domestic and foreign policy assets”;
4. from “zero sum to positive sum global politics/economics,” preferring interdependence and universal values to isolation and exclusion of other nations;
5. from “national security to national prosperity and security,” a shift that would involve a new National Prosperity and Security Act to replace the 1947 National Security Act.

In Slaughter’s summary, she sees the officers adjusting the balance between exceptionalism and universalism toward the latter value, still seeking to be “leader of the free world,” but in a healthier and less military way.⁵⁵

Economic Drivers or National Purposes

resident Eisenhower’s prophetic warning about the unwarranted influence of the military-industrial complex from 1961 has become more relevant than ever.⁵⁶ More accurately called the military-industrial-congressional complex, or “the iron triangle,” it is an interlocking system of mutually reinforcing interests with very little outside oversight. Supported by “political engineering” that distributes military contracts across many congressional districts, the complex creates and sustains its own bureaucratic momentum. The question is simply: How much are private interests dictating national interests, and have we come to confuse such interests with national purposes? Nonviolence seeks to put a moral bottom line under foreign policy, while peacemaking works more broadly to see that our purposes remain larger than our interests.⁵⁷

The United States’ vast military and intelligence establishments go far beyond the intent or imagination of our nation’s founders, whose views could loosely be called isolationist, opposed to ‘foreign entanglements’ in John Adams’s words. George Washington himself counseled against a significant standing army: “Overgrown military establishments are under any form of government inauspicious to liberty, and are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican liberty” (Farewell Address, September 17, 1796). And James Madison wrote: “Of all enemies to public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few.”

By contrasting the practices of empire with “the highest ideals of our heritage,” we affirm that our country should have a significant role in the world and one of benefit to all. It is a key role of the church to help inspire our culture to see new possibilities, and it is not isolationist to be opposed to much military intervention. At times the use of power is justified and may serve those high ideals of democracy and world community; the dangers are that the momentum of our enormous arsenal calls to be used, and that this mindset may confuse power and responsibility. Finally, following John Ikenberry, we note that when America goes on foreign adventures, as we did in Iraq, working outside of international institutions and in violation of international law, which we helped create following World War II, we severely damage our moral legitimacy.⁵⁸ While some American nationalists would consider working through international institutions unrealistic and constraining, we call people to a deeper realism that recognizes the importance of moral legitimacy to international leadership. This lawful, cooperative and moral approach has characterized the “highest ideals of our heritage.”

Challenges in Pulling the United States Back from “Empire” Practices

Professor Andrew Bacevich, a career military officer now a professor of political science and incisive commentator on American military policy, analyzes a phenomenon he terms “Washington rules.”⁵⁹ These rules consist of the “American credo,” which is the assumption that the United States is “exceptional” or “indispensable”—that it alone has the duty and the calling to “lead, save, liberate, and ultimately transform the world.” Complementing the belief in American exceptionalism is a consensus across the spectrum of the American political elite regardless of political party. This consensus insists that international peace and order require the U.S. to project military power anywhere across the globe and that the U.S. follow a policy of global interventionism. The twin pillars of “Washington rules”—American exceptionalism and the global police role—have a stranglehold on American foreign and military policy, according to Bacevich. Voices that question this consensus, as the church has done on numerous occasions, are regarded as outliers, too radical, or naïve and unrealistic. The result is a self-reinforcing system of decision-making that discounts the calls for moral restraint or efforts to see the other nation’s point of view.

Therefore, the church must be realistic about the nature of its influence. In light of the “Iron Triangle” noted above, three main factors influence military spending: (1) Powerful, multinational corporations have a vested interest in perpetuating the machinery of war and seeing it as a necessity. Weapons must be used and new orders placed for profits to be maintained over time. (2) Political careers must be continued and economic benefits from the military-industrial complex deliver the goods to constituencies back home, even if other forms of public investment would create more jobs. (3) The dramatic rise in the power of the Pentagon and the massive “defense” establishment over the past seventy years has created a huge and dominant sector of government with ever-increasing demands. These three extremely powerful factors in the decision-making process regarding war form a political “microclimate” largely impervious to outside influence. In fact, the phrase “microclimate” is deceptive, for it is an enormous part of our country’s life, too often underestimated by churches and other reforming groups.

The Reformed tradition has long affirmed that the state can indeed be an instrument of God’s purposes in history (Rom. 13). But it is also true that the Word of God warns us that the state can also be an instrument of the Beast (Rev. 13). These texts pose the basic question of whether the United States functions more as an empire pursuing its own interests than as a faithful instrument of God’s will. In these historical circumstances, nonviolence represents a counter-logic, a sharper contrast, and a counterweight to the machinery of permanent war and seemingly perpetual cycles of violence. The Reformed tradition makes careful provision for responsible resistance to government overreach, based on its covenantal vision of national purposes, and this more constructive vision is the core of the alternatives to misused power that the church seeks to present. That covenantal vision, in fact, was expressed in Puritan John Winthrop’s first use of Jesus’s metaphor of a “city set on a hill” for the new settlement they were building. Nowadays we are clearer than Winthrop was that human rights and respect for international law are essential building blocks in any such construction, but he was clear enough that for the community to last “we must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities for the supply of others’ necessities.”⁶⁰

The Things that Make for Peace

We Presbyterians are looking for direction and guidance about how we, as individuals and congregations, can take faithful and effective action to reduce violence and war, to further justice and peace. In this vein, there is broad interest in learning concrete peacemaking skills that we can use in our daily lives. Indeed, if we are to be effective peacemakers, able to actually reduce violence and injustice in our various contexts, we need to receive education and training in the “things that make for peace.” We need to study and practice nonviolent means of conflict resolution (such as nonviolent communication, negotiation, and mediation) and nonviolent methods for social change (such as faith-based community organizing and nonviolent direct action) to help bring about a more just and peaceful world. (See Appendix G for brief descriptions of these approaches.) We also need to become more familiar with just peacemaking initiatives, which can help prevent war, and just war principles, which are intended to limit war, so that we can be more effective advocates for justice and peace in the public square. Jesus’ own statement, “would that you knew this day the things that make for peace,” was addressed to the whole of Jerusalem, and was followed shortly by his “cleansing of the Temple” (Lk. 19:42–46).⁶¹

Interfaith Understanding

Among the most important peacemaking approaches for Christians today are practices of interreligious understanding that build mutual respect and the ability to hear what is most important to the other, without vetoes or mischaracterization. Religions are often blamed for being the cause of conflict and violence in the world. Religious identity is impossible to separate from other dimensions of personal identity, yet those who blame religion isolate it as the primary causal factor. In reality, political, ethnic, and economic factors bear much more responsibility for creating the underlying conditions that lead to violent conflict. Nonetheless, religions have within them a storehouse of resources to promote peace and reconciliation, and Presbyterians should be quite familiar with the Christian basics, starting with the Golden Rule, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk. 6:31), which is found in some form in all of the world’s major religions. In many cases cited in *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, edited by David Little, public dialogue between religious leaders from opposing groups can help create breakthroughs for reconciliation.⁶² Prophetic religious leaders are often among the few social actors who can and will take initiative in blocked situations.

Little also sees religious peacemakers playing four key roles: in “enforcement, peacekeeping, institution-and-capacity building, and agreement-making.”⁶³ The work is less in the first area, which can involve coercion to end violence (as in Bosnia and Kosovo), and the second, which can be diplomatic language for outside military monitoring or stabilization forces. The third and fourth roles, however, are sometimes considered part of a “Track Two” or unofficial citizen diplomacy. They frequently involve religious peacemakers in developing organizations and even rituals for social harmony and thus creating positive contexts for Track One, or formal peace negotiations. Such efforts built empathic understanding in South Sudan and Northern Ireland, for example, although the relationships built can remain fragile.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

Under the fourth affirmation we noted ways that public forgiveness and apology were included within the Just Peacemaking framework. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are also ways of bringing perpetrators to acknowledge, if not actually confess, the truth of their actions before their victims or the survivors of their victims. The Reverend Allan Boesak, a leader of the nonviolent United Democratic Front that played a major role in South Africa’s transition, has

analyzed ambiguities in the quasi-judicial reconciliation commission approach. There is a danger that a collective evil, like apartheid, be reduced to the actions of individuals who are then blamed on behalf of a larger group that wants to “move on” and minimize shared complicity. Yet Boesak also affirms that victims can regain their voices and dignity through publicly recognized and respected grief.⁶⁴ Naturally, the work of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions must follow the actual achievement of ceasefires. The presence of outside observers (like a Jimmy Carter) and religious leaders (like a Desmond Tutu) can be extremely helpful. The key thing, though, is that such commissions are moral inventions and they can lead to more healing and more creativity. We need more arenas where longer term hostilities can be defused, young people inspired, and new leaders born. Could we even address structural violence this way, and recognize more veterans of social conflict who carry moral injuries?

Accompaniment and Nonviolent Third-Party Intervention

Nonviolent direct action is usually engaged in by the “weaker” party in a conflict. In the past few decades, however, there has been growing experience with third parties, who are not part of a conflict, intervening nonviolently in the hopes of deterring violent attacks and human rights violations. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has played a part in this through its support for Witness for Peace, a body that brought accompaniers to Nicaragua during the Contra War against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua, from 1983 to 1988. Since 2005, the Colombia Accompaniment Program, started by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship with support from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, has brought more than ninety trained accompaniers to stand in solidarity with the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia whose leaders had been killed and members intimidated for resisting land grabs by the powerful. The World Council of Churches has cosponsored an accompaniment program in Palestine to protect Palestinian school children and others from settler and Israeli army violence. The goal in such efforts is “to see and be seen.” At a less-intense level, court watchers and election monitors do variants of this work.

Teaching Peace in the Church

The more personal dimensions and disciplines of active nonviolence and peacemaking are already being practiced in many churches where strangers are welcomed, prisoners are visited, veterans brought in, and perhaps “international peacemakers” hosted and interfaith dialogues sponsored. Some mission trips also seek to cross once-hostile boundaries, or to help build new friendships. Suspicion of “the Russians” still exists, racism still poisons our cities, Islamophobia is manipulated to prevent empathic understanding: all are addressed in some congregations. Some also teach children nonviolence and ways to prevent bullying, and increasing numbers are speaking up about the constant menace of gun violence. We believe these life-giving practices are of God and offer life to the church and witness to the world.

Peacemaking is a faith commitment; it is a calling rather than a conclusion. It constitutes the lens by which reality is brought into focus. It is the value system by which the meaning and significance of threats are determined. With humility, we recognize that just as the nationalistic exceptionalism of empire distorts, so a concern for universal human rights may not be the full key to the healing of the nations. If the U.S. were to reduce its footprint, would benign forces take the place of our military? Would the churches push for constructive multilateral ways to fill power vacuums and help create order through collective security—or are we simply weary of war? We have spoken of citizen diplomacy; could we see ourselves assisting others with citizen-based defense? At the core of all these risks in seeking peace is the choice to resist violence, and it is not just a personal choice.

The word “making,” in peacemaking, is *poesis* in Greek. The Gospel of Peace is Christ, who is our peace, who gives to us ministries of reconciliation, who makes us ambassadors of God’s commonwealth and reign. But perhaps God also calls us to be poets of peace, composers, crafters, creators, hearers and doers of peace.⁶⁵ We end with three true stories.

Three Examples of Risking Peace

- The French village of Le Chambon risked peace in sheltering 5,000 Jews fleeing the Nazis during World War II. The driving force behind the rescue effort was Andre Trocme, the Huguenot (French Reformed) pastor of the village. Deeply committed to Christian nonviolence, on Sunday mornings he would preach the Sermon on the Mount, love of God and love of neighbor, reverence for life, and the necessity of resisting evil with good. The people of Le Chambon hid Jews in their homes and farmhouses and arranged for them to reach the safe haven of neutral Switzerland. In doing so, they risked their lives. Occasionally, the Gestapo raided the town. Leaders were arrested and imprisoned, and some were later killed. But despite the repression, the resistance in Le Chambon continued to the end of the war.

In the last months of German occupation, the Tartar Legion commanded by SS Colonel Metzger was poised to destroy the village and its inhabitants. But a second German officer, Major Schmebling, commandant of the German Army post in Le Puy, dissuaded Metzger from attacking. Years after the war, Schmebling told Trocme of the fateful conversation: “Colonel Metzger was a hard one, and he kept insisting that we move in on Le Chambon. But I kept telling him to wait ... I told Metzger that this kind of resistance has nothing to do with violence, nothing to do with anything we could destroy with violence. With all my personal and military power I opposed sending his legion into Le Chambon.”⁶⁶

- More recently, on August 20, 2013, a school bookkeeper, Antoinette Tuff, risked peace when a gunman walked into her school. Twenty-year-old Michael Brandon Hill entered the Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy near Atlanta with an AK-47 and 500 rounds of ammunition, intending to shoot and kill as many people as he could. Tuff was scared but remained calm. She had received training in how to respond to dangerous situations like this one. And she found courage and strength in her Christian faith. She recalled her pastor’s teachings about “anchoring and how you anchor yourself in the Lord.” She was able to talk Hill down and convince him to surrender to police, thereby averting another mass shooting. “It was all God,” she said. “I was just praying.”

- The U.S. risked peace in September 2013, when it opted not to launch air strikes against Syria in response to an August 21 chemical weapons attack against civilians, but instead negotiated an international agreement to disarm the Syrian government of its chemical weapons. President Obama threatened a military response as a consequence for violating international norms. Military intervention seemed imminent. Then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry made an off-the-cuff remark that air strikes could be averted if Syria turned over all its chemical weapons to the international community, but Syria “isn’t about to do it and it can’t be done.” This rhetorical suggestion was taken up as a serious proposal by Russia and received a positive response from Syria. Where once military intervention was being touted as the only option for responding to the use of chemical weapons in Syria, the U.S. stumbled into a diplomatic alternative that had not been seriously considered. It is another question whether the countries involved in that grinding proxy war—including the U.S. and Russia more directly—have begun a serious peace process in early 2016.

God is always doing a new thing. It is the nature of God to gather up all the occasions of the past, and with immense healing power, weave transforming possibilities into the emerging moment. The future is constantly arriving, a future whose radical and redemptive newness it owes to the creative work of the Poet of the World, the Lover of Souls, the Lord of the Church, who declares, “Behold I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5). Let us welcome the new thing that God is doing, risk peace and transform conflict by boldly practicing the things that make for peace.

APPENDIX A

Tabulation of Presbytery Responses to the Five Affirmations with Notes

In most of the presbyteries listed, one or two persons led discussions before or during presbytery meetings and others (stated clerks usually) tabulated the votes, though in some presbyteries voice or hand votes reflected general consensus. We thank those leaders and presbytery councils who scheduled consideration of the affirmations. Peacemaking staff were present in several cases; the Presbytery of Newton’s discussion with Alonzo Johnson is posted online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT4xK318pDQ>. In addition to the voting, which may be done by any presbytery up to the General Assembly, all comments and proposed wording changes will be read, though they cannot of course affect the revision and streamlining of the affirmations that has been done. Those who did serious re-writing are also to be commended.

Overall Strong Support	Different Position
Albany	Nevada (re-wrote the 5)
Baltimore	Yukon (adopted 1, re-wrote the rest)
Beaver-Butler*	Elizabeth and New Castle (good discussion but no vote)
Blackhawk	
Chicago	Utica (lectio divina approach, good comments on all, no vote)
Cimarron	
East Iowa	N. New York (call for simpler language, more time)
Great Rivers	
Holston	
Hudson River	
Long Island	De Cristo (yes on 1, no on rest)
Mission	
New Hope	
Newton	
Northeast Georgia	
Pittsburgh	
Sacramento	
San Jose	(adds a #6 for peace congregations) ⁶⁷
Santa Fe	

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Susquehanna Valley

Tampa Bay*

Western Reserve

(*strong but declining #'s moving 1-5)

By designated committees:

Denver

National Capital (3/2 yes to no)

Ohio Valley

Transylvania

Declined to Consider:

Peacemaking Program staff spoke with or tried to reach staff or leaders in approximately seventy presbyteries that had not responded to the invitation to take the advisory vote by September 2015. In one case, Northumberland, a clear refusal to consider the Five Affirmations had been received. In many others, the pressures of presbytery business, limited staff, and limited numbers of presbytery meetings led to an apology, often accompanied by a sense that the affirmations, “looked OK,” or were noncontroversial, but would require educational as well as discussion time. In other words, they were voluntary and if the assembly passed them without change, most presbyters would understand if not agree that they were appropriate peacemaking concerns. In numerous cases, presbyteries have moved away from having “program” committees, such as “mission,” “social concerns,” or “peacemaking,” leaving only constitutionally mandated functions to be managed a more limited set of committees. Also, in many presbyteries there had been administrative turnover and approximately forty have been without even “transitional” staff at any given point over the 2014–2015 period.

Among the top items of “extra” business on presbytery dockets (again, from conversational reports):

- Voting on inclusive marriage and other changes to the Book of Order; not “advisory” votes.
- Discussions and processes of “gracious dismissal” with and about congregations leaving the denomination, reports of administrative commissions, along with procedures and policies regarding property and ministerial standing.
- Voting on the Belhar Confession, often accompanied by educational programs and discussions.

Communication considerations:

The Stated Clerk wrote all presbytery leadership staff the assembly’s request that they consider and take an advisory vote on the Peacemaking Affirmations at the end of 2014 and in mid 2015, extending the deadline for responses twice. The Stated Clerk’s staff is to be commended for developing a website with materials on peace discernment and an electronic response form. Most of the peace discernment process, in fact, has been carried on via the internet for cost reasons, with all material downloadable at no cost. Printed study materials were only sent to presbyteries in the first stage of discernment, though with notice via Presbyterian News Service and other communication by the Peacemaking Program, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and the Compassion, Peace, and Justice Ministry unit. The Peacemaking Program has also maintained a site with the peace discernment resources and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and Presbyterian Voices for Justice have also publicized the peace discernment studies and affirmations. As Professor Daniel Ott notes in his analysis of the responses in Appendix C, *UNBOUND* (www.justiceUnbound.org, the online justice journal of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy) also featured consideration of the peace discernment process and efforts were made to involve Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)-related colleges, universities, and seminaries, a number of whose faculty provided input to the process.

Educational Considerations:

The effectiveness of churchwide educational efforts that do not have enough “footprint” that includes print resources may be questioned, whether or not mid councils have the forums and capacity to relay and interpret the online materials or to display and share downloaded samples of resources. Consultation with publishing house staff suggests that many adult education groups and congregational programs prefer print resources organized for effective discussion, often in a single clear voice. Professor Ott’s recommendation of a more focused Reformed argument for nonviolence should be noted. The Peace Discernment Steering Team felt—coming out of the congregational discernment reports—that many Presbyterians would want more information about the chief positions of Just War, Christian Pacifism, and Just Peacemaking, and the 221st General Assembly (2014) Assembly Committee on Peacemaking and International Affairs agreed with this. In some cases, uncertainty about these basic positions led to reluctance to vote on the Five Affirmations, raising concern about the adequacy of Presbyterian formation on matters of war and peace.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF RISKING PEACE RATIONALE SENT TO PRESBYTERIES

The following layout of the Five Affirmations and the five sections of Risking Peace in a Violent World was provided on two, back-to-back pages to make the report more accessible, along with a one-page response form.

FIVE PEACEMAKING AFFIRMATIONS FOR PRESBYTERY DELIBERATION

As part of the process of peace discernment begun by the General Assembly in 2010, then following nine years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the 221st General Assembly (2014) approved five affirmations for discussion, debate, and voting in the presbyteries. These affirmations were derived from work by sixty-five presbytery and congregational study groups and two consultations, one with seminary ethi-

cists and one with Presbyterian college and university faculty, campus ministers and chaplains, and students.

This brief document contains the key action of the General Assembly and summarizes the background rationales for each of the five affirmations. The goal is to make this process as inviting as possible for presbytery discussion and voting. For those interested, the full set of study material is posted online: https://www.pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp_deploy/%28S%28xj11wbkkr5lfzvuydipivwj3%29%29/IOBView.aspx?m=r_o&id=4795 and is also available from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. Presbyteries may wish to schedule information sessions on the affirmations before they vote, or may simply distribute this resource and announce the voting in advance.

Here is the action of the 221st General Assembly (2014) (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 861):

Process of Discernment for Presbyteries: As the next stage in a six-year process of discernment, the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directs the Stated Clerk to send to each presbytery, electronically and in print, the following five affirmations and supporting rationale with the request that they discuss and take an advisory vote on each affirmation and send the results of those votes, along with a summary of the floor discussion, back to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy by July 1, 2015, to help guide the preparation of a report on peacemaking directions for the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

The affirmations for churchwide discussion and advisory vote:

1. We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.
2. We confess our complicity in the world's violence even as we pray for the Spirit's courage to "unmask idolatries," to speak truth about war and oppression, to stand with those who suffer, and to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.
3. We reclaim the power and authority of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, who proclaims God's reign, who inspires the prophetic church, [by] forgiving, healing, and undoing violence, and who overcomes evil through the cross and resurrection.
4. We seek to understand the nonviolent revolutions and armed struggles of our time by drawing on the traditions of Christian pacifism, just war, just peacemaking and active nonviolence, and by cultivating moral imagination through prayer, study, and engagement with friends and enemies. Even as we actively engage in a peace discernment process, we affirm our responsibility of continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the U.S. military, veterans, and their families.
5. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves earnestly to seek and promote loving, nonviolent responses to conflict in our daily lives, in our communities, and in our world, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to practice boldly the things that make for peace."

THEOLOGICAL BASIS: The title of the full General Assembly report is "Risking Peace in a Violent World." It invokes both the Brief Statement of Faith, acknowledging not only a "broken and fearful world," but a violent one, and the Confession of 1967's prophetic phrase, "This search [for peace] requires that the nations pursue fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at the risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding" (*Book of Confessions*, 9.45). Each explanatory section includes biblical, ethical, and historical analysis.

"Peace discernment" is the name given to a six-yr. process of updating the peacemaking vision of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The process was initiated by seven presbytery overtures on the 30th anniversary of *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* (1980). A Steering Team was charged with a twofold mandate to "seek clarity as to God's call to the church regarding nonviolence as our fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war," and to examine "ministries of peacemaking and justice- seeking that honor the Gospel, the history of the church, and the movement of the Holy Spirit..." to develop recommendations for new policy and action (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 69). The study document, *Encountering the Gospel of Peace Anew*, contained questions to explore not simply the effectiveness of the church's peacemaking work and its threefold offering, but the basic nature and scope of the Gospel's mandate for peacemaking. (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/peace-discernment/>)

STATUS OF THE AFFIRMATIONS AND POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS: The affirmations clearly build on each other, but presbyteries can decide whether to consider the five as a set or vote on them individually to assess the degree to which they may, or may not, represent that presbytery's views. The five proposed affirmations honor the range of viewpoints within the church while testing new directions; *they are not statements of policy but propositions for serious debate*. We respectfully ask presbyteries to make time on their busy dockets to consider the affirmations.

Our Presbyterian process values differences of opinion as efforts to speak the truth in love under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Voting is part of the work of the body to build consensus over time, and Presbyterians do not usually see unanimity or total agreement as necessary for decision. We take corporate stands, believing that the church as a body should not be silent, *and* at the same time we affirm that "God alone is Lord of the conscience..." making space for dissent. It is for those reasons we would like to see the vote tallies, but it is up to each presbytery to determine how to report, and some may wish to approve their own affirmations or amend the ones presented here. If a presbytery develops one or more affirmations of its own, we would appreciate a brief statement of rationale to explain the position or amendment. For example, if a presbytery thinks that "Christian pacifism" conflicts with the line about supporting the military—both added by the General Assembly—it could add, subtract, or move its own viewpoint.

The wording of this summary background piece draws freely on the language of the full report and all sources quoted are documented in the online footnotes. Leaders of presbytery discussions are urged to be familiar with the cases made in each section.

1. *Summary of Rationale for First Affirmation*

This affirmation would support the understanding in *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* that working for peace is not only an individual matter (such as conscientious objection) but a call of the whole Christian community, including those opposed to all war and violence and those who use categories of the "Just War" or justifiable war tradition. Former chief of chaplains, Kermit Johnson, in opposing

nuclear warfare, writes, “Like pacifism, it [Just War] is rooted in the commandment: ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ It is a presumption against violence, ‘the presumption in favor of peace and against war.’” Thus faithful Presbyterians may differ on whether there can be justified force, whether war is inevitable, and what the range from policing to maintain social peace to organized military campaigns may be. The point is: it is our responsibility to deal with these questions. Further, it is not enough to repeat old answers, but it is important to know what they have been. For example, strong majorities of the PCUSA presbyteries in 1936 and 1938 voted to remove Just War language from the Westminster Confession, though not attaining the supermajority necessary for constitutional change. This voting process recalls those votes prior to the adoption of *The Book of Confessions*. The full rationale section itself summarizes alternatives to violence and war in General Assembly social witness policy, particularly since WWII, and notes the support of more than 50 percent of PC(USA) congregations for The Commitment to Peacemaking and the Peacemaking Offering at some point since 1980.

2. *Summary of Rationale for Second Affirmation*

This affirmation asks us to be “honest patriots,” owning our responsibility for the horrific consequences of the Afghan and Iraq wars, while recognizing the ways that structural and cultural violence permeate our society and those of others. The emphasis here is on honestly counting the costs of what we have done, and in the spirit of the Brief Statement of Faith, to consider whether we have succumbed to idolatries in our efforts for security and justice. The final clause of this affirmation, which speaks of how to respond to violence, was added by the General Assembly and is given support in the background to affirmations four and five. The word, “complicity,” has both conscious and unconscious dimensions, and recognizes how embedded we all are in social structures that include unjust relationships. Prophetic self-criticism, apology, and repentance are basic parts of Christian life. This affirmation applies those principles not only to the large scale and deliberate violence of war, but to the roots of war. Members of presbyteries may want to look at the definitions of violence and of “structural violence,” or forms of oppression that can prompt violence or self-destructiveness. As a church in the United States, how do we stand before not only the peoples of the countries that have suffered so much more than we, but before the Lord of history? Does this affirmation help us so stand?

3. *Summary of Rationale for Third Affirmation*

This affirmation focuses on Jesus Christ in relation to war and violence and proposes a new emphasis for Reformed Christians, without denying our traditional linkage of the New Testament witness with Old (and some New) Testament justifications of force. This affirmation says it is essential to look at how the words and example of Jesus cohere with the rest of the “Gospel of Peace,” and suggests more attention to the earliest centuries of the church when Christians had no public power and largely chose nonviolence. Stating clearly that our faith is not based on scholarly reconstructions of Jesus’ life—of which there are many—nonetheless the preponderance of scholarship supporting a nonviolent interpretation of Jesus’ ministry bears attention. This affirmation does not answer the specific question of how much peace or nonviolence were the goal or method of Jesus’ ministry, and does not try to fit Jesus into a programmatic script. Yet it would urge the church not to get too far away from his example, lest we be coopted too easily into war for reasons of state or economic interest.

4. *Summary of Rationale for Fourth Affirmation*

This affirmation proposes that our church’s social and ethical teaching give more attention to the nonviolent techniques of social change that have been more productive than violence in a surprising number of cases. That list would include the fall of the Berlin wall and other nonviolent transitions in Eastern Europe, the nonviolent revolution in the Philippines, the painstaking achievement of peace in Northern Ireland, the dramatic transformation of South Africa, and the initial successes of the Arab Awakening. In these cases many non-pacifists chose nonviolent tactics for their effectiveness in mobilizing people. Clearly there have also been incredibly savage wars and instigated religious/ ethnic tensions, with some countries funding forces in other countries as “proxies” for their interests. These point to the weakness of international diplomatic structures and difficulties of protecting minorities within countries, many of whom have become refugees. The General Assembly added a sentence that could apply to all five affirmations, expressing concern for those in the military and veterans, and also added the category of “Christian pacifism” as well as nonviolence as a force for social change. The import of this affirmation is to diversify further the alternatives to force available for the church.

5. *Summary of Rationale for Fifth Affirmation*

As amended by the General Assembly, this affirmation emphasizes that nonviolent methods should be chosen first in our personal and corporate efforts to resolve or transform conflict, and that on the national level our country should pursue international relations based less on military superiority and unilateral force. The background rationale here looks at the differences between national interests and principles (such as respect for universal human rights); it challenges the practices of “empire” on practical and even “realist” grounds, emphasizing the “soft power” of ideals and example, particularly in facing new kinds of global crisis (such as environmental disaster). The rationale also provides a range of “things that make for peace:” truth and reconciliation commissions, interfaith cooperation, accompaniment and nonviolent intervention, increased teaching of peacemaking. Three illustrative examples are given in conclusion: the Reformed village of Le Chambon sheltering Jews during WWII, a personal witness that prevented a mass shooting, and an international agreement to remove chemical weapons from Syria in 2013. This affirmation, then, would seek alternatives to military violence at every level.

APPENDIX C

Analysis of Presbytery Responses to Five Affirmations

In addition to the members and staff of the Steering Team appointed in 2010 to oversee the Peace Discernment process; the Reverend J. Mark Davidson, chair; Dr. Kathryn Poethig, ACSWP representative; Shaya Gregory Poku; Shaheen Amjad-Ali; the Reverend Jessica Hawkinson; the Reverend Craig L. Hunter; the Reverend Roger Powers, consultant, and the Reverends. Carl Horton, Alonzo Johnson, and Christian Iosso, staff, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Peacemaking Program thought it would wise to have a review of the responses by an informed person who was not directly involved in the writing of the discernment materials, including the Five Affirmations. Hence this report by the Reverend Daniel Ott.

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

“Analysis of Presbytery Responses to the Five Affirmations for Peace Discernment”

The Reverend Daniel Ott, Ph.D., Associate Professor of *Religious Studies and Director of the Peace, Ethics, and Social Justice Program*,
Monmouth College, Monmouth, Illinois

The Peace Discernment Steering Team, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, and the Peacemaking Program are to be commended for their work throughout the Peace Discernment process. The process has been deliberate, inclusive, insightful, and fruitful. I am glad that the past three General Assemblies have been overwhelmingly supportive of the proposals and reports put forward.

Observation of the Discernment Process:

I have intersected with this process at several points and reviewed and used the materials produced. First, I attended the January 2013, gathering for Presbyterian-related colleges and universities. The program was impressive including figures in peace studies, biblical studies, theology, and public policy. Attendees received an outstanding overview and introduction to peace studies from leaders in the field, including Andrea Bartoli, Margaret Aymer, Richard Horsley, and Allan Boesak. Colleges and universities were encouraged to make use of *Encountering the Gospel of Peace Anew* before and/or after the event in order to foster discussion on campuses. I found these materials very helpful and the discussions on our campus were instrumental to launching a program and minor in peace, ethics, and social justice.

Secondly, I was honored that my article “Toward a Realistic, Public, Christian Pacifism” was used and cited in the document “Risking Peace in a Violent World.” This is a rich document that works hard at balancing Christian pacifist traditions with the more publicly engaged and “realistic” Calvinist traditions, a balance I try to strike in my own work. I was invited by *Unbound: An Interactive Journal of Christian Social Justice* to offer a guest opinion response to Risking Peace as a part of a series. I titled that short piece “Let’s Focus on Nonviolence” and the sentiment expressed there prefigured to some extent the analysis I offer here (<http://justiceunbound.org/carousel/lets-focus-on-nonviolence/>).

Analysis of Initial 29 Responses:

I have been asked to offer an analysis of presbytery responses to the Five Affirmations for Peace Discernment. Let me begin again by commending the work done to date. I was not able to attend the meeting of the Presbytery of Great Rivers when the affirmations were discussed, but had I been in attendance they would have received my full support. In fact, a strong majority of presbyteries responding approved of the affirmations by strong margins. The affirmations are a concise statement of several key issues and could well move the church forward in a positive direction as currently articulated. I will have to leave it to others more schooled in social analysis and/or ecclesial politics to account for the low number of presbytery responses (29 of 171 presbyteries available, October 2015). Both the question of statistical significance of the small response and the question of local reception could be important, but, again, I am ill-equipped to address these concerns.

The responses received can still be instructive, though, despite the low number. Clear trends emerge in comments from the presbyteries and could lead to helpful revisions. My analysis will focus on some common critiques articulated in the comments from presbyteries. These should be heard in the context of overwhelming support, but they may also represent problems that would be ongoing in the reception of the affirmations if not heeded. It should also be stated at the outset that most if not all of these concerns might have been mitigated had commissioners been able and/or willing to engage with the full text of “Risking Peace.” The sources and rationales for the phrases that caused alarm are in that text, but it is of course probably asking too much that commissioners engage those thirty-three pages. The briefer rationales provided to presbyteries also address some of the concerns and in an accessible format, but may be too brief as to be persuasive.

I will proceed first with a couple of comments that were general in nature, then to a treatment of each affirmation, and finally offer a suggestion with regard to an accompanying statement of some sort. I will intermingle analysis of comments in presbytery responses with my own ideas about the affirmations, but try to remain clear about which is which. I have offered my own rewriting of the affirmations as a way to frame this analysis. I am not necessarily asserting that my language is better or could be substituted facilely, but hope that this is a helpful way to think through the issues at hand.

General comments:

Several presbyters asked for the affirmations to be simpler (Beaver-Butler, Northern New York, Susquehanna Valley) and more practical (Cimarron, Great Rivers, Northeast Georgia, Tampa Bay).¹ Commenters advocated that the “affirmations should be worded in a much simpler manner,” and suggested that “Each one of these proposals holds too much.” Several called for various affirmations to be shorter and there were quite a few comments about dividing Affirmation #4 into two. Some of the complexity of these affirmations is almost certainly due to their extensive revisions. Affirmation #4 provides the example of the extended comment about those who serve in the United States military being added in committee at General Assembly. But even in their original form, the affirmations may try to do too much. Several important concepts are summarized in a phrase, which often requires background knowledge for a full understanding. I will point out several of these below. It may also be the case that the affirmations are simply a bit too diffuse. I suggest a clearer focus in order to draw the affirmations together and make them simpler.

Given that the original articulation of the discernment process included a call “to examine particularly the nonviolent understanding of Jesus’ call to discipleship,”² I would suggest a revision of the affirmations that would highlight nonviolence. It seems to me that the articulation of a nonviolent stance is what is new and most helpful in the discernment process. Such a focus helps us to avoid several pitfalls. First, traditional “peace church” stances are rooted in sectarianisms that cannot be affirmed from within the Reformed tradition. Our commitments to a public witness to social righteousness demand that we take our place in the public sphere and fully participate in public service and discourse. Peace churches have been important witnesses to peace as they stand outside and prophesy against violent and corrupt structures. But our position has traditionally been one of reforming these structures even as we participate in them. Nonviolence rather than a sectarian Christian pacifism, allows us to take a stand against violence while remaining full participants in the public struggle.

Second, nonviolence can help us to move beyond a traditional just war stance. As several commenters noted (see below), the category of just war is breaking down. Notions of proportionality are all but moribund after Dresden and Hiroshima and categories like competent authority and just means seem almost archaic in an age of terrorism and drones. Nonviolence has the potential to offer a consistent philosophy and theology that can move us a step further in our commitments to peacemaking. “Risking Peace” already adequately articulates the strengths of nonviolence and how it can fit within the Reformed tradition. Of course, much more can be learned and said about this relationship, but those could be steps that follow the discernment process.

The call for more practical language in the affirmations could also be heeded by more focus on nonviolence. Presbyters several times suggested, “Add language that speaks to peacemaking action in our daily lives and communities,” or asked “can we make this practical and specific?” Again, “Risking Peace” contains careful analysis of the ways in which violence impinges on our daily lives and communities and how action that can be (and is) taken to address that violence. But it may be that the complexities of the affirmations as articulated leave some readers wondering about their practical applications. Focusing on nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution, social change and opposition to war, might allay some of these fears of abstraction.

The affirmations may well be strengthened by better focus, more concise articulation, and less evocative and complex language. I will now address each affirmation in turn. Sections begin with my suggested revision of the affirmation.

1. Affirmation as presented to presbyteries: *“We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God’s reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence, fear, and misused power.”*

Ott revision: *“We affirm that peacemaking is essential to our faith in God’s reconciling work in Jesus Christ, whose love and justice challenge hatred and conflict, and whose call gives our church a mission to present alternatives to violence.”*

Affirmation #1 received resounding support from responding presbyteries. The Presbytery of De Cristo approved of this affirmation even as they voted against all subsequent affirmations. Several presbyteries saw growing minorities of “no” votes as they moved through affirmations #s 2–5, but very few dissenting votes here. The Presbytery of Nevada offered alternative language (as they did in every case) but their very concise affirmation is consistent with the spirit of the original, “We affirm that peacemaking in the name of Jesus Christ is important work for the Church.”

My revision is very modest, just removing the last four words. This only serves to highlight the term “alternatives to violence” and set up the focus on nonviolence that I am advocating throughout.

2. Affirmation as presented to presbyteries: *“We confess our complicity in the world’s violence even as we pray for the Spirit’s courage to “unmask idolatries,” to speak truth about war and oppression, to stand with those who suffer, and to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.”*

Ott revision: *“We confess that we have sinned, by participating in acts of violence, both structural and physical, or by our failure to respond to acts and threats of violence with ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation.”*

“Risking Peace” accurately predicted that articulating a need to confess our complicity in violence “may prompt denial and hostility.”³ Quite a few commenters (Baltimore, Tampa Bay, Yukon) took exception to the word “complicity” in the original. Some seemed merely to wonder about the definition of the term, while others wondered whether they personally or the church as such could be said to be complicit. My language attempts to be both clearer and more traditional. The affirmation is clearly intended to be a confessional element, so I have made it more explicitly so adding the word “sinned” and defining complicity in terms of acts of commission or omission. The “or” might also be helpful so that those who don’t see themselves or the church as actively complicit (though they probably are as “Risking Peace” argues well) can at least find themselves in the omission of ministries of justice, healing, and reconciliation, since more can always be done.

Objections to the phrase “unmask idolatries” (Beaver-Butler, De Cristo, National Capitol, Redstone, Yukon) may lead one to wonder about the reception of A Brief Statement of Faith. Some commenters seem to wonder where the phrase itself comes from, while others ask helpful questions about what exactly it stands for in this context. “Risking Peace” draws on this Calvinistic moment in A Brief Statement of Faith to articulate all of the ways in which our participation in violence is masked—masked by idols of national security, masked by cultures that find violence entertaining, etc. Nonetheless, the phrase does seem to stand for a lot in the affirmation and could be unpacked. I took at least one of the important concepts implied by the phrase to be structural violence. This term may not have immediate resonance with some readers either, but it does more directly and concisely articulate the problem of our participations in systems that propagate violence.

I have also taken the liberty here of merely shortening the affirmation. The phrases “to speak truth about war and oppression, to stand with those who suffer” seemed to move from confession to action and to at least be implied by later affirmations. Mostly, though, their omission is in further attempt to shorten and simplify.

3. Affirmation as presented to presbyteries: *“We reclaim the power and authority of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Reconciler, who proclaims God’s reign, who inspires the prophetic church, [by] forgiving, healing, and undoing violence, and who overcomes evil through the cross and resurrection.”*

Ott revision: *“We look to the teaching and example of Jesus and the early church to learn how to reclaim a Christian commitment to nonviolence.”*

Affirmations #s 3–5 contain more thorough revision. In each case I will first address concerns of commenters and then justify the nature and extent of the revision. These affirmations still received strong support from the presbyteries responding, but the support declined in #s 3-5.

One of the more consistent comments seen in the responses (Baltimore, Beaver-Butler, Chicago, De Cristo, Great Rivers, National Capitol, Susquehanna Valley, Yukon) had to do with the phrase “We reclaim the power and authority of Jesus Christ.” Some commenters found the phrase triumphalist and wondered whether Christ’s authority is ours to claim. To others, the phrase seemed ambiguous and they wondered whether the power and authority had to be reclaimed from someone who had usurped it or whether it implied that the church had once claimed it but no longer did. I confess that I side a bit with those who find the language triumphalist. It also seems to be somewhat theologically paradoxical to have such strong language about power, authority and reign in a statement that ostensibly wants to affirm nonviolence, healing and forgiveness.

A few commenters (Susquehanna Valley, Yukon) wondered about the phrase “undoing violence.” Perhaps the authors had in mind Jesus’ examples of undoing structural violence, but I too find the phrase somewhat ambiguous. At its worst, the phrase has the potential to undercut the finality of violence. Violence can be avoided, forgiven, transcended, but once committed it cannot technically be undone. Lives taken cannot be regained. Bodies, minds and spirits broken are often irreparable.

It seems to me that Affirmation #3 is the best example of the complex language of the affirmation getting in the way of the intent. The rationale following Affirmation #3 in “Risking Peace”⁴ deals with the life and teachings of Jesus and the example and teachings of the early church as resources for nonviolence. This is wholly in keeping with the original charge from the 219th General Assembly. The rationale takes care to note that there are always problems with claims to the historical Jesus and that the scripture does not speak univocally about violence and nonviolence. But perhaps these caveats weighed too heavily in the language of the affirmation. They do not negate the ability of Christians to look to Jesus, scripture, and the early church to learn about nonviolence because nonviolent commitments and action can certainly be found there. It seems to me a humble and simple claim to want to look again at these nonviolent resources is wholly justifiable and very much in keeping with the charge, the discernment process, and Reformed theology.

Simplifying this affirmation also has the strength of making it a clear action item. Churches, peacemaking committees, scholars, and pastors can take immediate steps to begin to learn about nonviolence from these resources.

4. Affirmation as presented to presbyteries: *“We seek to understand the nonviolent revolutions and armed struggles of our time by drawing on the traditions of Christian pacifism, just war, just peacemaking and active nonviolence, and by cultivating moral imagination through prayer, study, and engagement with friends and enemies. Even as we actively engage in a peace discernment process, we affirm our responsibility of continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the U.S. military, veterans, and their families.”*

Ott revision: *“We commit ourselves to studying and practicing nonviolent means of conflict resolution, nonviolent methods for social change, and nonviolent opposition to war.”*

The simple and practical language in my revision is taken almost verbatim from page twenty-six of “Risking Peace.” Affirmation #4 was clearly trying to do too much. Several commenters asked for it to be divided and/or simplified. A few comments noted that the second sentence about the United States military felt added on (as it was in GA Committee—ed.) and may in fact undermine the sentiment it intended by seeming token. The rationale in “Risking Peace” constitutes the center of that document’s argument that nonviolence can work within a Reformed framework and need not totally usurp other ways of thinking about peace (Just War, Just Peacemaking, Christian Realism, Christian Pacifism) that are operative in the church. Such an argument is much too big to capture in a sentence, though.

Interestingly, another of the most pervasive comments (Albany, Chicago, De Cristo, Denver, Mission, Santa Fe, Tampa Bay) from presbyters was an objection to “just war.” Several commenters rejected the term altogether suggesting that the only just war “is one where no one showed to fight.” Other commenters wondered about the varied uses and abuses of the term. I wondered about the fruitfulness of listing the various ways to understand issues of violence and nonviolence. Certainly Christian pacifism, just war, just peacemaking, and active nonviolence are all justifiable Christian positions and much can be learned by studying each. But to list them avoids taking any sort of position. These approaches cannot be wholly harmonized and affirming them all offers no real direction.

A few commenters (Great Rivers, Tampa Bay) also raised questions about the term “moral imagination.” Again, “Risking Peace” explains the term and concept well, and interested parties would do themselves a great service by reading John Paul Lederach’s book of the same title, but I see how the term could be ambiguous to those who have not been introduced to it.

I have offered a simple, concise and practical statement about nonviolence. Building on Affirmation #3, this affirmation would move to the continued learning and practice of nonviolence as applied to three key areas: conflict resolution, social action, and opposition to war. These areas open out almost endlessly at multiple levels of society. Conflict resolution can be practiced in families, schools, communities, places of work, and internationally. Nonviolent social action can be used to address all kinds of injustice and violence: racism, environmental degradation, economic exploitation, etc. And nonviolent opposition to war can take the shape of diplomacy and development, or protest, boycott, accompaniment, etc. These are whole realms of practice about which the church can learn much.

I also deleted the second sentence about support for the United States military. See my rationale under “What is left out” below

5. Affirmation as presented to presbyteries: *“As disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves earnestly to seek and promote loving, nonviolent responses to conflict in our daily lives, in our communities, and in our world, to risk calling our nation back from the practices of empire to the highest ideals of our heritage, and to practice boldly the things that make for peace.”*

Ott revision: *“We place our faith, hope, and trust in God alone. We renounce violence as a means to further selfish national interests, to procure wealth, or to dominate others. We will practice boldly the things that make for peace and look for the day when “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*

The centrality of the term and concept “empire” to Affirmation #5 may pose the most difficult problem to reception if the presbytery responses are indicative of what can be expected. No less than ten presbytery responses (Baltimore, Beaver-Butler, Chicago, Cimarron, De Cristo, Mission, Northeast Georgia, Redstone, Tampa Bay, Yukon) included comments that reacted negatively to the term, several quite vehemently. The rationale in “Risking Peace” makes empire central to the argument. The rationale ties the problematic of empire to the original move away from nonviolence in the early church, to the history of colonialism, and to current United States policy. I myself find these arguments mostly persuasive, but the term is clearly a red flag for many who read the affirmations. Several of the responses merely called the term empire “loaded” or “political.” But a comment from the Presbytery of Cimarron might be instructive, “While ‘empire’ is a powerful concept that is biblically, historically, and theologically relevant and is explored in the full rationale, it may be easier for people in the pews to engage in discussion of this deep structural threat to peace using contemporary language.” My revision tries to spell out succinctly the actual practices of empire and their ties to violence. For better or worse it leaves the reader free to judge whether U.S. policy engages in these practices. I would imagine that most sober assessments would admit that it does so at least to some extent.

A few commenters (Beaver-Butler, National Capitol, Tampa Bay, Yukon) questioned the phrase, “to risk calling our nation back ... to the highest ideals of our heritage.” Some found the phrase ambiguous and wanted clarity about which ideals are being invoked. A couple of comments asked if it might be better to evoke Christian ideals rather than national ideals. I myself wondered about such a brief and ambiguous appeal as well. Our nation is to some extent rooted in practices of colonialism, slavery, and violence. Of course, ideals like democracy and equality are also deeply rooted in our heritage, but always intermixed with oligarchy and injustice. Little treatment is given even in the extended rationale in “Risking Peace” to what national ideals are helpful, how we marry them to our theological ideals, and how we might uproot them from their connections to unjust practices. I think such a discussion can and should be had, but I don’t think that work has been done here. I would strongly advocate deleting this phrase.

I agree that closing with an appeal to Christian ideals and Christian hope might be a powerful way to conclude the affirmations. I have juxtaposed a Barmen-like confession of faith in God alone with a renunciation of the practices of empire and closed with Isaiah of Jerusalem’s beautiful vision.

What is left out in these revisions:

Perhaps the most important omission in my revision of the affirmations is the mention (a full discussion in “Risking Peace”) of the several ways in which Christians can justifiably think about violence and war. If the affirmations were to focus on nonviolence, some might see them as a departure from the just war, just peacemaking and Christian pacifist dialogues that have marked our church’s commitment to peacemaking. I think it is absolutely imperative that these discussions continue, because we are not near a consensus on these matters. However, as I said above, to merely mention various ways of thinking about these matters really doesn’t *affirm* much. I do think that there are ways to affirm nonviolence from all of these perspectives, and “Risking Peace” lays some of that groundwork. The dialogues need to continue but I’m not sure there’s an effective way to capture that in the affirmations themselves.

Because not everything can be said that needs to be said in five short affirmations, I also left out the second sentence of Affirmation #4. This is not because I think this sentiment is unimportant, though. In fact, I think that one of the most impactful actions the church could take would be to engage in support for military veterans. “Risking Peace” mentions the work of Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini with regard to “moral injury.” In a forthcoming article in the *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* (January 2016, 37.1), which I have edited, Joshua Daniel makes a persuasive argument that such injuries must be healed in a communal context and cannot be adequately addressed through merely clinical means. Faith communities are well positioned to tackle this important problem and be truly supportive to combat veterans. Of course, the church can and should do more in terms of material support to combat veterans suffering from physical and psychological wounds as well. I gave serious consideration to a separate affirmation regarding these issues, but in the end decided that such an affirmation would still seem out of place and risk appearing to be token, consistent with some comments made in the presbytery responses. Even so, such an affirmation might read:

We commit ourselves to continuing the long tradition of support by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for our sisters and brothers who serve in the United States military, veterans, and their families. We promise to support materially and socially veterans of war who suffer injury in body, mind, or spirit, even as we work toward the day when they will need to fight no more.

Another omission, in both the original affirmations and my revisions is a listing of the kinds of violence to which we stand in opposition. Several commenters noticed that environmental degradation was not mentioned. Some commentators gave lists of the kinds of structural violence we encounter in our daily lives: “rape culture, bullying/cyberbullying, domestic terrorism, human trafficking... and hate crimes (related to racism, sexual orientation, religious practice).” “Risking Peace” also effectively discusses structural violence and cultures of violence, but it is difficult to be both clear and succinct with regard to naming the many faces of violence that we encounter. I opted for including the term “structural violence” in hope that this will have enough resonance to stand in for these many important instantiations.

I wonder if some or all of these omissions might be mentioned in a postscript or accompanying document, but I remain worried that too much verbiage can water down the effect that five concise affirmations might have.

How these revisions might be used:

I offer these revisions not so much as potential substitutes to the original affirmations, but as propositions for creative contrast. I was asked to look with “fresh eyes,” so I’ve tried to be creative and offer something that is both novel and helpful.

Likely, the most helpful piece of this analysis will be the identification of trends in reception. Several of these trends probably should lead to modest revision in the affirmations at least.

I do also hope that the affirmations can be streamlined a bit. My focus on nonviolence is one way to do that, but in any case some effort should be made to make the affirmations a bit simpler and more practical. I would love to see a set of affirmations that can be widely disseminated and have immediate resonance that clearly leads to action.

Finally, it has been my privilege and pleasure to contribute to the peace discernment process with this analysis. I would love for this contribution to be the continuation of a conversation that extends into the future. Please let me know how I can clarify what I've said here, extend this analysis, or otherwise continue to be helpful.

Endnotes for Appendix C

1. I will use these parenthetical references throughout to give the reader a sense of where the comments come from and can be found. Again, I am not offering an exhaustive and exacting sociological analysis of the responses. I am not qualified to do so. But these observations are made after close reading of the responses, collating some of the kinds of responses, and rereading the responses for accuracy.
2. "Risking Peace," p. 2.
3. "Risking Peace," p. 10.
4. "Risking Peace," pp. 13–17.

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT RESPONSES BEHIND THE FIVE AFFIRMATIONS

This appendix summarizes themes in the responses to the discernment study materials circulated in late 2012 and 2013, and notes the Presbyterian Panel Survey done by Research Services of representatives Presbyterian attitudes towards matters of violence and nonviolence, peace and war.

"The present Peace Discernment Process, initiated by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and affirmed by the 220th General Assembly (2012), differs from previous studies in that it seeks broader participation from the denomination and focuses more on the example and teaching of Jesus and the early church. The full texts of the 2012-13 discernment materials and response forms used are available on-line at: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/peace-discernment-interim-report-encountering-gosp/>.

These discernment resources, some of which are reflected in this report, were designed to introduce "ministries of peacemaking and justice-seeking that honor the Gospel, the history of the church, and the movement of the Holy Spirit ..." and to inform eventual recommendations of new policy and action (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 69). The resources were presented to and partly tested by the Peacemaking and International Affairs Committee of the 220th General Assembly (2012), which recommended that the discernment process proceed: <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=4015&promoID=254>.

Presbyterians in more than forty-five congregations and eighteen presbyteries came together in small "focus groups" to pray, to reflect, to engage in individual and communal discernment, to "seek clarity as to God's call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war; and to identify, explore, and nurture new approaches to active peacemaking and nonviolence" (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 68).

Most participants found that the Peace Discernment Process encouraged meaningful sharing that was powerful and engaging. They appreciated the opportunity to hear varied perspectives and opinions in a framework where almost everyone had at least one loved one with experience in war. Some were surprised at the level of trust that developed in their small groups, allowing individuals (including veterans) to risk being vulnerable and speak about difficult personal experiences they had had with violence. One participant called it "a very holy process."

Nonviolence, Just War, and Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling

Presbyterians generally agree that peacemaking is the calling of all believers, but they differ about whether violent means of peacemaking are faithful to Jesus' life and witness. Some focus on Jesus' call to love our enemies and his sacrifice on the cross, and they conclude that violence can never be a faithful Christian response to violence, injustice, or evil in the world. They gravitate toward Christian nonviolence. Others point to Jesus' defense of the poor and oppressed, the weak and vulnerable, and believe that violence or coercion can be justified in restraining evil forces and defending the innocent. Drawing on the gospel's portrayal of Roman soldiers and Paul's letter to the Romans, where he states that God has entrusted political leaders with "the sword," they believe that political leaders and their agents (soldiers and police) have a responsibility to pursue a relatively just, tranquility of order that allows humans to flourish. They also believe that Christians are called to faithfully participate in the world and that in a democracy they should exercise their public responsibility to pursue peace and justice. They gravitate toward the just war tradition. For many participants, the Peace Discernment Process was their first introduction to both the methods of nonviolent action and the criteria of just war.

Lamenting our Culture of Violence and War

It is clear, after more than ten years of war, that a majority of Presbyterians are deeply concerned about the enormous human and economic costs of war—the hundreds of thousands killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the millions displaced, the thousands of U.S. soldiers killed or injured, the trillions of dollars spent, and the damage done to our economy. Understandably, there was a focus on those wars where our country has been most directly involved, but many were aware of other wars and long conflicts initiated and suffered by others. A majority of Presbyterians are also deeply worried about the violence pervasive in U.S. culture—the high incidence of gun violence compared to other countries; school shootings; violence against women; violence in media, sports, and entertainment; and the underlying structural violence of economic injustice and social oppression (racism, sexism, other exclusions).

Many appreciate the important connection between justice and peace. They understand that were a relatively just order is lacking, people are tempted to violence. They also understand that direct, physical violence is often caused by injustice, and that a genuine peace can only be brought about by working toward justice and equity for all. Many lifted up God's vision of shalom, affirming that peace is a rich mosaic of human flourishing within the global community in the broader context of God's good creation.

A Desire to Learn Peacemaking Skills

At the same time, many expressed a sense of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the issues, particularly at the national and international level. Weary of the stream of grim news of bombings and terrorism, there were questions about what our years of war had achieved. Some questioned the effectiveness of both social policy statements and the primarily educational approach of the Peacemaking Program, facing a political system dominated by money. They are looking for direction and guidance about how individuals and congregations can take effective action to further justice and peace. In this vein, there seems to be broad interest in learning concrete peacemaking skills that they can use in their daily lives—skills in nonviolent communication, negotiation, mediation, community organizing, social movement building, and nonviolent direct action.

Challenging U. S. Militarism

While most Presbyterians are not ready to renounce violence as a means of restraining evil or protecting the innocent, a large majority of the discernment participants would nevertheless support:

- Just Peacemaking initiatives to promote justice and prevent war
- Downsizing the military-industrial-surveillance complex
- Economic conversion from a war economy to a peace economy
- Shifting resources from the military to international diplomacy and development
- Ending policies of pre-emptive attack, targeted assassination, and torture, which lead to violent “blowback” and which seemed immoral to many discernment group participants
- Moving the U.S. away from the role of global policeman, finding other ways to support international structures of security cooperation

Given the high level of motivation in the discernment groups, a representative survey of Presbyterian opinion was commissioned from Presbyterian Research Services. While the questions presented by the Presbyterian Panel survey instrument were necessarily shorter, there is considerable similarity in overall outlook to the written narrative summaries from the discernment groups. http://www.presbyterianmission.org/media/uploads/research/pdfs/nov_2012_panel_summary_violence_and_war.pdf

APPENDIX E

BRIEF SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN AND PRESBYTERIAN
APPROACHES TO WAR PRIOR TO 1980, AND CONCLUDING CONCERN

Excerpt from a paper by the Reverend Edward L. Long, Ph.D.

The centrality of peace as a distinctive feature of Christian fidelity goes back to the Bible, to the idea of shalom in the Hebraic tradition and to the idea of being peacemakers in the teachings and pattern of Jesus’ own fidelity to God. But translating this concept into policies that further human well-being has challenged Christian thinking ever since the church ceased to be bands of dedicated believers existing as outsiders within Greco-Roman culture.

Within the Christian movement two main traditions developed dedicated to the goal of peace, but each understood responsibility for achieving it in different ways. The first, claiming a strong grounding in the New Testament and the practices of the early church, is Christian pacifism; the other, the just war tradition, grows out of the realization that when Christians become holders of authority and exercise office in a political world they may be called upon to use violence for the protective love of neighbor and for the maintenance of justice and order. Both of these moral stances need to be seen as very different from the views that religion may use violent means to advance its own interests—the premises of an ethic of the crusade, or that nationalisms or ideologies may claim de facto religious sanction for dominating others—the major causes of war for more than two centuries, particularly in Europe and countries colonized by European empires.

During the Protestant Reformation some groups, from which the “peace churches” emerged, understood Christian discipleship to require the repudiation of violence in the manner of the earliest church. Other groups, from which most mainline Reformed bodies emerged, understood Christian discipleship to allow for the restrained, and hence legitimate, use of the sword to preserve justice and order. Presbyterian Confessions generally contain just war positions in relation to the role of the magistrate, or civil government. These two main Christian approaches to war and violence retained theological coherence as Christians sought to apply them through revolutions and wars of conquest, liberation, defense, and humanitarian intervention. American Presbyterians participated in and justified the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the Korean conflict, but have been less and less of one mind on smaller wars like Vietnam, the Nicaragua/Contra war, the two Iraq wars, and Afghanistan.

In 1936 and 1938, when pacifist sentiment was strong in American Social Christianity, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. sent the presbyteries proposals to remove just war language from the Westminster Confession, which was then the church’s only confessional standard. While a majority of the presbyteries voted to remove or amend the language, in neither case did the outcome reach the supermajority of presbyteries required to accomplish that result.

During WWII, which had the overwhelming support of most Americans following Pearl Harbor, two important developments took place. First, some individual Presbyterians felt called to be conscientious objectors and were generally supported in taking this position (or at least benignly tolerated) by the Church. That support made it amply clear that a pacifist conviction was a legitimate form of Christian discipleship. (The influence of the votes in the 1930s may be seen here). The second development found the Presbyterian Church in cooperation with many other denominations giving extensive thought to what would constitute a just and durable peace. Studies were

undertaken both in the denominations and in ecumenical bodies which explored such concerns and were staffed with competent specialists. That work contributed to support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations and was likely to have helped the postwar settlement avoid the vindictive features of the armistice that settled WWI.

The development of the Cold War and its tendency to divide the world into two polarized positions eventually brought increasing questions about the wisdom and adequacy of military and particularly nuclear means for establishing peace and justice on a world wide scale. Many Christian ethicists at the time argued that the draft laws should recognize the validity of conscientious objection on just war grounds as well as on fully pacifist grounds, and the General Assembly of 1967 emphatically reaffirmed the right of Presbyterians to be conscientious objectors. (See *Conscience, Conscriptio, and the Church*). This action highlighted the legitimacy of conscientious differences about participation in war by individuals, and made individual integrity a foundational reference point for moral reflection. That action did not overcome the differences between pacifist and just war commitments in the Church's corporate stand, but it clearly undercut any presumption that just war thinking inevitably means subservience to the policies of the state or that pacifism is unacceptable because it is unpatriotic.

Thus the recent history of our church is marked by a persistent belief in the importance of peace but also by continuing good faith disagreements as to what kinds of policies and commitments most faithfully translate that central belief into prudent and responsible action. Some of these disagreements have challenged the Peacemaking Program, the primary agency through which *Peacemaking: The Believers' Calling* and other social witness policies were to be implemented. Some have been impressed with what the Church has done in the last quarter century, particularly the extent to which it has managed to be critical of the prevailing trends in the society of which it is an integral part. Others feel that the program has been insufficient in its vigor and lacking in prophetic intensity and are disturbed by the fact that at the same time the Church has been engaged in this program the country has become more and more involved in the use of military ways of meeting the threat of terrorism and other international crises, and has landed on what amounts to a permanent war footing.

APPENDIX F DEFINITIONS

A very succinct summary of just war principles:

Those applying to the decision whether or not to go to war (*jus ad bellum*).

1. There must be just cause.
2. There must be right intention.
3. The action must be undertaken by the proper authority.
4. The action must be taken as a last resort.
5. There must be a reasonable hope of success (to defend, protect, or otherwise gain a just peace).

Those applying to the conduct of war (*jus in bello*).

1. The force or violence used must be proportional to the result intended.
2. Noncombatants are not to be directly attacked.

See Edward LeRoy Long Jr. *War and Conscience in America* (Westminster Press, 1968) 22–33.

Ten Principles of Just Peacemaking

1. Support nonviolent direct action.
2. Take independent initiatives to reduce threats.
3. Use cooperative conflict resolution.
4. Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.
5. Advance democracy, human rights, and religious liberty.
6. Foster just and sustainable economic development.
7. Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system.
8. Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights.
9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade.
10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.

See Glen Stassen, ed. *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (Pilgrim Press, 1998)

Six Elements of Nonviolent Strategy (More from a faith perspective)

1. Nonviolence is for the strong rather than the weak. It is a difficult discipline that eschews cowardice. It is not nonresistance but a particular method of resistance.
2. Nonviolence does not seek to “defeat or humiliate” the opponent, but to win them over. It is not employed for the purpose of scoring points but as a means of creating “the beloved community.”
3. Nonviolence directs itself “against the forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing evil.” One may despise a particular form of evil, but one may not despise the doer of the evil.

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

4. Without making suffering into something to be sought, nonviolence can bring home the truth that “unearned suffering is redemptive.” It can be creatively enacted in ways that transform evil into a potential for good.
5. The attitude of nonviolence must be within the heart of the individual as well as his outer actions. “The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him.”
6. Nonviolence “is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice.” The practitioner can believe that she is not going against the grain of what is ultimate, but seeks rather to exemplify what is ultimate: redemptive suffering love.

These six come from Martin Luther King Jr.’s *Stride Toward Freedom* (NY: Harper & Row, 1958), summarized by Robert McAfee Brown in *Religion and Violence* (Phila.: Westminster, 1973). King learned from Mohandas K. Gandhi, who in turn learned from Leo Tolstoy on the spiritual grounding and orientation of nonviolence.

APPENDIX G

SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF METHODS OF VIOLENCE REDUCTION:

By the Reverend Roger Powers, Pastor, Light Street Church, Baltimore; consultant to the Steering Team.

Nonviolent Communication

Too often the words we use, especially in conflictual situations, escalate tensions rather than reducing them. We use words as weapons to blame, judge, criticize, or dominate others. At the same time, we don’t listen well. What we hear is distorted by our own prejudices and misconceptions.

Nonviolent communication is a process developed by Marshall Rosenberg that helps people to exchange the information necessary to resolve conflicts and differences peacefully. When using nonviolent communication, people listen deeply to themselves and others and articulate their observations, feelings, needs, and requests, honestly and respectfully with empathy and compassion. Nonviolent communication can help bring healing and reconciliation to interpersonal relationships in a variety of settings. More information is available from the Center for Nonviolent Communication (<http://www.cnvc.org>).

Interreligious Understanding

Religions are often blamed for being the cause of conflict and violence in the world. Religious identity is impossible to separate from other dimensions of personal identity, yet those who blame religion isolate it as the primary causal factor. In reality, political, ethnic, and economic factors bear much more responsibility for creating the underlying conditions that lead to violent conflict. Nonetheless, religions have within them a storehouse of resources to prevent violence and promote peace and reconciliation. For example, the Golden Rule—“Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk. 6:31)—is found in some form in all of the world’s major religions. Increasing interreligious understanding through interfaith dialogue is critical to peacemaking in the 21st century. Some Presbyterian teaching elders and congregations have been involved in interfaith dialogue in their local communities, particularly between Christians and Jews. These conversations are important and to be encouraged. At the same time, efforts to promote interreligious understanding and reconciliation must expand to include Muslims and other faith traditions. Strengthening these bonds of mutual respect and understanding between the religious traditions has a stabilizing effect in society.

Training and educational resources are available from a number of organizations, including the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding (<https://www.tanenbaum.org>), the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs (<http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu>), the Religion and Peacemaking Program of the U.S. Institute of Peace (<http://www.usip.org/centers/religion-and-peacebuilding-glas>), the Program on Religion and Reconciliation at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies (<http://kroc.nd.edu/research/religion-conflict-peacebuilding/program-religion-reconciliation>), the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions (<http://www.parliamentofreligions.org>), and Religions for Peace (<http://www.religionsforpeace.org>)

Conflict Resolution Skills

Methods of conflict resolution such as negotiation and mediation seek to settle disputes peacefully through mutual agreement. We encounter conflict regularly in our day-to-day lives -- at home, at work, in school, and in our congregations. Knowing how to manage and resolve these conflicts well is essential to the well-being of ourselves and others. But few people ever receive training in conflict resolution.

Many community mediation centers offer training in conflict resolution skills. For church leaders who want to learn the skills needed to address conflict in church settings, the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (<http://www.lmpeacecenter.org>) offers a Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders. Excellent educational resources are also available through the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School (<http://www.pon.harvard.edu>).

Faith-Based Community Organizing

Congregations have joined together in faith-based community organizations to work for social and economic justice in their communities. By building relationships with one another they discover their shared self-interest. By organizing their people and money, they build the power they need to influence key decision makers in government and business to act in the community’s interests. Working across lines of religion, race, and class, these interfaith community organizations have fought for affordable housing, better schools, funding for social services, and a host of other issues. These are efforts that address causes of structural violence, and hence contribute to less violence in families and communities.

Training in faith-based community organizing is available through four national organizing networks: the Industrial Areas Foundation (<http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org>), the Gamaliel Foundation (www.gamaliel.org), the PICO National Network (<http://www.piconetwork.org>), and the Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART) (<http://www.thedartcenter.org/>).

Nonviolent Third-Party Intervention

Most nonviolent direct action has been used by one or more parties directly engaged in a conflict. However, in the past few decades there has been growing experience with third parties, who are not part of a conflict, intervening nonviolently in the hopes of deterring violent attacks and human rights violations. Organizations such as Peace Brigades International (<http://www.peacebrigades.org/>), Witness for Peace (<http://www.witnessforpeace.org/>), Christian Peacemaker Teams (<http://www.cpt.org/>), Nonviolent Peaceforce (<http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/>), and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (<http://www.eappi.org/>), recruit, train, and deploy volunteers who provide an international nonviolent presence in areas of violent conflict.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has played a part in this through its Colombia Accompaniment Program (<http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/colombia/accompaniment>), which began in 2004 at the request of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (IPC). Colombia church leaders who had spoken out against human rights violations and who had supported families displaced by decades of war were facing threats of political violence. They asked the PC(USA) to send international companions to stand with them and provide a measure of safety for them as they carry out their prophetic ministry. In response to their request, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has worked with PC(USA) World Mission and the IPC to train over 130 volunteers, of whom 90 have been deployed as short-term mission workers to Colombia. Companions practice a ministry of presence with the IPC and with the displaced communities and human rights leaders with whom they work. The primary goal is to be a nonviolent presence of Christian support and solidarity with our church partners in the IPC, to “see and be seen,” and to share the story with churches and communities in the U.S. through prayer, education, and advocacy efforts.

Endnotes

1. Johnson, Kermit D. “Just War and Nuclear Deterrence,” in Ronald H. Stone and Dana W. Wilbanks, Eds., *The Peacemaking Struggle: Militarism & Resistance* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), p. 197. Johnson went on to determine that even various “tactical” nuclear war options then being advocated would not fit the criteria of Just War.
2. Much recent mainline pacifist discussion has been prompted by the writings of John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, and a number of Roman Catholic priests (whose vows forswear violence).
3. Long, Edward L. “The Mandate to Seek a Just Peace,” in Stone & Wilbanks, op. cit., pp. 29–41.
4. Presbyterians may be proud to know of the serious theological and ethical discussion of war and peace issues by Presbyterian scholars represented in several collections of essays, in particular: Ronald H. Stone and Dana Wilbanks, eds., *The Peacemaking Struggle: Militarism & Resistance* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985) and Ronald H. Stone and Robert L. Stivers, eds., *Resistance and Theological Ethics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004). With some writing more than once, thirty-six scholars participated in this work, representing most Presbyterian seminaries and a number of colleges and universities. Stone and Long, cited above, were chief co-authors of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling*. Stone’s role and that of the group of Theological Educators for Presbyterian Social Witness (now, Social Ethics Network) is described in Christian Iosso, “The Church Reformed, Always Resisting,” in Matthew Lon Weaver, ed. *Applied Christian Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).
5. Gowan, Donald E. and Ulrich W. Mauser, “Shalom and Eirene,” in Stone & Wilbanks, op. cit., p. 132–33.
6. (Green, Lapsley, Miles, and Verhey, eds. *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).
7. Kathryn Poethig points to the fundamental asymmetry involved in structural violence and to key analysts Gayatri Spivak (“sanctioned” or non-innocent ignorance), Catherine Lutz on misleading names and language, Slavoj Zizek on the distancing and falsifying impact of “virtualization,” and Sturken on the distortions of fear magnifying insecurity. See Spivak, Gayatri (2003). A conversation with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: politics and the imagination, interview by Jenny Sharpe, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(2): 609–24
8. Wink, Walter, “The Myth of Redemptive Violence,” <http://www2.goshen.edu/~joannab/women/wink99.pdf>.
9. King, Martin Luther Jr. *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*. 1967. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), p. 62.
10. Rene Girard’s work gives depth to the concept of unmasking and has been part of Presbyterian ethicists’ discussions of the persistence of violence. An example of his view: “Christ does not achieve this victory through violence. He obtains it through a renunciation of violence so complete that violence can rage to its heart’s content without realizing that by so doing, it reveals what it must conceal... because it will be recorded and represented with exactness in the Passion narratives.” Girard, Rene, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001), p. 140.
11. Robert McAfee Brown notes Brazilian Bishop Dom Helder Camara’s version of this in *The Spiral of Violence* (Dimension Books, 1971); Brown’s own *Religion and Violence* (Westminster, 1973) presents a pioneering assessment of structural violence.
12. Ortiz, Isabel, and Matthew Cummins, “Global Inequality: Beyond the Bottom Billion,” UNICEF Social and Economic Policy Working Paper, April 2011, p. 12. http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Global_Inequality.pdf.
13. Written February 28, 1948, Declassified June 17, 1974. Kennan, George, “Review of Current Trends, U.S. Foreign Policy, Policy Planning Staff, PPS No. 23. Top Secret. Included in the U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, volume 1, part 2 (Washington DC Government Printing Office, 1976), 524-525. <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?type=goto&id=FRUS.FRUS1948v01p2&isize=M&submit=Go+to+page&page=524>. Kennan is best known for the strategy of

containment that guided much US policy during the Cold War. Raised Presbyterian, his realism contained clearer moral components later in his published essays.

14. Friedman, Thomas L. "A Manifesto for the Fast World," *New York Times*, March 28, 1999. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/28/magazine/a-manifesto-for-the-fast-world.html>.

15. The cost comparisons in this section are distilled from The National Priorities Project: <http://nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2011/us-security-spending-since-911/>. The 2007 Harvard study referred to: <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2009/09/new-study-finds-45000-deaths-annually-linked-to-lack-of-health-coverage/>. The role of military expenditure in creating debt is summarized by Joshua Holland based on a study by economist Robert Higgs: <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=1941> Holland's article: http://www.alternet.org/story/151119/five_eye-opening_facts_about_our_bloated_post-9_11_defense_spending?page=0%2C1.

16. Johnson, Luke Timothy, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (SF: Harper Collins, 1996).

17. *Ibid.*, p. 149. Historical, literary, and other criticism can illuminate ways that texts and traditions developed, but Johnson, a biblical scholar himself, questions especially the use of Gnostic texts without passion narratives, as he relates "narrativity" to materiality.

18. While appreciating Hays' respect for the scriptural canon, Luke Timothy Johnson takes issue with him on his methodology for making ethical applications. For reviews by Johnson and four others: <http://www.westmont.edu/~fisk/articles/mvntreviews.htm>.

19. Horsley, Richard A., *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 319.

20. See Horsley, Richard A. *Jesus and the Powers* (Mpls: Fortress, 2011) for a recent synthesis of his work. Horsley sees Jesus as a prophet in the covenantal tradition and movement leader, rather than an apocalyptic visionary, wisdom teacher, or self-proclaiming messiah. As a transforming public martyrdom, the crucifixion amplifies Jesus' message and carries great power not only for occupied Israel but for all on the margins seeking hope.

21. Wink, Walter, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 175–193.

22. Margaret Aymer presented a critique of violent biblical imagery to the Peace Discernment consultation for Presbyterian universities and colleges in January 2013, at Montreat, N.C.

23. King, Martin Luther Jr., *Strength to Love*. 1963. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 39.

24. David G. Hunter summarizes the scholarly consensus among diverse scholars (pacifist and not) of the Early Church; "Even those who differed radically in their evaluations of the ancient material shared three basic conclusions: 1) that the most vocal opponents of military service in the early church (e.g., Tertullian and Origen) based their objections on a variety of factors, which included an abhorrence of Roman army religion as well as an aversion to the shedding of blood; 2) that at least from the end of the second century there is evidence of a divergence in Christian opinion and practice and that Christian support for military service (first reflected obversely in the polemics of Tertullian) grew throughout the third century; 3) that the efforts of Christians to justify participation in warfare for a "just" cause (most notably that of Augustine) stand in fundamental continuity with at least one strand of pre-Constantinian tradition."

David G Hunter, "A Decade of Research on Early Christians and Military Service," *Religious Studies Review*, 18/2 (April 1992) p. 87. Again, in the book, *The Church's Peace Witness* (1994), Hunter writes: "the pluralism of Christian witness today has a ground in the pluralism of the early church. From the very time when military service became a real option for Christians, there is evidence that Christians responded to it in a variety of ways... The witness of the first three centuries does not provide the Christian today with a univocal mandate for pacifism" (He reviews how early on Christians were *not allowed* to serve because they weren't citizens and so military service was not an option.) (p. 180) <http://www.eerdmans.com/Products/0555/the-church39s-peace-witness.aspx>

25. (Stone & Wilbanks, op. cit. at 4, p. 187. A non-Realist reading of Augustine is presented by Eugene TeSelle in *Living in Two Cities* (Scranton: University of Scranton, 1998, following an earlier debate in Richard John Neuhaus, editor. *Augustine Today*. Encounter Series, 16. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993.)

26. Wolterstorff, Nicholas *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 18.

27. Winn, Albert Curry, *Ain't Gonna Study War No More* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), p. 99, cited in Ott, Daniel J., "Toward A Realistic, Public, Christian Pacifism."

28. Creach, Jerome F. D. *Violence in Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2013).

29. Readers of Niebuhr will recognize references here to *The Irony of American History* and *Beyond Tragedy* as illustrations of his application of biblical resources.

30. Ott, Daniel J. "Toward a Realistic, Public, Christian Pacifism," *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* Volume 33, Number 3, September 2012, pp. 245–57.

31. This paragraph is from the Reverends Mark Davidson and Roger Powers, both pastors on the Peace Discernment steering team, putting recent scholarship into admittedly simplified antitheses.

32. For the Treaty of Westphalia's implications: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/> But perhaps the most fundamental and controversial account of what the church lost in the rise of empire in the West is Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker's *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Boston: Beacon, 2008). Acceptance of violence is a big part of this fall into empire. For a positive if questioning review: <http://www.christiancentury.org/reviews/2008-10/saving-paradise-how-christianity-traded-love-world-crucifixion-and-empire>.

33. The argument of this paragraph is informed by Victor Paul Furnish's, "Uncommon Love and the Common Good: Christians as Citizens in the Letters of Paul," in Patrick D. Miller and Dennis P. McCann, eds. *In Search of the Common Good* (NY/London: T&T Clark, 2005). This essay in particular tempers other voices we have cited who argue for the recovery of a deliberately sectarian, distinctive church. Furnish gives a distinctive church but one concerned with its culture even in the earliest century when it had no power.
34. Iran has claimed that its program of enriching nuclear material is for energy production and not an imitation of the covert weapons development by Israel, India, Pakistan, N. Korea and the nuclear powers on the UN Security Council. International sanctions, plus computer viruses, sabotage, and assassinations of scientists led Iran to agree to dismantle its capacity to build a bomb, and submit to inspections in accord with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement.
35. The role of the transnational Roman Catholic community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique is described by Andrea Bartoli, one of its members: "Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Mozambique Peace Process," in Helmick, Raymond, S.J. and Rodney L. Petersen, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (Phila. & London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), pp. 361ff.
36. Stephan, Maria and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict" *International Security* 33:1, pp. 7-44. <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/isec.2008.33.1.7>.
37. Further information about the techniques for nonviolent direct action is available from The Albert Einstein Institution (<http://www.aeinstitut.org>) and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (<http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/>). (Sharp himself, a minister's son, does not emphasize particular religious motivation but encourages widest applicability.)
38. This story can be found at: https://www.goshen.edu/mqr/Dirk_Willems.html
39. See Johnson, Kermit and Ronald H. Stone essays, op. cit. at endnote 1.
40. Quoted in Introduction, "The Promise of Peace," *Church & Society*, Sept/Oct 1983, p. 4 That issue of *Church & Society* journal (available online through the American Theological Library Association) was edited by Robert F. Smylie, longtime director of the Presbyterian United Nations Office (now the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations). Perhaps the best treatment of Presbyterian thinking on peace leading up to 1980 is Smylie's "A Presbyterian Witness on War and Peace: An Historical Interpretation" *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Winter, 1981, 59:4. The Presbyterian response to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings was influenced by the notable Federal and National Council of Churches' study commissions chaired by Robert Calhoun and Angus Dun, which reported in 1944, 1946, and 1950. See Charles E. Raynal, "The Response of American Protestantism to World War II and Atomic Weapons," in Thomas D. Parker and Brian J. Fraser, eds. *Peace, War and God's Justice* (Toronto, Ont: United Church Publishing House, 1989). That Parker and Fraser collection, done for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, stands well beside the two collections cited in Footnote 4.
41. Hedges, Chris, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (N.Y.: Public Affairs, 2002).
42. Stassen, Glen, ed. *Just Peacemaking: Ten Principles to Abolish War* (Pilgrim Press, 1998).
43. <http://www.palgrave.com/in/book/9780230339897>. Thistlethwaite, Susan, ed. *Interfaith Just Peacemaking* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2012).
44. Stone, Ronald H. *Prophetic Realism: Beyond Militarism and Pacifism in an Age of Terror* (London/NY: T&T Clark, 2005), p. 119.
45. Narvaez, Leonel, *Political Culture of Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (Bogota: Fundacion Para La Reconciliation, 2009 (original Spanish) and 2010 (English)). Includes essays by Narvaez and Hicks.
46. <http://www.faithandleadership.com/content/mel-baars-war-and-the-dimensions-love>) The PCCMP was formerly the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel: <http://pccmp.org/who-we-are/history>.
47. See: <http://brite.edu/academics/programs/soul-repair/>.
48. See *Ministry to Persons in the Armed Forces*, adopted by the 187th General Assembly (1975), *Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1975, Part I, pp. tk. This careful study reflects on chaplaincy from WWII through Vietnam, outlines Christian anti-war criticism, and builds on the 1969 policy endorsing conscientious objection to particular wars adopted by the UPCUSA 181st General Assembly (1969) in *War, Peace, & Conscience*.
49. John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 14.
50. Attacks on "empire" are nothing new: Christians have been comparing their governments to Rome from the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment through to our day. And yet, the word still powerfully names the misuse of power, the use of other people and nations for our benefit more than theirs. Dan Ott, in his analysis of the results, proposed a definition partly based on national selfishness. "Empire" is that and more; it carries an echo of the "principalities and powers, and thus is retained for its metaphorical and biblical power of association.
51. For a downloadable version of Accra Declaration: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/accra-confession-covenant-justice-economy-and-eart/>.
52. Fandos, Nicholas, "U.S. Foreign Arms Deals Increased Nearly \$10 Billion in 2014," *The New York Times*, Dec. 25, 2015: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/26/world/middleeast/us-foreign-arms-deals-increased-nearly-10-billion-in-2014.html>.
53. This paragraph combines a number of trend analyses reflecting a steady military spending trajectory: <http://www.ibtimes.com/global-defense-budget-seen-climbing-2014-first-total-increase-2009-russia-surpasses-britain-saudi>.
54. Mary Kaldor ("new wars") and John Arquilla (network wars, or "netwars") see globalization eroding state sovereignty so that non-state militants function in states that fail to provide protection and face social/demographic crises.
55. See online: www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/A%20National%20Strategic%20Narrative.pdf.

56. Eisenhower's words are worth remembering:

"This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together." (Eisenhower's Farewell Address, January 17, 1961)

57. See Ronald H. Stone, *Prophetic Realism*, op. cit. at xxx, Chapter 6, "On Power and Purpose," pp. 72–83, for influence on this section.

58. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis and Transformation of the American World Order*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

59. Bacevich, Andrew J. *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (N.Y.: Metropolitan/Macmillan, 2010). This book provides the basis for this paragraph.

60. Winthrop, John "A Model of Christian Charity." See http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/519465.John_Winthrop.

61. The placement of this text in Luke is another argument against the exchange with the money-changers being a violent one. This passage was one featured in the 2012 Season of Peace Bible Study leading up to the Peacemaking Offering: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/season_of_peace_bible_study_the_things_that_make_for_peace.pdf.

62. Little, David, ed. *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution* (N.Y.: Cambridge University Press/Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, 2007).

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 442–47.

64. Allan Boesak included this analysis in his presentation to the Consultation on Peace Discernment for Presbyterian-related colleges and universities, January 19, 2013.

65. Andrea Bartoli suggested this understanding of peacemaking as an art in his keynote at the Consultation on Peace Discernment for Presbyterian-related colleges and universities, January 19, 2013.

66. Hallie, Philip, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The story of the village of Le Chambon and how goodness happened there* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 245.

67. The San Jose Presbytery added a sixth affirmation reflecting the position of First Presbyterian Church, Palo Alto, by a vote of 38 yes to 36 no. That affirmation reads: "We encourage the Peace Discernment team, in collaboration with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, to develop materials and processes by which individual churches may consider declaring themselves Peace Churches. A Peace Church is defined as a church embracing nonviolence as the fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror and war. It is an expressed commitment to nonviolence as a solution to international conflicts and a statement of full support for anyone electing to be a conscientious objector to military service."

Item 12-07

[The assembly approved Item 12-07. See pp. 14, 68.]

New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A "Nuevo Momento"—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

In fulfillment of the assignment of the 221st General Assembly (2014), in cooperation with the Cuba Partners Network, and after consultation with representatives of La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (The Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

1. Approve the following affirmation and receive the study paper and discussion questions (as found in the *Rationale* section):

Affirmation of Cuban and U.S. Presbyterian Mission Achievements and Goals for the Future

The United States and Cuba are poised to end one of the last chapters of the Cold War and to reestablish full official governmental and economic relations. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that direction and looks forward to a free and open relationship between our peoples and churches. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rejoices at the prospect of deepening our communion with La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC). We earnestly look to our sister church for guidance in how to proceed, not only for our mutual upbuilding in our shared faith in Jesus Christ, but for the blessing and wisdom of our peoples.

As this long-hoped-for process gains momentum and acceptance, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that the Cuban Revolution did not break all ties across those Florida straits. We honor those who maintained connections and kept faith over the fifty-seven years since that revolution. Cubans and Cuban Americans have negotiated a complex relationship that contains within it a longer history of colonization and settlement, cultural exchange and missionary endeavor, economic development and economic exploitation. The church recognizes those who were determined to remain Presbyterian in Cuba after 1959 and those who created and shared in more than eighty mission partnerships between Cuban and U.S. synods, presbyteries, seminaries, and congregations. This has not simply been a form of “citizen diplomacy.” This has been a joint labor of love that has sought to embody God’s peace across daunting ideological lines.

At the same time, the church presents this report as a call for a better and fairer relationship than our nations have had both before and after Cuba’s 1959 revolution. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to support the self-determination and initiative of the Cuban people, a cause for which they have struggled for more than two centuries. Cuba has represented resistance to the hegemony of the United States in this hemisphere, and thus has played a symbolic role in regional movements for greater social and economic equality, as its social progress—though not its form of government—has been emulated. Cuba was also affected by its positioning within the bipolar competition of the Cold War. Now oligarchic rule in many Latin American nations has been transformed, and indigenous populations have begun to receive better treatment. In this “Momento Nuevo,” we hope that a transformed U.S.-Cuban relationship can help improve relations between peoples, governments, and cultures throughout Latin America. The General Assembly called for this report in June of 2014 in hopes of hastening the reconciliation of our peoples and churches, six months before the December 17, 2014, joint announcement of reopening diplomatic relations.

While there is much to celebrate, ensuring a sustainable future will require much practical and painstaking work of reconciliation. The problems of racism, inequality, and poverty persist in both our nations, stunting hope and distorting values, though in different ways. We are particularly encouraged at the role taken at the highest level of the Roman Catholic Church’s leadership in helping break a long impasse; our prayer is for the self-determination of the Cuban people to be respected among all the nations of the world. Just as we hope for better understanding of the sacrifices and achievements made during the years of separation, we know some real wounds remain to be healed. As citizens of the larger country, we bear the greater responsibility for the impact of the embargo and economic damage caused from outside (to speak of moral, not specific legal responsibilities). We acknowledge the suffering of split families and the wounds of migration between those who left Cuba for the U.S. and other countries and those who chose to or had to stay.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has sought to understand and respond to events since its 1969 statement, *Illusion and Reality in Inter-American Relations*. The church has analyzed and addressed the revolution, the Bay of Pigs attempted invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the tensions of proxy wars in Southern Africa, the real and imagined influence of Cuba on other countries, and the political decisions favoring Cuban immigration. While opposing all limitations on human rights in Cuba, the General Assembly has repeatedly called for an end to the economic embargo and other sanctions that have divided families and limited development without bringing about significant political change. The General Assembly and the World Mission area of the Presbyterian Mission Agency have also supported the development of a dedicated and creative mission network, The Cuba Partners Network. It has fostered more than eighty partnerships, benefitting the church as a whole and this study in particular.

Since that initial study in 1969, seeking to understand the causes and hopes of the Cuban Revolution as part of building more constructive relationships with all of Latin America, there have been both tragic wars and considerable gains for greater numbers of citizens. We believe that the example of partnership between La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and the PC(USA) played a role in the struggles for justice across the hemisphere, joining ecumenically with other churches in opposing interventions and seeking to reduce hostility. Moving forward, improved U.S.-Cuba relations should continue to contribute to a wider horizon of peace and mutual respect among nations. The assembly states its appreciation for the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy’s ability to meet with Cuban government representatives and officials of the State Department and National Security Council of the United States.

The study paper that supports these recommendations provides data and summary analysis on these topics: economic change and human values, social and racial concerns, Cuban American and Cuban communities, the religious environment, the natural environment, political dynamics, military and human security factors (with the U.S. and other nations in the region).

This report affirms Cuba’s gains in some economic and social areas, such as in education and medical care, without ignoring limitations on civil and other rights. Our recommendations, both to governmental policymakers in the United States and nongovernmental organizations, including religious bodies, focus on ways to improve the

process of transition. We do not want to repeat the distorted development, cultural and military imperialism, and internal restrictiveness of the past.

2. Approve the following recommendations:

a. For the Church:

(1) Celebrate and strengthen the ecclesial relationship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) as sister churches, highlighting our shared history, faith tradition, and participation in ecumenical bodies, such as the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches. Although the relationship between our two churches is unique in some ways, the IPRC and the PC(USA) engage in common ministry and mission with and through other ecumenical partners and organizations. We recognize and support the many contributions of the IPRC to the church universal through its leadership and witness over the years in ecumenical bodies.

(2) Celebrate and strengthen our partnership with the IPRC (including the partner congregations, presbyteries, and the many relationships and projects that have united members of our churches) with special attention to incarnating the principles and commitments of mutuality and interdependence in the discipline of mission partnership and to promoting and supporting the priorities of the IPRC as a church that God has called and planted in Cuban soil.

(3) Update our partnership agreement between the PC(USA) and IPRC in light of new hopes and realities as we assess together new opportunities for mutual mission. In this partnership, the PC(USA) normally addresses the U.S. government and the IPRC addresses the Cuban government.

(4) Direct the Office of the General Assembly to see that this report is posted in easily downloadable form, printed in limited quantity, and shared with church partners, ecumenical bodies, and public officials.

b. In Support of Changes in Cuban Church Life:

Support the IPRC's efforts to receive legal recognition as a church through changes in Cuban law concerning religious bodies, consistent with their exercise of religious liberty¹, and with control over the disposition or improvement of church properties. Recognizing the possibility of more competition for members if foreign capital is allowed to pour without restraint into some kinds of religious groups, we affirm the importance for congregations that are part of historically recognized churches to continue to receive contributions to their mission from overseas partners. We acknowledge that sometimes when hopes outrun realities people may seek new religions promising almost magic change and prosperity; let us learn also from the mistakes and successes of churches in countries that have gone through major social transitions.

c. For Governmental and NGO Engagement:

Support church, civil, and governmental groups working alongside the Cuban government to protect undeveloped areas and the Cuban environment from ill-considered mining, housing, or industrial uses, to plan responsible tourism that enhances biodiversity, and to cooperate with international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, preserve Caribbean ecology, etc. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will seek to support environmental and social responsibility in the visits of its partner congregations and in the recreational travel of families and individuals.

d. For international Financial Mechanisms and Corresponding National Policies:

(1) Support the invention or retention of as many culturally appropriate and communitarian solutions as are feasible to maintain the social achievements of Cuba, in health, education, social solidarity, and public services, while at the same time assessing, modifying, and implementing market mechanisms that can improve investment, productivity, and incentives in economic life. An important goal is to allow for orderly exposure to globalization and new communications, banking, and currency practices without price shocks and housing crises, although the economic opening and more remittances are already increasing inequality. Note: the accompanying study carefully documents the economic stress already present in Cuban life, and thus supports the cautious opening process recommended by our church partners.

(2) On the key issue of requests to reclaim private property abandoned or lost during the revolution, the assembly affirms the need to address those claims in light of subsequent history, without exploiting the inequality of negotiating power between our countries, and recommends that other dimensions of the larger reconciliation process should proceed in the meantime.²

(3) To support Cuba in overcoming the lingering economic effects of the embargo and of its past internal policies, we advocate for the U.S. government to offer mutually agreed-upon economic development assistance and to

end its (now legally mandated) opposition to Cuba's membership in the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank.

e. For Reducing Military Hostility and Restoring International Law:

(1) Commend the U.S. government and the Cuban government for reinstating their embassies in the two countries and initiating other diplomatic engagements, and encourage lawmakers of all persuasions to support this constructive direction. We note with appreciation the openness in both governments to the role of the Papacy and welcome further ecumenical cooperation. We affirm the appropriate removal of the Cuban government from the list of state sponsors of terror (May 2015) and the expansion of civil liberties in Cuba, both encouraged by past General Assemblies.³

(2) End policies of isolation and the threat of regime change. This would include the embargo or "el Bloqueo," the impedimentary acts, and pressures on other nations to exclude or constrict opportunities for Cubans. Surveillance overflights and other intrusion into Cuban sovereignty should have judicial review and public accountability and disclosure. The United States should support regional relationships that normalize relations and develop a common security model against smuggling, trafficking, infectious diseases, and any credible threats of terrorism. Radio Marti and other publicly funded propaganda and/or destabilization efforts, and all public monies going to private or nonprofit groups sponsoring such efforts, should be ended. The State Department should continue its human rights and religious liberty reporting on Cuba, consistent with its general practice.

(3) Return Guantanamo to the Cuban nation. The prisons on Guantanamo set up under the second Bush administration to avoid provisions of due process guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, remain an affront to human rights everywhere and damage the reputation of the United States. We remember that this military base imprisoned Haitians in the past. It also has surveillance facilities to monitor the lives of Cubans and others. As was formerly the case in Panama, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and other former colonies, the unwanted presence of military and other foreign-controlled bases constitutes a limited occupation of Cuba and should be ended.⁴

(4) Normalize immigration policies: The Cuban Adjustment Act, the Medical Doctor Parole Program, and other preferential measures for Cuban immigrants to the U.S.A. are now out-of-date as Cuba changes. To the extent that these programs were meant to weaken the Cuban government by taking in human capital, their purpose is no longer served, and they are counterproductive to building positive relationships between our peoples. Such steps will also improve relations with other nations by ending double-standards for Cubans.

(5) In the spirit of a doxology, the General Assembly promises on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to pray for our sister and partner church, the IPRC, and requests prayers in return, so that we both may minister and witness to God's domination-free reign.

Rationale

These recommendations are in response to the following referral:

2014 Referral: Item 11-06. Refer Back to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Cuba Partners Network to Rework This Important Concept (and Future Funding Sources) in Light of the PC(USA)'s and This Assembly's Commitment to Deepening Our Relationship by Careful Analysis of the Ongoing Complex Situation in Cuba (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 832-35).

New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A Nuevo Momento

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Christians, one of our fundamental concerns must always be for peace and reconciliation. In the case of Cuban-U.S. relations, this means understanding the impact of economic and other sanctions imposed on Cuba in response to its revolution, and the ways U.S. foreign policy throughout the Caribbean reflected a long cold-war strategy of isolation and impoverishment. Cuba's own policies were affected by its relationship with the then-Soviet Union in a bipolar ideological competition with the "West." Recent scholarship continues to reveal ways in which the U.S. government has sought to undermine or overthrow the Cuban government. So the current welcome moment and its new, different approach through licensed travel, scripted dialogue, and incremental diplomacy stands in real tension with the "regime change" that continues to be the official policy of the U.S. government.⁵ But Cuba cannot be reduced to its government, and nor should the influence of that government be reduced to a caricature.

The Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC), the Cuba Partners Mission Network, and PC(USA)'s World Mission ministry area have been invaluable for understanding the spiritual and cultural impacts of Cuban governance on the church and society generally. Broadly speaking, at the cost of some civic freedoms, Cuba made very considerable gains in social and economic rights, largely equalizing and making universal the provision of medical care, education, housing, nutrition, and other safety-net components. Cuba attained rankings in many categories of social welfare comparable to developed

European and Asian nations, and has maintained many of these achievements since, despite the end of Russian oil subsidies subsequent to 1989 and a “Special Period in Time of Peace” of austerity, depression, and “out-migration” that followed. Perhaps ironically, the aging trends for the Cuban population (discussed below) are similar to some of those developed nations, though domestic policies and economic weaknesses contribute to making longevity more problematic for society.

Cuba has also played a critical role in the relation between the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, U.S. foreign policy has been critical of the Venezuelan government since the election of the late Hugo Chavez for providing oil to Cuba at reduced prices. Added to other exclusions and pressures described in the body of this report, this opposition to a pro-Cuba government reinforces the perception in much of Latin America that the United States presumes a continuing right to influence other nations in its sphere of influence. While it is an equally common assessment that the embargo and other U.S. pressures have strengthened the Castro-led government, providing a constant excuse for austerity and surveillance, Cuba’s nationalism and social commitments long antedate the 1959–1961 revolution, going back to Jose Marti and struggles against Spanish colonial rule. This report looks at some of those enduring Cuban values and aspirations, including the desire not to have its society, economy, and environment reshaped—again—by or for the benefit of outside interests.

This report also looks at less well-known aspects of Cuban life: the movement from an atheistic state to a secular one, permitting increasing amounts of religious liberty; the scope of economic liberalization and increasing trade and tourism; the emergence of some racial and social inequality as outside remittances and investment reenter; the generational transition in attitudes among the two million Cuban Americans, no longer wedded to efforts to punish a regime identified with the Castro brothers; and transformations in that regime. The Cuban military is not given in-depth treatment here, partly due to limited information, but largely due to its primarily defensive capacity (“war of the people”) since the end of the major Soviet subsidies (during the 1970s and 1980s).⁶

The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba was begun by Cuban patriots in the 1890s, but became part of U.S. Presbyterianism for much of the 20th century. After the revolution and failed Bay of Pigs invasion, only 30 percent of Cuban Presbyterian pastors remained, among other reductions in members and resources. The IPRC chose to become an independent church, but at the same time a faithful partnership began with sister U.S. congregations and presbyteries, despite the embargo. The church suffered under official antireligious policies that have lessened since 1991. With the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, all religious bodies continue to lack standing except as associations that are part of civil society. The testimony of our partnerships is of a brave and determined church that remains committed to both evangelism and social justice in its society.

Key recommendations are: to celebrate the life of the La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba and maintain its fruitful partnerships with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); to support the IPRC’s legal standing as a Christian church among other religious bodies; to honor the social achievements and democratic values of Cuba, while encouraging full civil liberties; to support the normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations within a productive Caribbean community of nations, necessarily ending the embargo; to affirm steps already taken in removing barriers and hostility, while calling for an end to immigration preferences that encourage emigration, particularly of physicians; and to renew the call to return Guantanamo Bay naval station, closing its infamous prison and ending its unconstitutional violations of human rights. Many of these are not matters for “quid pro quo negotiation” as they are unilateral laws or practices of the U.S., with no commensurate measures on the part of Cuba. Looking forward, the church seeks to learn from and participate with our Cuban partner church in social and environmental mission and witness that seek the common good of their country and ours.

A. *Introduction*

In the spring and summer of 2015, a joint committee comprised of members of the Cuba Partners Network (CPN), the Advisory Committee of Social Witness Policy (ASCWP), Presbyterian World Mission, and the La Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) undertook the task of updating the Presbyterian policy on Cuba for consideration by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Assembling as “partners” in Havana and Matanzas, Cuba, and in Washington, D.C., to hear from experts representing both governments and church organizations, advocacy groups, ecumenical partners, social educators, and other activists, the committee’s task was to gain an understanding of the current economic and social reality in Cuba and make recommendations that build on PC(USA)’s long and strong relationship with the Cuban church. Along with the public policy dimension, this report and its recommendations also reflect on mission strategies for our two churches, as a contribution to the work of Presbyterian World Mission ministries in the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

The assembly’s assignment came in the form of a referral to the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy and the Cuba Partners Mission Network “to rework this important concept (and future funding sources) in light of the PC(USA)’s and this assembly’s commitment to deepening our relationship by careful analysis of the ongoing complex situation in Cuba” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 67, 832). The concept referred to was that of a consultation in both countries proposed in an overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe (Item 11-06). The funding question was answered by the generosity of the Cuba Partners Mission Network in raising funds,⁷ and all ACSWP members participating also donated personally. More will be said on the assignment below, but it is important to note that the assembly approved two other measures designed to improve U.S.-Cuba

relations: removal of Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (see Item 11-03, *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 826), and lifting of the travel ban (Item 11-05, *Minutes*, 2014, Part I, pp. 65, 66, 830).

That the joint committee's task could not have been more timely is an understatement. In December of 2014, during early stages of the joint committee's work, the Obama administration introduced a set of reforms that included the reestablishment of diplomatic ties with Cuba, expansion of travel under general licenses, and a promise to review Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. (Cuba was officially removed from the list on May 28, 2015.)⁸ In initiating this reopening process, President Obama gave credit to Pope Francis, the Vatican's first pope of Latin American (Argentinian) origin, for his influence as encourager of a "new moment" and time for reconciliation.

The announcement was also well received in Cuba by our Cuban church partners, la Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de Cuba (IPRC). On December 17, 2014, the IPRC officers released a historic "declaration" recognizing the necessity to put to rest "the hostility of more than half a century" between the two nations. Welcoming President Obama's announcement, the IPRC statement emphasized years of serving as "bridges for meetings" and exchanges between Cuban and U.S. churches consistent with the church's historic mission to "struggle for peace and justice" while equally reminding us of the "harsh economic and trade measures" that the United States has imposed on the Cuban people (Declaration of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba, December 17, 2014).

Since then, the U.S. Congress has revisited the economic and trade measures against Cuba—the fifty-one-year old bloqueo (embargo)—and bipartisan efforts have sought to reduce the sanctions (see discussion below). National media, reflecting the general sentiment in the North American public, have also weighed in on the debate, best exemplified by the *New York Times* calling the "web of laws and regulations" as "frozen in time," ultimately surmounting to a "failed attempt" of "coercive means" toward political change.⁹ Then on July 20th, 2015, the Cuban flag went up in Washington, D.C. for the first time in fifty-four years. Members of the Cuban guard raised the Cuban flag at the historic Washington, D.C., Cuban Interests Section with onlookers shouting, "Cuba Si! Embargo No!" This was followed by the former Cuban Interests Section raising the U.S. flag in Havana on August 13, 2015. These acts signified the openings of both embassies and the day-to-day practicalities of diplomatic relations.¹⁰

To reiterate, many of these "incremental" changes have long been recommendations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), representative of years of energy, resources, and work by faithful partners here and in Cuba (see Statements in Appendix). Undoubtedly, President Obama has taken a monumental first step towards "normalization" of relations between the two countries, but as outlined in the following pages, we remain faithfully optimistic but also critically cautious, given myriad potential consequences for Cuba and the United States. Historically, relations between the two countries have never been "normal," neither during the prerevolutionary years (pre-1959) nor during the Cold War.

Prior to the revolution, Cuba's resources had long been exploited by the United States, represented by U.S. supported, often violent and oppressive puppet regimes whose main purpose was to advance interests of agribusinesses at the cost of economic and political livelihoods of resident Cubans.¹¹ The revolution, largely a movement to uproot the "dependency models" from Cuba and other "banana republics," would occupy much of the western hemisphere during the late 19th and through the 20th century, and would be met with great resistance by the United States. This resistance is best exemplified by the array of Cold War sanctions that compose the now fifty-three-year-old embargo as well as government-level support for many of the revolution's most vociferous opponents in the Cuban exilic community.¹²

Much has changed since then, with a more politically diverse Cuban American community largely comprised of "transnational immigrants" who view migration as part of a "family project" and support reconciliation between the two countries, along with overwhelming support for diplomacy by U.S. citizens in general.¹³ But resistance by a handful of powerful members of Congress remains, and "change," as we learned through our Cuban partners, isn't always good, with potential negative ramifications if not fomented in ways that respects the environmental, political, economic, cultural, and religious autonomy of the Cuban people. This report, then, examines the political and economic changes occurring in Cuba and the region, and looks at ways the church should both adapt to and seek to affect those changes. It was produced with the input of numerous voices, above all that of the IPRC, though it is not a joint report and they are not responsible for any recommendations.

B. *Sisters and Brothers in an Enduring Relationship: The Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

This section examines the history of the IPRC in Cuba, with an eye on relations with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and current pastoral and mission challenges.

1. *The Early Years*

Protestantism was introduced in Cuba, not by U.S. missionaries, but by Cuban patriots who had spent time in the U.S. in the 1870s and 1880s as they worked for independence. One of these was Evaristo Collazo, who, with his wife Magdalena, started a school and worship services in their home in the 1880s. In early 1890, he wrote to the Board of Foreign Missions of

the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) asking them to send someone to see what he was doing and determine if it would merit some support.

The PCUS immediately sent the Reverend Anthony Graybill. Before he returned to Mexico, he held preaching services in Havana, baptized some forty adults who elected two men to form a session, ordained those two as elders, “organized” a Presbyterian church, and finally, by his own hand, ordained Collazo to the ministry and installed him as pastor of the new congregation. He also had visited Santa Clara, the home of Magdalena, and left a group of converts there as well.

These events founded the Cuban Presbyterian Church institutionally and began the relationship with the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Graybill and others visited the mission on several occasions in the next few years, strengthening the work in Havana and bringing more formal organization in Santa Clara and surrounding towns.

When José Martí, Maximo Gómez and others initiated the Third War for Cuban Independence in 1895, Cuban patriot Evaristo Collazo enlisted. In the chaotic and repressive climate during the next few years and without indigenous leadership, the nascent congregations melted away.

After the U.S. took ownership of the war in 1898 when it was almost over, changed its name to the Spanish-American war, and occupied Cuba, missionaries of both the PCUS and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) soon went to Cuba.¹⁴ Missionaries dominated the work to the extent that the Presbytery of Cuba celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1950, counting from the arrival of the missionaries rather than the work of Collazo. In fact, there was a strong sentiment in the U.S., among the churches as well as the nation, that Cuba should be annexed by the U.S., a vision that dates back to the Founding Fathers! The PCUSA actually assigned oversight of its work in Cuba to the Board of National Missions.

The PCUSA missionaries connected with Evaristo Collazo, who had survived the conflict, and began to organize churches and schools. Scarcely five years after the first resident missionaries arrived, the relationship to the PCUSA was profoundly altered. The Presbytery of Havana was organized in 1904 with seven congregations and five ministers. It was assigned by the General Assembly to the Synod of New Jersey and remained such until the Cuban church became autonomous. in 1967. From mission field to an organic part of the PCUSA, sending commissioners to the General Assembly! Though still dependent on the support of the Board of National Missions, the Cuban Presbyterians controlled many aspects of their work, the preparation of their leadership, and ordained their ministers.

The PCUS centered their work around Santa Clara and in Cárdenas, where the oldest continuing congregation in Cuban Presbyterianism was organized in 1900. In that same year, Robert Wharton started the school that grew into the famous and influential Colegio la Progresiva. A number of congregations and schools were established in the towns around Santa Clara, but the PCUS did not constitute a Cuban presbytery until 1914, and even after that “The Mission” remained intact with authority over much of the work.

A spirit of ecumenism and comity dominated the U.S. Protestant mission enterprise in the early 1900s. In 1909, the Congregational Church turned its Cuba mission over to the PCUSA, four ministers and five congregations, including San Antonio de los Baños and Guanabacoa. In 1918, the Disciples of Christ also ended their work in Cuba, and a pastor and two churches, Matanzas Central for one, became part of the Presbytery of Havana. The most consequential addition came also in 1918, when the PCUS ceded its mission to the PCUSA, an early example of Presbyterian reunion. The new Presbytery of Cuba gained six ministers and eight churches, including Cárdenas, Placetas, and Caibarién, as well as several more schools and La Progresiva. The accession of sizeable numbers of ministers and congregations from non-Presbyterian traditions of theology and polity exerted their influence and a “Cuban way” began to emerge.

Presbyterians had a theological school in Cárdenas for many years, but in 1946 it was closed and merged into the new Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, founded by the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist Churches of Cuba. Preparation of indigenous leadership had been an objective of the PCUSA from the beginning and the churches and schools in Cuba were led by Cubans from the earliest years.

2. *Aftermath of the Cuban Revolution*

A number of Cuban Presbyterians, including students at La Progresiva, were active in the movement to overthrow Cuban Dictator Fulgencio Batista. When that movement succeeded in the triumph of the armed resistance led by Fidel Castro on January 1, 1959, a number of Cuban Presbyterians initially served in national and provincial positions. The Presbytery of Cuba, with generous financial support from the Board of National Missions, was given a tract of land in the mountains of Eastern Cuba and established a health and education center in Tanamo.

That brief “honeymoon” ended abruptly in 1961 with the bombing of Cuban airports, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the U.S. termination of diplomatic relations, and the establishment of the embargo, always known in Cuba as the “blockade.” The Cuban Revolution was declared to be socialist with Marxist-Leninist ideology, the schools and clinics of the Presbytery of Cuba were nationalized, and Cuba was proclaimed an officially atheist country. Large numbers of Presbyterian clergy and lay people left Cuba and the Presbyterians of Cuba entered a thirty-year wilderness journey.

Fifty years of mission dependency ended almost overnight, as the U.S. embargo made it impossible for the PCUSA to supply financial aid, or even to pay its Cuban pensioners what they were due. The Cuban Presbyterian Church would have to survive on its own commitment and its own resources if it were to survive. The small cadre of leaders who chose to remain in Cuba made heroic choices and the church survived though it dwindled down to a veritable remnant. A number of Cuban clergy who had been studying abroad returned to Cuba and joined the core leadership of the remnant church.

In October 1963, the whole church was called to gather in the First National Institute to discern a way forward. Dr. John Mackay, the beloved Scottish Latin American missionary, then President of Princeton Seminary, led the worship and delivered the keynote addresses. Two years of follow-up that included a study process in the congregations, consultation with the Board of National Missions when they could meet in World Council of Churches meetings, and the work of a special commission resulted in a proposal adopted by the presbytery in March of 1966 to overture the 1966 General Assembly, to meet in Boston, to dismiss the Presbytery of Cuba in order to constitute an autonomous and independent Presbyterian church. In spite of the opposition of the Synod of New Jersey, of which the Presbytery of Cuba was a part, the General Assembly approved the overture.

The Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba was constituted in January 1967 in the First Presbyterian Church of Havana. The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) moderator and stated clerk and the general secretary of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations had obtained State Department permission to travel to Cuba to represent the UPCUSA and certify the official actions. The new IPRC immediately voted to join the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches as well as other ecumenical bodies. They also ordained Ofelia Ortega Suárez to the ministry, the first Presbyterian/Reformed woman in Latin America to be ordained.

This event again changed the relationship between Presbyterian bodies in Cuba and the U.S. Though many U.S. Presbyterians think of Cuba as a “daughter church” during the long years of joint existence, in reality from 1904 onward it was simply an organic part of the U.S. Presbyterian church, like the Presbytery of Chicago or the Presbytery of Monmouth. For most of those years, the Board of National Missions provided the essential linkage between us as well as mission support, which was like support for Spanish work in New Mexico or Native American ministry in North Dakota. Now, in 1967, the Cuban church became a sister denomination and the mantle of relationship passed to the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations. That move, of course, did not make communication easier or escape the stranglehold of the U.S. embargo.

3. *New Mission Partnership Models and Methods*

The reunion of the UPCUSA and the PCUS in 1983 renewed the long-dormant Cuba connection of the PCUS. Though the reunited church was one, the program and mission agencies of the two former denominations remained in place for five years. In 1985, the IPRC invited the two U.S. denominational mission agencies to a partnership consultation in Havana, which produced a Mutual Mission Agreement that was approved by both churches.

The 198th General Assembly (1986) approved the Mutual Mission Agreement that had been developed by representatives of the IPRC and PC(USA) leaders, authorizing a Partnership in Mission that included: “exchange of seminary professors and students”; “participation of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba in the Mission to the USA Program”; “joint ministry in peacemaking programs”; “exchange programs between youth, women, and other groups”; and “relating middle governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba” (*Minutes*, 1986, Part I, pp. 589–90), subsequently amended also to authorize partnerships between congregations of the two denominations.

This historic agreement authorized the formation of official partnership agreements between presbyteries of the two churches, broadening the understanding of partnership beyond the traditional pattern of denomination to denomination. Agreements between the Presbytery of Long Island and the Presbytery of Havana, the Presbytery of South Louisiana and the Presbytery of Matanzas, the Presbytery of Transylvania and Presbytery del Centro, and the Presbytery of Santa Fe and the IPRC Council were soon established. Mutual visits began, in spite of the restrictions of the U.S. embargo. The Presbyterian Cuba Connection was established in 1996 to inform individual Presbyterians about the mission and ministry of the IPRC and to support it financially.¹⁵

The 1986 agreement opened the way to a mission partnership of unprecedented breadth and depth between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba. A consultation on “Mission in the New Millennium” was organized in November 2000 in Cuba, which brought together for the first time representatives of all the denominational and presbytery partnerships.¹⁶ From that celebratory and reflective meeting, a vision was born for a place where U.S. and Cuban church partners could learn from each other’s experiences, assist fledgling partnerships, and stay current with the concerns of the IPRC. Subsequently, the PC(USA) Cuba Partners Network was organized and the Mutual Mission Agreement was amended to allow congregation-to-congregation partnerships.

The 215th General Assembly (2003) approved the policy “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership” to guide our relationships within the PC(USA) and between PC(USA) entities and sister churches and institutions internationally. Understanding “mission” as “God’s mission” in the world (*Missio Dei*)—a mission to which we are all called—became the foundation

for the mission partnerships. In this discipline of partnership with other communions around the world, PC(USA) members and bodies are asked to:

- affirm that we are all recipients of the same grace that calls us to confess our individual and collective failings, to seek forgiveness for our complicity in injustice, to repent our histories of exploitation, and to move toward common celebration of Christ's work of reconciliation;
- relate to others in mutuality and interdependence;
- recognize and respect each one's equal standing before God;
- engage in dialogue, common discernment, and transparency, with differences mediated in a Christ-like manner; and
- share resources of all types with each other: human, cultural, financial, and spiritual.

This partnership model of mission has guided subsequent mission partnerships at all levels of the PC(USA) since its approval in 2003.

The growth in the number of partnerships and of the Cuba Partners Network of presbyteries, congregations, and organizations constitutes a dramatic and dynamic new era of mission partnership between the PC(USA) and the IPRC, and brings sizeable support and solidarity for the life and mission of the IPRC. But, it also holds a new danger of "missionary dependence," financially and culturally, for a Cuban church proud of its ability to survive on its own.

Currently the network includes some fifteen PC(USA) presbyteries and synods, ninety congregations, the Outreach Foundation, the Presbyterian Cuba Connection, and Living Waters for the World and Presbyterian World Mission working together in the Presbyterian Cuba Partners Network. At its annual meeting in 2013, the Cuba Partners Network, Presbyterian World Mission of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba affirmed the intention to work cooperatively as a "community of mission practice."

The year 2014 marked the 45th anniversary of the basic policy toward Cuba adopted by the 181st General Assembly (1969) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) stating that "consistent with the right of self-determination ... the United States Government should immediately take steps to re-establish normal relations with the Government of Cuba. This should include the lifting of the trade embargo against Cuba. ... The three United States military bases in Latin America should eventually be dismantled, subject to negotiation with Panama and Cuba" (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1969, Part I, pp.742, 744). Subsequent General Assemblies have reaffirmed and amplified this policy as U.S. policy toward Cuba has changed under succeeding administrations, though the fundamental realities first addressed in 1969 remain largely unchanged.

The 215th General Assembly (2014) considered and passed three overtures pertaining to Cuba: advocate for Cuba's removal from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism and a lifting of the travel ban to Cuba. The third overture approved the consultation about which this document reports.

The continued involvement of thousands of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with the life of their sisters and brothers in Cuba and their experience of the impact of the continued U.S. embargo on them and all the people of Cuba give the PC(USA) an unusually profound insight into the human impact of U.S. policy toward Cuba and an almost "personal stake" in continuing to seek just and peaceful relations between our two nations. Recent changes in Cuba bring new urgency to that quest and new hope for its successful outcome.

4. *The IPRC Pastoral Landscape*

The changes in the nature of partnership in the 1980s and '90s were not the only forces acting on the IPRC. The nation of Cuba entered a long "Special Period in Time of Peace" after the disintegration of the European Communist bloc in 1989 suddenly ended the support and subsidies for Cuba. In 1990, Fidel Castro met with leaders of the Protestant Church in Cuba and requested their moral support in the very trying times. His approach to the churches was made known in the mass media and things began to change for the churches. It was all right to go to church! The Cuban Constitution was changed in 1991 to eliminate the official commitment to atheism and instead make the state neutral in matters of religion.

It became possible to renovate church facilities that had almost collapsed. New people started to come to church, many who had dropped out in the '60s returned, new vocations for the ministry increased. Some of the new members were actually Presbyterians who did not leave Cuba in the post-revolutionary exodus, but who left the church. Most new members were completely new to Christian faith, without biblical knowledge and or much ethical teaching apart from the social commitments stemming from the revolution. Pastors faced the challenge of reconciling those who stayed with the church and those who left, as well as a renewed emphasis on Bible study and teaching of basic Christian values. The IPRC is still struggling to meet these challenges.

More significant for the IPRC, it became possible again to move slowly and cautiously into social space to serve people. The IPRC had developed and adopted a Confession of Faith in 1977, until recently the only confession adopted in Latin America, and one done in the context of a socialist state. Its emphasis on service was very strong, harkening back to the days before the revolution when education and medical care were prominent needs. One of the dramatic indications of this new ability to move into social space came in June of 1999 with the Cuban Evangelical Celebration, a series of regional assemblies culminating in a huge celebration in Revolution Place in Havana with Fidel Castro and high officials present.

Since the early '90s, economic and social change in Cuba has been ongoing and accelerating. Changes have brought new challenges and opportunities formerly forbidden to the church. Whenever possible with new openings, pastors have led their congregations into new ministries of service and evangelism. Among them are breakfast feeding programs, physical exercise, social interaction and laundry services for the elderly, urban gardening demonstration plots, prison ministries, and AA program space. More recently they have also engaged in agricultural cooperatives and provision of clean community water in cooperation with Living Waters for the World. These missions came into being with limited resources, but often with the support of PC(USA) partners. All are in addition to traditional pastoral responsibilities of worship, education, counseling, care for the sick and grieving, working with lay leadership, and moderating the consistory (session).

At present with a few exceptions, congregations lie within the three presbyteries that constitute the synod. The IPRC Synod administratively is roughly equivalent to the PC(USA) General Assembly. There are thirty-three organized congregations in the IPRC Synod and fourteen dependent congregations (preaching points or mission outreach of an organized congregation), for a total of forty-seven. To serve these congregations, there are a total of twenty-five active ordained pastors, some already past retirement age and another seven lay pastors. There are roughly an equal number of men and women. According to recent figures there are at present five seminarians but the educational process is lengthy.

- Havana Presbytery: There are 11 congregations (9 organized and 2 dependent) served by 8 pastors.
- Matanzas Presbytery: There are 19 congregations (11 organized and 8 dependent) and 11 pastors; 2 lay pastors.
- El Centro Presbytery: There are 17 congregations (13 organized and 4 dependent.) There are just 6 pastors; 5 lay pastors.

Another eight ordained Presbyterian Reformed pastors serve in other roles such as staff within world ecumenical organizations, the Evangelical Theological Seminary (SET), and in preparing and publishing educational materials.

Challenges and opportunities for an IPRC pastor are real. Every pastor needs to work with congregations beyond his/her own, and/or to provide services for the presbytery, the IPRC Synod, and the Ecumenical Theological Seminary at Matanzas (SET). IPRC pastors also provide active support to the Cuban Council of Churches, The Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM), the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the World Council of Churches as participants, officers, and members of staff. As example of many roles/one person, the general secretary of the IPRC is a local church pastor, chair of the SET Board of Directors, teaches several times a week at the seminary, and represents the IPRC at meetings both within and without Cuba. To help alleviate the pastoral shortage, seminarians are also providing services on the weekends to pastorless congregations or preaching points.

Often, especially in El Centro and Matanzas, the congregations can be miles from each other requiring the pastor who serves multiple congregations to travel. Travel in Cuba is expensive and difficult. Most pastors do not have a reliable car or motorcycle. Two years ago, the El Centro general secretary was killed in a one-car accident, when he apparently fell asleep at the wheel returning home from moderating the consistory of a distant congregation.

By the grace of God and strong pastoral vocation, the IPRC continues in Christian witness. Sunday services are full and joyous. The gospel is proclaimed. The service flows in typical Reformed liturgical form, but is distinctly Cuban. Cuban hymns are accompanied by guitar, bongo, and tambourine. The benediction is sometimes danced into the street. Weekday activities are well-attended and there is a strong commitment to sharing of resources.

Pastoral training has been provided continuously by the Seminario Evangélico de Teología (SET) since its organization in 1946 by the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal churches. (The Methodists recently withdrew to form their own seminary, but the Fellowship of Baptists has been added.) SET provides theological education to Cuban Protestant students from many denominations as well as to students from Latin America and around the world. SET has increased the possibilities for broader theological education by offering extension courses around the island, leading to Bachelor of Arts degrees for both pastors and laypersons. It has been at the forefront of training and preparation to move into new areas of social and economic change as the government allows. The rector, the dean, as well as several key professors are members and clergy of the IPRC and also provide pastoral services whenever called upon.

The National Church Camp and Conference Center (CANIP), the land for which was purchased shortly after the revolution, has also functioned continuously. CANIP provides opportunities for summer youth camping, but has become a center for Christian education and theological training for lay leaders and pastors all year. That leadership training is provided by the all too few, but versatile, pastors of the IPRC.

These heavy demands on individuals are an ongoing concern. A major morale issue for many is that the insistent demands on the pastor can have negative impact on family life. Pastor apartments are often in the church, so there are virtually no barriers to protect private family time. Nor has the IPRC been immune to brain drain and its negative impact on morale generally. After years of hope and expectation invested in talented young seminarians, it is painful to see some, after ordination, abandon their posts and emigrate to the U.S., Spain, or elsewhere.

Economic pressures are always present and a constant worry. The General Assembly consultation team met with IPRC pastors at the Seminary in Matanzas for an afternoon. One older pastor expressed appreciation for the participation of PC(USA) churches in the mission projects (discussed above). He said “Our traditional services we can fund. For our mission projects we are dependent on funds from you churches from the north.”

While our partnership relationships have been strong and supportive of each other, the limited resources of local IPRC congregations, which host U.S. and other partner visits, are increasingly taxed. Most visitors do not speak Spanish and first-time visitors often have little sense of Cuban history and culture. English-speaking pastors and congregants are called on to travel with visitors to translate and provide needed orientation. Beyond housing, hosts provide meals and transportation for visitors. Although PC(USA) partners always reimburse them for these things, foodstuffs and vehicular resources (auto parts, tires, oil, and gasoline) are limited in availability and expensive. These specific shortages are expected to increase with the relaxation in U.S. travel bans and an upswing in the number of foreign visitors. Our IPRC partners are beginning to ask their PC(USA) counterparts to limit visits to once per year.

5. *Summary*

In summary, the IPRC confronts enormous challenges in the midst of the dramatic changes occurring in Cuba prior to and independent of the diplomatic opening announced on December 17, 2014, by President Raul Castro and President Barack Obama. The changes will increase in uncertain directions and at an uncertain pace as the modernization of the Cuban economy continues. The IPRC faces a leadership loss of young pastors moving to the U.S. as dramatic as that of the 1960s.

Relations with the Cuban government are characteristically fluid and murky. The activities of the church as well as all dimensions of civil society are still closely regulated by the government, and the IPRC officially needs governmental permission to engage in new activities to respond to a changing culture. The IPRC and other Protestant churches in Cuba are officially “associations” like a Masonic Lodge, not a “church.” Only the Roman Catholic Church is recognized as a church in the Cuban constitution. The IPRC can interface with government agencies only through an Office of Religious Affairs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. This severely circumscribes the possibilities for public policy advocacy and also the church’s efforts to influence the nature of change in a just and humane direction, one of the foundational commitments of Reformed churches. In its own public policy advocacy activities, the PC(USA) must urge the U.S. government to address these Cuban church/state issues in negotiations toward the establishment of fully normal relations between our two countries.

Accompanying and assisting the IPRC to engage in faithful ministry in the years immediately ahead will pose a continuing challenge to the PC(USA) General Assembly, Presbyterian World Mission, and other Presbyterian Mission Agency offices and the members of the Cuba Partners Network. A stance of careful listening to the IPRC and flexibility in policy and program are fundamental prerequisites together with excellent communication, coordination, and consultation within this community of mission practice.

Cuba Partners Network

The Cuba Partners Network meets annually in a four-year cycle that places the meetings for three years in the U.S. and the fourth year in Cuba. It is a time of rich sharing of worship, music, and partnership experiences with a variety of Presbyterian entities. At least one official Cuban representative, (and often others) is present at the U.S. meetings to share in theological reflection and to present the current issues and priorities before the Presbyterian-Reformed Church. The meeting in Cuba has an equal number of Cubans and U.S. participants. Workshops and plenaries offer opportunities for friendship and engagement with other partners. Working with Presbyterian World Mission, there are more than ninety U.S. congregations involved in—or seeking—congregational partnerships. Originally, partnerships were between presbyteries and there continue to be a number with a Cuban presbytery or synod counterpart. A number of other organizations engaged in development projects or Cuban issues are affiliated with the network. Living Waters for the World and LAWG (Latin American Working Group) often play an active role. Among other groups affiliated are the Presbyterian Cuban Connection, ARMMMS (Association of Retired Pastors and Spouses), and The Outreach Foundation.

C. *New Developments in Cuba*

This section identifies recent key economic, social, political, and religious developments in Cuba, as identified by the array of expertise and experience represented by the joint committee. These developments were either identified by committee members prior to our initial visit to Cuba, based on previous exchange and experience, or they arose in presentations by speakers as organized by the IPRC and committee members in Washington, D.C. The discussions with speakers, experts from their respective fields (church leaders, government officials, academics, community organizers, seminary students) and representatives of ACSWP/Cuba Partners Network and PC(USA) World Mission, provided a broad interpretive frame for analysis. Through this

process, key issues were prioritized by the committee, the Cuba Partners Network, and the IPRC representatives; members then volunteered to draft most of the following sections, which were later edited for reader accessibility.

1. *Cuba's Economy: Current Situation and Options for the Future*

a. *The U.S. Embargo Against Cuba*

One cannot speak of Cuba's current economy without addressing the impact of the embargo, now the longest enduring U.S. trade sanctions against any country. On October 27, 2015, speaking before the United Nations, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez estimated the economic damage to Cuba as \$121 billion dollars since it was first imposed in 1960.

President Obama has begun the process of lifting some of the embargo sanctions through executive order such as easing the rules on travel, internet-based business operations, banking and remittances, and U.S. companies' presence in Cuba. However, as the enforcing laws must be lifted by Congress, the embargo will not easily be dismantled and its other restrictions will remain in place.

The embargo is a complex mix of executive orders, several laws, and many regulations. Known to Cubans as the blockade (*el bloqueo*), the embargo began its development in 1960 under a partial trade sanction initiated by President Eisenhower, followed by full trade sanctions under President Kennedy. It has been added to over time and is largely enforced through six statutes: Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917; Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; Cuban Assets Control Regulations of 1963; Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (the Torricelli Law); Cuban Liberty and Democracy Solidarity Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton Act); and Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Act of 2000. Although treaty making is constitutionally assigned to the Executive branch, President William Clinton ceded authority in Cuban relations to Congress, whose assigned role is treaty ratification.

The embargo is often poorly understood by Americans and yet it is the issue that comes up most frequently when speaking with our IPRC partners about U.S./Cuban relations. They acknowledge that their controlled economy is often at fault for shortages but tell us of the socioeconomic hardships they believe are directly attributable to "el bloqueo." These, they say, fall heavily on the most vulnerable of their people.

Basic foodstuffs remain rationed and in short supply, which affects the elderly disproportionately. Almost every church in the IPRC has a feeding program for seniors. Water supplies are unsafe because of the difficulty of obtaining chemicals for purification or materials for renovation of old systems, endangering public health. Living Waters for the World has installed a number of purification sites at churches and at the seminary in Matanzas. In all cases this potable water is shared with the neighborhood and not restricted to church members. After the tightening of restrictions under the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Laws, the availability of medicines and medical equipment was drastically reduced, targeting the generally high quality of Cuban healthcare delivery. The IPRC church in Luyanó (district in Havana) keeps a garden of medicinal herbs, which is used to teach "traditional" alternative treatments. Herbs are shared with neighbors for such things as fevers, diarrhea, parasites, and depression. Obviously these are stop-gap programs and do not change the deprivation caused by embargo sanctions.

b. *The Broader Economic Picture*

Cuba is the largest Caribbean island country. As a comparison, the Dominican Republic (DR), which shares the island of Hispanola (formerly Quisqueya) with Haiti, is the next largest both in geographic size and population. Until the Cuban revolution in the 1950s, the two countries had a lot in common: they were former Spanish colonies, maintained a system of enslavement well into the 19th century, are composed of majority populations of African origin, functioned as plantation economies that moved toward tourism, and endured corrupt dictatorships. Table 1 shows how the two countries compare in recent years, before the latest move by the U.S. toward broader political and economic relationships with Cuba.

Cuba has 11.3 million in population, which has been declining very slowly (about 0.05 percent per year) since a peak in 2007. This compares favorably to post-socialist economies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, most of which have had substantial population declines since the 1980s. So far, low birth rates, not emigration, have been the main cause of the small population decline in Cuba, but that could change quickly if Cubans get more migration opportunities. Creating good job opportunities in Cuba as the economy opens up would help alleviate the challenge, albeit with emphasis on improved access for marginalized populations (discussed below).

There is already empirical concern that a large exodus of young workers would leave a problem for supporting the aging population that remains (see Section C.5. Cuba's Aging Population). During our joint visit to Cuba, members of the IPRC repeatedly expressed this concern. Within Cuba, substantial numbers are migrating from poorer areas in the southeast end of the island toward the northwest end of the island, where the capitol, Havana, is located. This is also anchored by the Cuban government's emphasis on building the port of Mariel (located west of Havana) that, when completed, would be the largest port of commerce in the Caribbean.

Table 1: Cuba and Dominican Republic, Compared (2011. World Bank database)

	Cuba	Dominican Republic
Land Area	107,400 sq. mi.	48,670 sq. mi.
Population	11.3 m	10.1 m
	Slight declines since 2007 peak	+ 1.3% growth per annum recently
Percent rural	23%	25%
Age 0–14	17%	31%
Age 65+	12%	6%
Life Expected, at birth	79	73
Fertility (births per woman)	1.45	2.5
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	5.4	16.9
GDP	\$68.2 b	\$58.1 b
GDP per capita US \$	\$6,081	\$5,730
GDP per capita, ppp	\$18,796	\$11,264
Exports % GDP	20%	26%
Imports % GDP	19%	31%
Tourism Arrivals	2.7 m	4.3 m
Tourism receipts	\$2.5 b (=3.7% GDP)	\$4.4 b (=7.6% GDP)
Cell phones per 100 persons*	18	88
Internet users per 100 persons*	26	46
*(2013)		

Cuba's per capita GDP of a little more than U.S. \$6,000 (at official exchange rates) is comparable to that of the DR (and Jamaica). Cuba looks better when converting with purchasing power parity (ppp), because that calculation is based on prices of basic necessities, which are kept down in Cuba. Consumer manufactured goods are less available and effectively costlier, although Cuba does a lot of trade with China (its largest trade partner since the dismantling of the Soviet Union in early 1990s) and other non-U.S. partners. Cuban exports and imports each equaled about 20 percent of GDP in 2011. These will grow as Cuba integrates more into the global economy. Speakers we met said they are concerned about the possible impact of rapid economic liberalization and did not want the country to lose its cultural distinctiveness, communitarian values, or social protections. Cubans will need to debate and decide what all this means, but it surely includes avoiding a big-bang economic opening that could decimate existing industries and agriculture and lead to mass unemployment and underemployment. This happened in Russia and other former soviet economies when they opened quickly in the early 1990s.

As the Cuban economy opens, they and their Caribbean neighbors will decide how to relate to each other and to the tourism business from the United States and elsewhere. In the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and other regional organizations, where the Dominican Republic has participated less than its size could warrant, the potential role of Cuba is unclear. The U.S. offers special trade and tax regimes to many Caribbean countries, and negotiations will need to determine how much Cuba could and would want to participate in that. The direction of Puerto Rico is also relevant for Cuba's future. Puerto Rico, officially known as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, is an unincorporated territory of the United States. Burdened by high debt and outmigration, there are movements among mainland and island Puerto Ricans to join regional trade and political alliances that could mutually benefit this longtime U.S. possession as well as Cuba.

Tourism is the most obvious source of potential growth for Cuba. The tourist arrivals per year must have already increased from the 2.5 million in 2011 and now are growing rapidly as transportation options with the U.S. increase. Still, even if tourism receipts double from the 2011 level, they will still be well under 10 percent of GDP. Cuba will need to decide how much tourism to accept and how to regulate it, given its documented effects on culture and the environment. The Caribbean countries have struggled to form a united front in regulating the cruise-ship business, for instance in the matter of sewage disposal. If Cuba continues to open up to cruise ships, it will face these issues and could play a useful leadership role in the region.

Our IPRC hosts described some unexpected consequences of the tourism upsurge. Hotel service persons often receive tips in the convertible peso used by tourists. Some doctors and teachers are reportedly leaving their regular employment to drive taxis or work in the new privately owned restaurants or hotels since the exchange rate between the Cuban convertible peso (a hard currency) and the Cuban national peso is roughly twenty-four to one. Hence service employees gain a distinct advantage in buying power over other Cubans paid with the national peso. The average Cuban earns an amount equivalent to twenty dollars U.S. each month. Most Cubans cannot afford to stay at the tourist hotels.

Another negative impact of tourism reported is a lack of available foodstuffs for Cuban families. Many difficult-to-find foods are being bought up by the tourist venues leaving those without buying power fewer options in an already scant diet. The Cuban culture, with its strong communitarian values, sees these effects as violating social and economic rights.

Improvement is needed in the production and processing of sugar (partly for rum), coffee, and tobacco for cigars, traditional mainstays of the Cuban economy, largely controlled by outside interests from colonial days up to the revolution. Marketing opportunities for these will expand somewhat with trade opening, but they are stagnant products in the world market,

so it is likely Cuba will seek to diversify, if not move toward a mixed-economic model. Cuba could usefully try for specialization in products certified as FairTrade, or organic.

Agricultural production must also benefit the everyday Cuban consumer. An economic reform of recent years allows Cubans to obtain title to unused government land. At present about 40 percent of arable land lies fallow while Cuba has been importing as much as 80 percent of the food it rations for its population. It is now possible for farmers to sell their produce to community markets or hotels. Some new agricultural cooperatives have been formed, increasing the income of individual members working collaboratively rather than competitively, and making more fresh fruit and vegetables available.

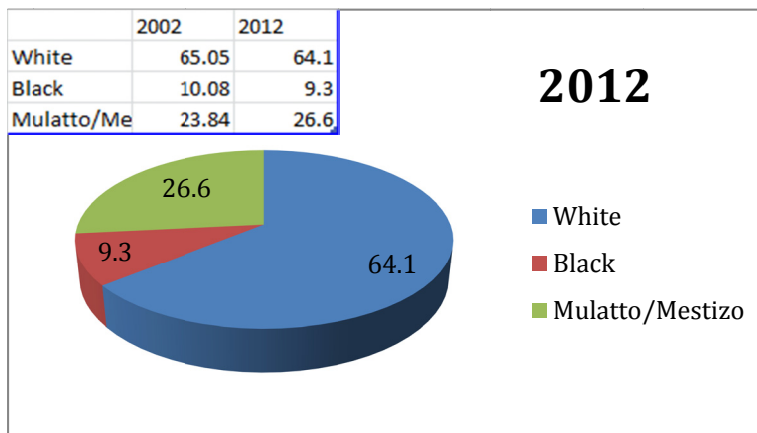
Cuba also faces important challenges in the energy sector. Venezuela, which has in recent decades provided oil at subsidized prices to Cuba and other neighboring countries, may be less able or willing to do so. This depends on a variety of factors including its present political instability (some contend influenced by the United States). Cuba has found and is extracting some oil and gas in its own territory, and greater reserves are thought to be just offshore. International oil companies are currently providing technical and financial resources needed for exploration and extraction, but these come with important potential financial, political, and environmental costs.

Cuba, however, leads Latin America in solar energy, and could potentially tap more into wind energy, both environmentally sustainable practices without the geopolitical volatility and conflict that also come with fossil-fuel dependency.

Changing government funding structures will be a challenge in Cuba, as with all primarily state-run countries when the private sector expands or replaces some of the public sector. A tax system should efficiently and fairly raise enough revenue to take the place of any privatization of state-owned enterprises and to track mixed economic growth (including greater opening to outside capital¹⁷). China's experience could also be relevant, where they let subnational governments tax local business and pass part of that revenue to the national government. Higher taxation and regulation in the tourism industry, or profit-splitting models with foreign-owned resorts, could help sustain upward financial flows into the universalized, public institutions (health care, education, housing) for which the revolution is best known.

2. Race and Racial Discrimination

Chart 1.1 Racial Self-Identification in Cuba



Source: Cuban Census of 2012.

The extent of racial discrimination in Cuba is a matter of contention, given a historic belief grounded in the late 19th century independence movements that Cuba is a “racially democratic” country. Cuban statesperson, author, and poet, Jose Marti, once argued, in contrast to Spain, that to be Cuban was to be “more than white, more than black, more than mulatto.” But this sentiment, however grounded in the “color-blind,” all-inclusive nationalist discourse that comprises Cubanidad (the “state” or “process” of Cuban identity) unfortunately has been refuted. The violent repression of Cuba’s black citizens during the 20th century, perhaps best exemplified by the Race War of 1912 and subsequent oppressive treatment during the Machado and Batista dictatorships, have received considerable treatment in the academic literature (De La Fuente, 2001; Helg 1998, 2012, Moore, 1988). When the revolution began to implement numerous social and economic reforms in the 1960s, embedded within was the specific focus on youth and the improvement of overall living conditions for the country’s black citizens. Since then, the revolutionary government, in providing access to health care, education, and housing to all Cuban citizens, has argued at times that institutionalized racism has been eliminated, but that claim has not stood up to empirical scrutiny.

Latin American scholars refer to racism as “negrophobia” or fear of blackness. Negrophobia is rooted in the context of white hegemony that creates conditions in which people seek to upgrade their social status. This legacy of racism in Cuba is best demonstrated by Chart 1.1. This chart highlights racial self-identification on the island via the latest (2012) Cuban census as compared to the 2002 Census (top left-hand corner embedded in the pie graph). Notable is that nearly 65 percent of the Cuban population self-identifies as “white,” while nearly 27 percent identify as “mulatto” (mixed African/European origin),

and the remainder (9.3 percent) as black. Numerous experts note that these are severe underestimates for those who identify as black or mulatto, given the histories of race on the island.

For example, during the early 20th century, the Cuban government promoted a “blanqueamiento” movement, in which so-called “white” immigrants from Europe, especially men, were encouraged to migrate to the island so as to “whiten” the population, while at the same time the island’s Afro-Cuban population experienced violent repression. Much of this mentality still operates in new guises when Ibero-American investors in the tourism industry are documented hiring “white” or lighter-skinned Cubans. These figures for white also appear inflated in that during the early stages of the Cuban revolution (1960s to early 1970s), “white” Cubans disproportionately fled the island, taking advantage of their generally middle or upper class ability to relocate. An important 1976 study examining Cuban Census data by sociologist Benigno Aguirre documented the inverse impact of the migration process, in that as white Cubans settled in the United States, the island’s population became “darker.”

Impact of “New” Cuban Economy on Afro-Cubans

There is considerable debate about the revolution’s impact on the acute realities of Cuba’s Afro-Cuban population. Scholars often credit the revolution for eliminating “structural” inequalities, given Cuba’s success in vastly improving literacy rates, providing universal housing and education, and the creation of a world-renowned, high-quality health-care system. From this angle, the numerous quality of life indicators have upended the systemic racial oppression under Batista and previous U.S. puppet regimes, underscoring the revolution’s success in improving conditions for blacks on the island.

The debate, however, centers largely around the elimination of “cultural racism,” which arguably never disappeared under the revolution and is now magnified in a post-Soviet, market-reform based reality. Scholar Sarah Blue (2007), for example, used survey data that examine racial inequalities in Cuban families through the post-1993 reforms. Analyzing familial access to dollars through state employment, recently allowed self-employment or remittances, along with impact of educational attainment on income, Blue found “disappointing results.” The structural gain of the revolution designed to counter racial discrimination in access to education and employment has, in her words, “lost its equalizing force in contemporary Cuba.” This is backed by Alejandro De La Fuente (2001) and other interdisciplinary observation, perhaps best summarized in political scientist Samuel Farber’s words that since the Soviet Union fell “conditions for Afro-Cubans have worsened in real and absolute terms.”¹⁸

3. Effects of Ongoing Change on Cuban Women

Among the concerns consistently raised by our Cuban sisters and brothers as a result of the “new Cuba” is its impact on women. Constant adaptation to regulated markets, increases in the role of civil society and private sector change, and cuts to the public sector have affected women from the workplace to the household, especially Afro-Cuban women, in line with the preceding section’s summary.

Research suggests that as a “brain drain” from the island occurs, and as younger educated Cubans migrate to the U.S. or elsewhere, there are less funds for government investment in social programs. This has an adverse effect on an aging, female-dominant population. Coupled with ongoing cuts to the public sector where women have long held jobs because of the social initiatives of the revolution and today’s movement toward models of self-employment, women are generally more vulnerable because they lack the resources men are more apt to possess. Those with loved ones in the diaspora, most of whom are white and better resourced, can financially benefit from their networks abroad—networks not generally available to their sisters of color. The embargo, then, adds a degree of inequality to “work around” economic practices, impacting the household level where deeply rooted machismo and traditional female roles run up against modern challenges of balancing home and work for income.

D.M. Weissman’s 2011 study of the neo-liberal changes in Cuba summarizes the current context consistent with our learnings as a group. Placing the impact of external factors, including the embargo, in context with newer state-level changes she states:

The process of assuring health and hygiene in the home, transportation to day care or school and other family chores, have been complicated by shortages of all household items and fuels, thus exponentially increasing the working hours of women. ... The burdens are often so time-consuming that some women have abandoned paid work and social participation in mass organizations outside the home. (p.242, 2011)

Weissman goes on to highlight the increased reliance on extended family members for basic household and family needs. She comments on the decline of daily caloric intake for women as they sacrifice their own nutrition and other health consequences for loved ones (primarily children), as well as a rising divorce rate in the current context.

Our church partners and other religious leaders shared these concerns repeatedly. This suggests that as we engage in partnership with the IPRC, we be mindful in polity and practice of the broad need and limited resources faced by our partner. Through their activities, programs, and outright nutritional support for women and families, the churches are sometimes the only community based provider for those experiencing economic displacement.

4. *Disproportionate Role of Remittances*

Many of today's Cubans live in a "transnational" reality of economic globalization. As dominant, interrelated economic systems permeate the globe and spur "northward" flows of migration, those who stay behind are more closely interconnected, if not dependent on, their loved ones living in relatively richer countries. In the early 1990s, the Cuban government, in response to increasing discontent during the Special Period in Time of Peace, permitted the receipt of remittances from family members in the United States. Blue's aforementioned study is useful, as it underscores the disproportionate patterns of those receiving, or not receiving, outside remittances.

These findings have been seconded by a more recent (2015) scientific poll.¹⁹ The 2007 survey Blue studied, which asked resident Cubans if they received money from a family member or friend in another country, found that 34 percent of respondents affirmed these transactions, and of those 61 percent said the money hails from relatives in the United States.²⁰ The 2015 poll found that the average individual payment is near \$1,000, that most (70 percent) receive funds on a monthly basis, and that of those an overwhelming percentage (90 percent) share their remittances with at least another person of their household. These percentages amount to an estimated \$3 billion in annual remittances, with most recipients using the monies for "every day expenses." This underscores the waning power of the state and increased self-reliance (see discussion above).

But within these findings, there is little secret in Cuba that, in De La Fuente's (2013) words, "whites have had and continue to have privileged access to hard currency remittances from abroad." Specifically, Blue (2007) found that 44% of white Cuban households received remittances, while only 23 percent of black households did. Of note during our consultation in Cuba, members and guests of the IPRC repeatedly referred to visual indicators of these apparent inequalities, pointing to maintained home facades as evidence that "this family receives remittances, but this family probably does not." Those with the financial resources may then open a private restaurant or a room in their home for tourist rental, increasing their economic capacity.

5. *Cuba's Aging Population*

The demographic projection of the United Nations places Cuba among the most aged populations in the world by 2050, when 39.2 percent of the inhabitants will be sixty years old or more, according to the latest estimates. At that time, the average age of Cubans will be fifty-two, the fourth nation in the world with that indicator, surpassed only by Bosnia Herzegovina, Japan, and Portugal. These UN projections, published under the title *World Population Prospects: the 2010 Revision*, also place the Caribbean island eighth on the list of nations with more elderly people than people of working age by 2050.

According to the Latin American Caribbean Demographic Center, Cuba's aging population, along with reduced fertility, is a chief cause of the continued decline in the Cuban population.²¹ This decline is exacerbated (per *Granma*) by the U.S. Cuban Adjustment Act (1966, updated 1996), which automatically grants U.S. residence to any islander that arrives on U.S. soil by clandestine, undocumented means (balsas—rafts or land border crossings via Mexico or Canada).

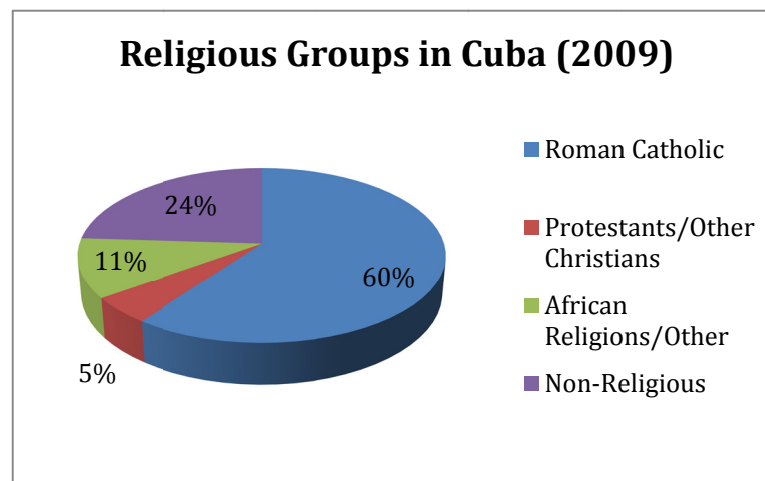
The population in Cuba fell by 84,000 in 2012 due to emigration and the country's low birthrate. In 2011 it had been 11,247,000 and fell to 11,163,000 in 2012 (see chart in C.2. economics section above). The Cuban population is forecast to decline to less than 11 million by 2032. The birthrate in Cuba, which has been in the mid-20s per one thousand of the population during the 1950s, climbed to the mid-30s in the years immediately following the revolution. Starting in the late 1960s it declined to reach 14 per one thousand in 1980, one of the most rapid declines on record. The most recent statistics (9.4 per one thousand) show that the problem is a grave one.²²

The most recent Cuban census reveals that 18.3 percent of the island population is sixty years or over. The official *Granma* newspaper has reported that cabinet level committees are required to develop comprehensive and long-term strategies taking into account economic, social, cultural, and biological factors that affect birthrate and seniors.²³ These demographic trends will take a toll on Cuba's welfare, national defense, health services, and labor force. For context, by 2021, more Cubans will be leaving the workforce than entering. In response, Cuba has recently allowed retirees to work and still collect their pensions. Overall, the aging population will pull down potential economic growth as it reduces the number of productive population and pushes up costs for senior care. This is the face of the challenge, and it was a challenge voiced by many of our church partners and consultation speakers as well.²⁴

6. *Religious Landscape*

Statistical understanding of the "religious landscape" in Cuba is not without controversy, given that only since 1991 has Cuba's status as an "atheistic" society changed to "secular." According to a report by the State Department released in 2010 (and demonstrated in Chart 1.2), the island remains overwhelmingly Roman Catholic (60 percent), with the remainder of religious affiliations comprised of Protestants/Other Christians (11 percent) and African Religions/Other (5 percent). Approximately 24 percent of the Cuban population is identified as "nonreligious."

Chart 1.2—Latest Estimates of Religious Groups in Cuba.



Within these categories, with specific attention to Protestants, the report finds that the bulk are Baptists and Pentecostals, and the remainder are Jehovah's Witness (95,400), Methodists (35,000), Seventh-Day Adventists (33,000), Anglicans (22,000), Presbyterians (15,000), Quakers (300), and Mormons (50). Additionally, estimates for the Jewish community estimates stand at 1,500 members, most of whom (1,200) reside in the nation's capital, Havana. The Islamic League reports that there are 6,000 to 8,000 Muslims residing in the country, although according to the report, only an estimated 1,000 are Cubans. Other religious groups include Greek and Russian Orthodox, Buddhists, and Bahais.²⁵

One of the many issues raised during our consultations in Cuba and in Washington, D.C., was the emergence and growth of "prosperity gospel." Often known as the "gospel of success" and equally emergent throughout Latin America, IPRC pastors and seminarians to whom we spoke were concerned at its proliferation, given its celebration of affluence and individualism. Beyond the serious theological problems and frequent pyramid schemes by pastors, widespread allegiance to this "sanctified selfishness" could conceivably dilute resources and energy away from economic and social goods (such as health care, education, housing, and food).

The history of "prosperity gospel" in Cuba goes back to 1990, when the Cuban government relaxed restrictions on "house churches" (prohibited since 1962). The government's decision was tied to the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba's long-time ally and trade partner, and the subsequent economic impact it had on the island in the early to mid-1990s (Special Period in Time of Peace [special period]). Since then, "an explosion of Pentecostalism" (Edmonds and Gonzalez, 2010) has occurred, and "prosperity gospel" has grown. Its emphasis on personal wealth as a "sign of God's blessing" counters the predominant socialism of the island, its appeal linked to the "charismatic style of this theology," (Edmonds and Gonzalez, 2010: p. 171). This faith may attract poor people disproportionately, but it may also draw on inflated hopes of change that may also crash. Currently the prosperity gospel's growth is limited by the Cuban government's restrictions on "house churches" and its relative permissiveness to more traditional denominations.

The Roman Catholic Church benefits from its recognized status, even as its Havana cathedral remains stripped of external Christian ornament. At the same time, through the Francisco Varela Center, it supports some open discussion of the implications of the Gospel for society and the environment. Within the broader religious spectrum, Pentecostalism generally takes Protestant forms and the traditional practices of Santería, often termed folk religion, also exist.

7. *Environmental Issues*

Environmental issues in Cuba are largely connected with economic realities, given that current dominant global models of consumption rely heavily on the manipulation of natural resources. If the opening of economic relations with the United States were to lead to an unchecked "predatory capitalism" alongside a state-driven Cuban production model akin to China and Vietnam, this could prove environmentally disastrous for Cuba and the Caribbean basin.

Water-quality problems in Cuba have (as in many parts of the world) resulted from over-pumping of underground aquifers and construction of dams without adequate attention to drainage infrastructure or salinization of aquifers.²⁶ Climate change is, of course, also a factor, as storms and flooding stemming from drastic, unpredictable changes in atmospheric temperatures as driven by carbon emissions, ultimately lead to polluted water systems.

Mangroves are a key element of the coastal defenses of the Cuban archipelago, as stressed by biology professor Jesús Figueredo of Cuba's Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center.²⁷ Mangroves have been destroyed by agricultural and tourism projects,²⁸ and were particularly hard-hit when (like many other trees) they were cut down for charcoal in Cuba's "special period" in the 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union. Our IPRC partners talked of this special period, after the loss of Soviet subsidies, as having been extremely difficult, and yet as providing important lessons on "green" agriculture (natural ferti-

lizers, oxen, crop diversity) after an earlier Soviet intensive agriculture system. It was at this time that the Cuban Council of Churches' "sustainable development" program started encouraging churches to develop community gardens, as part of a wider urban agriculture program in Cuba.²⁹ A combination of the "special period" and the U.S. embargo also led to a serious lack of modern medicines, and the Presbyterian Church of Luyanó, for example, still maintains a garden growing medicinal herbs to try to make up for this deficiency.

As the IPRC presented their environmental concerns, Cuba's need to balance care for the environment with economic development was emphasized. Mining of nickel, Cuba's most significant mineral resource, was one focus.³⁰ Open-pit mining has severely degraded large areas of land in eastern Cuba.³¹ Concerns were expressed that, while it would be better to prevent rather than restore environmental damage, environmental impact rules were rarely observed, and may be more ignored as foreign partnerships increase. Similar concerns were expressed about the environmental impact of rapid growth in the oil and tourism industries, both often affecting important and fragile coastal ecosystems.

D. *Political Perspectives:*

1. *Choices Before Cubans*

Over the past several decades almost all the countries of Latin America and of the former Soviet bloc have had political transitions toward some sort of electoral democracy. While the communist party is the only recognized political party in Cuba, some Cubans tell us anecdotally that provincial voting in Cuba is more democratic than what they read of our electoral primaries. In recent years there have been a number of clergy elected to the National Assembly. The election of IPRC Pastor Ofelia Ortega to the assembly from Matanzas Province is a case in point. Not a communist, Ortega was elected by the grass-root network of those (particularly women) who have witnessed her work on behalf of the community. It appears that there is increasing room to elect a trusted citizen leader who is not a party member, although church members may now also be party members.

Whether, when, or how Cuba manages its political transition, it should be up to the Cuban people. Some U.S. legislation (Helms-Burton, travel ban, etc.) prescribe a system transition—a.k.a. regime change—as a precondition for improving U.S. relations with Cuba on trade, travel, and cultural exchange. Such punitive policies have reinforced Cuban nationalism and alliance with other nations. But they are also against the principle of self-determination, even if we see Cuban practice as undemocratic. It was pointed out that our government does not insist on regime change in our relations with much more powerful countries, such as China and Saudi Arabia, whose records on human rights are poor. Human rights violations are often the rationale of those who oppose reconciling with Cuba. Yet where we have designed and imposed regime change conditions, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, results have not been as advertised. Military intervention and occupation have yielded the documented calamity of sustained violence, economic volatility, and political repression. Cubans are aware of these things.

Without making prescriptions, we may consider some lessons from transitions to democracy in Latin America, former USSR, and Africa: Moving quickly to nationwide elections has often led to conflict and collapse of the very attempt at democracy. Having a substantial degree of rule of law is a critical condition for successful transition. If Cuba is following a Chinese or Vietnamese model, changes are made without elections, as political order is prized even with growth in markets, and its claimed economic rights are more important than civil or political ones. Even if we disagree with this approach, elections that become winner-take-all battles clearly disrupt stability and sustainability; a reason for caution among our partners, despite other statements of frustration and deep reflection on the moral costs to the society of living official and unofficial lives. We recognize further options from elsewhere in Latin America in the notes.³²

2. *Diversification of the Cuban American Community*

Contrary to popular belief, the Cuban American community is not a monolithic group. Much scholarly and popular focus has often been placed on the politics of the Cuban exilic community; those who arrived during the early phases of the Cuban revolution (1959–1980) and passed on a strong anti-Castro sentiment to their U.S.-born children. Research has consistently shown, however, an increasing political ideological variation in the community, especially amongst most recent arrivals.³³

While there was some political variation amongst the earlier exilic waves, the historical marker for political heterogeneity is often regarded as the Mariel boatlift (1980).³⁴ In 1980, 125,000 Cubans arrived mostly via flotilla to Miami-Dade County over a period of four months. Largely influenced by a wave of late 1970s visits to the island by Cuban exiles who returned to see loved ones, some new arrivals were people economically discontent with revolutionary reforms and others were "pushed" out by the Castro government. This latter group included those released from mental institutions and prisons to join the exodus. This new "wave" of immigrants, labeled as "escoria" (scum) by the Castro government and vilified by the U.S. media as "undesirables," were immediately stigmatized upon arrival representing an intra-Cuban conflict between what sociologist Sylvia Pedraza called the "Cuba that was" versus the "Cuba that is."

The boatlift was the first time that a sizable portion (25–40 percent) of black Cubans arrived, the largest percentage since the more socially diverse tobacco workers who created communities in Tampa and Key West in the late 1800s and early 1900s.³⁵ The Mariel boatlift also consisted of members of Cuba's LGBTQ community, given that they were disproportionately jailed or placed in work camps in Cuba during the 1970s. Their "lifestyle" was viewed as a threat to the revolution. Need-

less to say, these newer arrivals, now more economically and socially diverse than the predominantly white and middle class exiles (1959–1973), were worried less upon arrival about subverting the Castro government, and more concerned over their own economic livelihoods. Put differently, Cubans, post-1980, now arrive for similar reasons as other Latin American and Asian immigrants.

3. *Cuban American Attitudes Toward the Embargo*

Upon President Obama’s late 2014 announcement of plans to restore ties with Cuba, the most recent poll data available published by Florida International University (2015) supported the White House rationale. Changing attitudes were even evident amongst a South Florida Cuban community long known for rigid attitudes toward Cuban policy. These new trends of support for “normalizing” relations with Cuba differed from that of a 1997 poll conducted by Florida International University and the *Miami Herald* (Grenier and Gladwin, 1997). The more recent poll found that 51 percent of 1,200 Cuban Americans randomly interviewed in Miami-Dade County supported a dialogue with the Cuban government as means toward regime change, a gradual improvement since polls conducted by the same researchers earlier in the decade.³⁶

Of note is the difference between Cubans by stage of arrival, in that those who arrived post-1979 (read: Mariel boatlift and subsequent) were more likely to support “negotiated solutions” than those who arrived previously. Among the exiles differences by race were even more apparent.³⁷ The authors found that 61 percent of black or Mulatto Cubans in Miami-Dade County were in favor of “establishing national dialogue” among exiles, dissidents, and the Cuban government, as compared to 50 percent for white Cubans.³⁸ Regarding economic issues specifically, 57 percent of black and mulatto Cubans in Miami-Dade County were in favor of the United States selling food on the island compared to 38 percent for white Cubans. Regarding lifting the embargo altogether, while both groups overwhelmingly supported the embargo at the time, more black/mulatto Cubans (28 percent) opposed the embargo as compared to white Cubans (21 percent).³⁹

4. *Exilic Cubans and the Cuban American Lobby*

Scholars generally distinguish between the political motivations of “exiles,” those pushed out of their homelands for political or religious reasons, and the typical “immigrants,” who are viewed generally as being “pulled” (or lured) out of their home countries and having migrated “voluntarily.” Legal definitions can often repress nuance of factors and motivations for migration but it is well accepted that those who arrive as exiles are more likely to influence U.S. foreign policy targeting their homeland as compared to immigrants who arrive to improve their economic position (p. 37, Lindsay, 2002).

For Cubans, it is well-known that as an “ethnic lobby,” they have often put their own interests (read: Cuba) ahead of local or national interests. Portes and Stepick’s (1993) acclaimed book, *City on the Edge*, examines this dynamic, in that while Cuban exiles and their children were instrumental in creating an economically vibrant “capital of the Caribbean” in Miami, it did not come without the political and economic costs to local African Americans and other Latinos. While this may have been more true for the first thirty years of the community’s formation in South Florida, in Lindsay’s words, the “once solid Cuban American lobby now appears to be fracturing among generational lines, with younger Cuban Americans turning away from the parents’ unforgiving hardliner policies” (p. 40, 2002).

It is now 2016, and while these intergenerational and migratory differences are generally accepted by scholars, the reality is that amidst the Cuban community’s growing political fractures, there remains a last gasp effort to reinforce the exilic “isolationist” mantra in Washington, D.C. Within this demographic cross-section of the community, those wealthier than other Cubans continue to fund said policy. Rubenzer (2011), for instance, looked at impact of Cuban American interest groups and individual campaign contributions on votes and key amendments in the 108th and 109th Congress.⁴⁰ He found a significant impact on foreign policy, albeit depending on particular issues. As expected, elected officials representing earlier Cuban immigrants oppose weakening the embargo.⁴¹

Not all of the conflict among exiles has been electoral. During el dialogo (the dialogue) of the 1970s, some Cuban exiles sought to reestablish connection with their island loved ones through diplomatic ties, efforts President Jimmy Carter welcomed and attempted to support. Their acts were met with steep, violent resistance by powerful exiles, best evidenced by a series of bombings in some of Miami’s institutions and the downing of two Cubana Airline planes. The independent organization, Human Rights Watch (HRW), released several reports detailing the extent of harassment and intimidation of more politically moderate members of the Cuban American community. The HRW pointed to past collaboration between “private actors” (Cuban American lobby, especially the Cuban American National Foundation) and the U.S. government in enforcing political discipline. Though the exile community was more peaceful in the 1990s, the environment of fear persisted well into the 2000s, while the U.S. government remained silent.⁴² Violence has thus declined over the years as the Cuban community, now younger and more concerned with economic livelihood, embraces a climate of reconciliation.

5. *Current Policy: “Regime Change” by Other Means*

The current U.S. policy toward Cuba, one largely based on “people-to-people” travel, is on the surface touted to promote “equal exchange” on the island, but with undoubted political undercurrents. During both of our consultations (Havana/Matanzas, Cuba, and Washington, D.C.), it was apparent from meetings with state officials representing both govern-

ments that there are no illusions about the predominant U.S. model of seeking to “improve” relations with Cuba. As illustrative, speaking at Florida International University in the summer of 2015, Hillary Clinton (former U.S. Secretary of State and presidential candidate for 2016), offered the following: “The Cuban embargo needs to go, once and for all. We should replace it with a smarter approach that empowers the Cuban private sector, Cuban civil society, and the Cuban American community to spur progress and keep pressure on the regime.”⁴³ In other words, an expanded Cuban “civil society,” already the byproduct of post-Soviet era reforms as initiated and allowed by the Cuban government, would through the influence of U.S. presence usher in a more “democratic” government designed to support free market capitalism.

The U.S. and Cuban governments are currently calibrating a compromise exemplified in the array of “licensed” travel that now allows a U.S. presence on the island. Individuals, groups, families, educators, students, professionals, and religious organizations, all allowed under the General License categories issued by the U.S. Treasury Department, are viewed as methods of support for the Cuban people to strengthen this “civil society.”⁴⁴ The Cuban government welcomes tourism and other sources of hard currency, but its main objective is likely ending the embargo, for which it is willing to risk an expanded civil society. The recommendations of this report support a lifting of the travel ban beyond these limited categories and restrictions for its own sake, and because travel contributes to opening civic space where the IPRC and other churches may live more freely. As we understand the Cuban church position, they wish to witness and to engage in mission practices of social, environmental, and economic justice that reflect a whole Gospel. These practices tend to support the best achievements of the revolution. Our consultation did not suggest that the Cuban government was fearful of losing its sovereignty; succession plans for the post-Castro era seem already prepared and show a high degree of continuity so far.

6. *Current Legislation—The Remnants of Isolation Policy*

While most U.S. citizens continue to support President Obama’s decision to improve relations with Cuba, and there is legislation to open further relations, there is also legislation from the powerful, albeit waning, voices of the Cuban exilic community. On the openness side, in 2015, S299, the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act was introduced and gained nearly fifty bipartisan cosponsors, designed to undo the laws enacted in 1996 and 2000. During our consultation visit in Washington, D.C., several speakers from ecumenical and international advocacy groups, and Republican (Senator Flake, Arizona) and Democratic (Rep. McGovern, Maine) legislators we met with, requested the PC(USA)’s continued support for the Freedom to Travel Act and other reconciling legislation.

On the opposing end of the spectrum are legislators reaffirming an “isolationist” position toward Cuba, including two presidential candidates of Cuban descent, Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. In June 2015, Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida), introduced the Cuban Military Transparency Act, also coauthored by Cuban American legislators Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), to “prohibit transactions with the Cuban military” and for “other purposes.” Since the Cuban military oversees many state-owned businesses, including large segments of Cuba’s growing tourist industry, this act would seek to limit expenditures for U.S. travelers who might access Cuba’s tourism industry. It also would affect the improvement of the island’s internet services and likely make it more difficult for Cuban Americans to visit family members.⁴⁵ This runs contrary to scientific evidence that most Cuban Americans, especially in Miami-Dade County, want to travel with unrestricted access to the island (see above), with the primary purpose of visiting their loved ones.

How, in view of these realities, should the PC(USA) and our IPRC partners reflect theologically on the above issues of exchange, partnership, polity, and action? As U.S. partners, we must watch out for our unconscious assumptions that we know how to fix things; we carry more baggage than we know. In what ways does God call us to serve as *mutual* partners in reconciliation, inclusive of differences and disagreements, as pan-Hemispheric Christians in solidarity for sustainable social, environmental, and economic justice?

E. *Theological Rationale*

In 2 Corinthians 5:16–21, Christ appoints the early Christian community to be ambassadors of reconciliation, recreated by God’s love to share God’s Word with the entire inhabited world. In this brief reflection on our ambassadorship with regard to Cuba-U.S. relations today, we remember first that the IPRC chose to be an independent church at the same time as the United Presbyterian Church was adopting the Confession of 1967, with its basic theme of reconciliation: God was in Christ “reconciling the world to himself . . .” (*Book of Confessions*, 9.07). At this time the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may shortly make the Confession of Belhar the latest part of its *Book of Confessions*. That confession addresses church-dividing issues in calling for unity, justice, and reconciliation. It is also a call for liberation in a very biblical and South African style, which has similarities to Cuban and other Latin American theology.

We take the church to be the ecclesia, the body of Christ comprised of persons “called out” from all nations and given “the ministry of reconciliation.” At its most generic, reconciliation, means “the resumption of friendly relations, thus restoring a state of mutual harmony.” Given the history of our Presbyterian partnership and the needs of a “new moment,” this definition is too abstract and easy-sounding. For U.S.-Cuban relations to gain a better grounding than before, reconciliation should go beyond the restoration of official diplomacy, communication, “people-to-people” exchange, and commerce, should the embargo be lifted. As we have seen in the symbol and reality of Guantanamo naval base and prison, as well as the grinding duration of the embargo/bloqueo, our new hopes still face hard realities.

For the church, reconciliation is a matter of deepening fellowship with our brothers and sisters, cooperating with them in mission and witness, and being transformed in the process. God's Spirit goes inward and outward, as must any mission done in mutuality. Because we believe God is sovereign and able to work through leaders and nations with different beliefs—like the Persian emperor Cyrus, we are reminded by the Cuban church—we should not absolutize or demonize our political antagonists.⁴⁶ Our faith helps us own our national identities and histories as gifts and burdens. The immigrant and transnational experience of Cuban Americans enriches our capacity for bridge-building, though it also personalizes and complicates the work of reconciliation.

In parts of the Old or First Testament, in order to fulfill the act of reconciliation, there had to be some type of restitution. For instance, the negligent owner of an ox who had gored a neighbor had to pay a settlement or take care of the family, depending on how much short- or long-term suffering the neighbor family would experience. This idea of restitution or reparation has been applied politically to expropriated properties, given the historical subjugation of the Cuban majority, even as those who lost properties seek restitution. For us, reconciliation between people needs to be the larger framework; property and poverty restitution should fit within this larger purpose.

Hard as it may be for Americans to grasp, the Cuban Revolution represented aspirations that echoed biblical promises to the poor and oppressed. Yet, as the Cuban church has dwelt in the tension of proclaimed ideals and sometimes strained actuality, U.S. church partners have learned from them about integrity and patience in bearing difficult burdens. To work toward reconciliation between peoples with vastly different experiences of power, wealth, and freedom, means telling and hearing hard truths about the costs and compromises that have been borne by each side. Hence the frequent pairing of “truth and reconciliation” in public commissions that seek to repair and heal social relations. This report proposes a role for our U.S. church of helping our nation understand some of the price already paid by Cuba in hope that burdens and barriers can be lifted without additional costs added. If, to be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ means to be reconciled with our fellow humans, is this not a worthy path toward reconciliation with our Cuban brothers and sisters?

The partnership between our churches can contribute to our mutual understanding at this time, as we have learned some of the values and virtues that have enabled the IPRC to survive. As part of the larger world church, the IPRC can help the U.S. church to understand our paternalistic and materialistic shadow. But this spiritual and cultural work is not just “about us.” Our reconciliation needs to recognize the racial and cultural diversity of Cuba and of the second and subsequent generations of Cuban Americans, most of whom have (and seek to continue) “transnational” economic and social relationships with family members on the island (see D.2. “Diversification of the Cuban American community above).

The present reality teaches us that we are no longer at war, hot or cold. This is a source of hope for two Presbyterian churches that have consistently sought peace even when leaders on both sides of the Florida Straits have spoken or acted out of hostility. Our partnership with the IPRC has helped us see Cuba differently. This new acquaintance is part of the energy of reconciliation. We have learned from Cuban Christians of different perspectives, recognizing the rights of Cubans as individuals and as a country. As we call upon our government to live up to its charge to provide for the common defense and welfare by furthering peace with Cuba, the IPRC helps us live up to our charge to be a conscience in the U.S. political *and* cultural process of reconciliation.

It is through these lenses that we call on our church body, and our neighbors and government leaders, to engage in this new moment of reconciliation. The Brazilian hymn “Momento Nuevo” is popular in the IPRC churches in Cuba. It begins (translated), “Today God has called us to a new moment, to walk together with his people/country. . . .” During a presentation to the joint committee undertaking the task of this report, the Reverend Francisco Marrero, Moderator of the IPRC, welcomed this “momento nuevo” in history, calling it a “crossroads” whereas we jointly move “toward something new and better” and address in “solidarity and accompaniment, with God's spirit” many of Cuba's aforementioned challenges.

With this “new moment” as opportunity, there will of course be voices of caution. We have heard them in recognizing the costs of economic change, the needs for human rights, and the determination of some to continue to punish Cuba. Yet we must always recall the explosion of reconciliation in the life of Jesus, called the Christ. Jesus taught an ethic of universal love that broke through boundaries. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, for example, the hero was not the person his listeners expected, but somebody who didn't fit their stereotypes. He blessed the poor. He reached out to lepers and tax collectors and others under embargo. He crossed blockades of gender, religion, and ethnicity to converse with the Samaritan woman.

By challenging these structures of alienation, Jesus provoked powerful interests who were invested in maintaining them. When religious leaders and agents of the Roman Empire turned against him, he chose to suffer and asked God to forgive them. In doing this Jesus took the sin and Godforsakenness of the world on himself. God raised Jesus from the dead, breaking the powers of sin, evil, and death that separate us from God and each other. This is our ground for reconciliation.

In the light of this fundamental orientation toward reconnection, U.S.-Cuban relations still bear the burdens of colonial history and the imperial attitudes that claimed multiple territories from Spain, disregarding the independence struggles of others. To this history is added a layer of suspicion and estrangement from the bipolar Cold War with its threats to the Cuban government, positive and negative influence of the Soviet Union, proxy wars, and interventions elsewhere in Latin America. And to that geopolitical antagonism, we see enmity between Cuban expatriates and an authoritarian Cuban government. In

this context, we see a Cuban church that, having endured repression and maintained its distinctive witness and solidarity with other Cubans, is now challenged by a newer, “neo-liberal” global order that stresses free markets, privatization, and limited regulation on corporations, while cutting social services and public investment.

As ambassadors of reconciliation, we see possibilities for rapprochement. We welcome a thawing of relations between our government and the government of Cuba. We see a totalizing political and economic order opening opportunities for a civil society and a freer economic order. We see opportunities for mutually enriching partnership in mission, including ways that both societies may deal with issues of race and gender inequality. Even as we celebrate these possibilities, we recognize that each may become an occasion for sin and new alienation, even exploitation. Hence our recommendations that seek to honor the social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban experience, and which call for international equity and respect for self-determination of peoples.

F. *Specific Background to the Recommendations*

This section is written to provide support for the initial affirmation and specific recommendations in the first part of this report. As guided by the overture from the Presbytery of Santa Fe that structured the dual consultation approach, in Havana and Matanzas, Cuba, and in Washington, D.C., the report combined social, economic, cultural, and church dynamics, in addition to the political changes that accelerated six months after the assembly’s action. In the U.S., efforts to end Cold War isolation policies still face ideological gridlock in Congress, but have expanded opportunities for travel and family contact. In Cuba, changes have enabled the churches to move into social spaces in new ways, despite continuing economic and legal limitations. The Cuban government itself has shown greater and more positive involvement in the Latin American/Caribbean region, brokering negotiations for peaceful solutions to long intractable conflicts (as in Colombia), and releasing some incarcerated political prisoners while allowing Cuban dissidents more freedom. These individual changes are clearly part of a complex process of reform that continues to unfold in unexpected ways, as the Cuban and U.S. governments interface with other governments in the region.

The consultations focused on orienting future mission engagement and public policy advocacy and the recommendations move from the former to the latter.

1. *Recommendations in Support of Mutual Mission Engagement with the IPRC*

Because of the unique pairing of the Cuba Partners Network and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the report reflects the partners’ ongoing struggle to keep paternalism out of partnership, starting with mutual understanding and “sharing of our stories of struggle.”⁴⁷ Our IPRC friends consistently suggested that in this “Nuevo Momento” of relations, such a relationship should be based on fundamental principles of “people-to-people” exchange for spiritual growth and learning. This included building on existing theological and practical statements and study of “partnership” and on past experiences of mutuality in mission: of shared community-level projects, of mutual visits to Cuba and the United States, of increasing connections, for instance, with the seminary in Matanzas and seminaries in the United States, of pulpit exchanges and other exchanges for similar opportunities for young adults and seminarians in the United States and in Cuba.

These suggestions of continued exchange, our friends reiterated, should be mindful of the impact and capacity of the Cuban IPRC churches and the overall burden on their human and physical resources that U.S. church visits inadvertently cause.⁴⁸ During one particular session during our consultation in Cuba, we were informed that while the church welcomed visits by partner churches in the United States, they were often “back-to-back” and sometimes consumed more than they provided resources for, impacting the time, energy, and overall “capacity” of the IPRC. Nor are exchanges sometimes mutually beneficial given greater legal difficulty for resident Cubans, especially pastors and seminarians, to travel to the United States (discussed below). This does not mean the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should cease financial and other assistance to exchanges or social projects, but rather define relationship goals beyond “giving” and in service to reconciliation.

Other recommendations in this report provide new opportunities for mutual mission engagement in issues of importance to both our churches and societies: environmental and energy concerns; racial conflict and disparities; aging populations; the status and opportunities for women; hunger and food security; and economic disparities, all of which create the greatest burden on the most vulnerable of our respective societies. These areas of joint concern can provide avenues for new learning, sharing, and action together, in Cuba and in the United States.

And there are, importantly, issues for mission that fall heavily on the U.S. church: advocacy with the U.S. Congress and Administration for the numerous changes in U.S. policy discussed within this report and recommended for action. But, even on these advocacy issues, the Cuban church has lent its voice in delegations and in written communications from the Council of Churches of Cuba and from our IPRC partners in support of these changes in U.S. policy. We welcome and need their continued participation in educating our churches and government leaders about the effects of U.S. policy on the Cuban people and churches and in advocating with our government. To that end, we call on the U.S. Administration to include the voice of religious leaders in Cuba in their negotiations between the two governments.

On economic matters, pastors we spoke to look forward to change; they would like a decent, living wage, time for vacation with their families, additional forms of transportation (buses and cars) for church-related social projects, and other necessities. To get there, economic “self-sustainability” (not dependency) was a model they were looking forward to as their church both mirrors and takes a more public role in the growth of Cuban civil society. This type of self-sustainability may be discussed more thoroughly in relation to partnership agreements or mission planning. Recommended “capacity-building” could include potential service ministries with Cuban seniors or projects to reduce racial disparities. On the U.S. side, interested congregations and presbyteries should seek and follow the guidance of the synod and presbytery leadership to avoid “doubling up” on some congregations while neglecting others. In general, orientation for all U.S. Presbyterians should include guidance on how to listen, avoid unconsciously patronizing behavior, and recognize important Cuban social cues.

The consultations involved direct discussion of problem of inequality both within the United States and among countries participating in the global markets. The committee heard the perception that “predatory capitalism” foments a massively inequitable distribution of resources, perpetuates climate change, and exacerbates already-existing racial and health disparities. All of these issues remained prominent and central to the concerns of our friends of the IPRC and the various members of Cuban society to which we engaged in dialogue.

2. *Recommendation in Support of the IPRC’s Legal Recognition and Political Autonomy*

At present, only the Roman Catholic Church is officially recognized by the Cuban government as a religious entity in Cuba; the Protestant churches are recognized in the Law of Associations. We support a legal status that goes beyond simple “association,” one that allows non-Roman churches like the IPRC to have the same treatment and recognition under Cuban law. This may also lead to more access to the Cuban government, beyond the Office of Religious Affairs, especially with regard to social ministries and environmental/energy projects. There are three Protestant ministers in Parliament currently, which is to be affirmed, and they are not formal representatives of the religious community.⁴⁹

3. *Recommendation Regarding Joint Work to Address Cuba’s Environmental Concerns*

As outlined in the “New Developments” section, environmental concerns are a key focus of the IPRC’s social outreach. Leaders of the IPRC and of the Cuban Council of Churches voiced concerns about water quality, about environmental degradation due to industry, and about the impacts of climate change. The IPRC is directly involved in these issues at the local level, and hopes for more voice in shaping regional and national policy.⁵⁰ For the Cuban Council of Churches, “Sustainable Development” has been a core issue for twenty-four years.⁵¹

Of specific note is the provision of purified drinking water—an issue most visible to visitors to Matanzas seminary and to some of the IPRC churches, which have partnered with Living Waters of the World to install water-purification systems, and which open up their systems for the local community to access.⁵² The John G. Hall Presbyterian Church in the north-Cuban town of Cárdenas has made climate-change a particular concern, working with the Cuban Council of Churches and ACT Alliance. Cárdenas is very low-lying, so it is particularly susceptible to damage from the hurricanes that climate-change is making worse. They are teaching their community about the issue by using workshops and theater, and also taking the concrete steps of tree planting near the beach, to try to build up coastal defenses.⁵³

In addition to water and flooding concerns, the IPRC seeks practical ideas for supporting community agriculture, environmental responsibility, and renewable energy. But the IPRC representatives challenged us to go further in the partnership to share ways to teach environmental values in our communities, and to develop our prophetic voices on environmental issues.

In terms of economic enterprises, our IPRC friends favored financial and logistical support for cooperatives and community programs on the environment, but not for individual business enterprises. This would mean that the Cuban government should decrease the regulatory process for church social projects to permit a wider range of activities. This call was evident when Dr. Reinerio Arce and the Reverend Francisco Marrero stressed the need for a change of mentality in regard to mutual environmental stewardship. “We can’t avoid being political because we’re part of society. ... We need to educate for environmental responsibility. ... We need to do a theological reading of the situation, and we need to do it with you!”

4. *Recommendation to End El Bloqueo (the Embargo) and Subsequent Impedimentary Acts (Cuba Democracy-1992, Helms-Burton 1996)*

There is substantial evidence that the embargo has had more impact on the Cuban people than on their government, and hence this fifty-five-year-old policy is a violation and impediment toward reconciliation.⁵⁴ To call for the end of the embargo is effectively to call for a new trade agreement, preferably one that allows Cuba’s full integration into a stronger Caribbean basin economy. This means revoking the Cuba Democracy Act (1992) and the Helms-Burton Act (1996), which states the embargo cannot be lifted absent “free and fair elections” in Cuba and a “democratic government” minus the Castro brothers.⁵⁵ In support of this recommendation, this report encourages churches and communities in the United States and Cuba to emphasize “fair trade,” and to consider any new arrangement’s impact on U.S. and Cuban workers, the environment, migration, food sovereignty, and on Cuba’s most vulnerable citizens. Most fundamentally, the embargo’s set of U.S. laws contra-

vene international law, unless justified in terms of acts of war. In 2014, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted 188 to 2 for the embargo to be ended, the U.S. was one of the two.

5. *Recommendations on Immigration Policy: End the Cuban Adjustment Act, the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, and Other Preferential Programs*

The Cuban Adjustment Act is one of the most “preferential” immigration policies in United States history, and one most disruptive of normalizing relations. During both consultations, numerous speakers, including government officials, confirmed the significant role this unique asylum category plays in encouraging immigration to the United States. In favoring its end, we note its Cold War rationale and its alienating effect with other Caribbean and Latin Americans, some of whom might better merit refugee or asylum status for human rights reasons. Of specific concern is the “wet-foot/dry-foot” policy, which was added as an update to the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act under the Clinton Administration (1996). Intended to deter the large amount of dangerous, clandestine migration (often via raft) that was occurring during the Special Period (1994–95 in particular), the act allows Cubans expedited residency (and ultimately citizenship) if they reach U.S. soil, but returns them to Cuba or a third country if they are caught at sea. At present, because there are reports that the Cuban Adjustment Act may soon be revoked, more Cubans are trying to get to the U.S. with the opportunity for preferred status before Cubans may have to get in line like others seeking to emigrate. Currently the act is more likely to benefit “white” Cubans given their familial networks in the U.S. rooted in the early days of the revolution, hence leading to an “admit bias,” though some forms of migration continue to be quite dangerous.

While “brain drain” is a constant for many developing countries, the “Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program” is particularly targeted at a strength of the Cuban medical and educational system, its training of doctors by subsidizing their relocation and citizenship in the U.S. It was created in 2006 by the George W. Bush Administration. In the program’s defense, some see Cuba’s offering the in-kind services of teams of doctors in humanitarian crises as a positive public relations ploy, whatever health benefits they may provide. And certainly some of those doctors—perhaps a higher number among those who take advantage of the program—do not like being sent to desperate situations overseas. The Cuban state provides for their education and expects their service in return. Against the program is its preferential operation, both punitive of Cuba and offensive on democratic grounds. It covers nurses, doctors, paramedics, physical therapists, sports trainers, and their spouses as well.⁵⁶ In 2014 alone, an estimated 1,278 medical professionals used this policy as a means to “defect,” a considerable uptick from 995 in 2013 but part of a general trend upward since eleven used it in its first year.⁵⁷ There are seven other specific policies that favor Cuban immigration but the three identified here are the best known.

6. *Recommendation on the Return of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and Prison*

The Guantanamo Bay overseas base is in some ways not unusual. The U.S. has hundreds of military bases in more than seventy countries. The base is unusual, however, in dating back to the seizure of all of Cuba from Spain in 1898 (“Remember the Maine!”). Originally serving as a coal port for the U.S. Navy, it served the Monroe Doctrine’s claim that all of the hemisphere is our sphere of influence. It has long been judged an unwanted foreign intrusion on Cuba’s sovereignty. The U.S. pays a small check to Cuba each year that is never cashed, but we claim a right to an infinite lease. This follows the pattern of the 1902 Platt Amendment, which authorized unilateral intervention into Cuba by the U.S. military. That amendment was officially revoked in 1934, but the U.S. has wanted the facility for various purposes since, at one time holding Haitians who had attempted to get to the U.S.

The current prison use was started by President George W. Bush and, as noted in the recommendation language and notes, was intended to circumvent the U.S. Constitution. The General Assembly has called for the prison’s closure and return of the base to Cuba previously, which is the position of the Obama Administration, although he has been unable to make it happen.⁵⁸ When the base is ultimately returned to Cuba, the U.S. will be morally obligated to clean up any toxins on the site resulting from its military and fuel storage uses.

7. *Recommendation of a New Inter-Denominational Partnership Agreement Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the IPRC of Cuba in 2016*

With the results of this study and recommendations as background, along with the 1986 mutual mission agreement and subsequent 2000 reaffirmation (*Sharing God’s Vision*) of that partnership between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we envision the 2016 Cuba Partners Network meeting in Cuba as a venue for a broader participation toward this common reaffirmation. With appropriate funding and resources as committed to this meeting, with leadership from the IPRC Synod and World Mission, Cuba Partners Network would engage in Hermanamiento (sisterhood) toward an updated, nuanced mutual agreement.

In advisory capacity, the 2003 PC(USA) Mission in Partnership policy document guides all our mission partnerships, proving the broadest framework for our partnership with the Cuban and all other churches and entities. World Mission, along with the IPRC, should be fully supported to engage in the groundwork prior to the network meeting, sometime after the synod meeting of January 2016. One value of these enduring partnership agreements between denominations is that they set the context for a Cuban presbytery’s own partnerships on a domestic level as well as with the Cuba Partners Network. Moreover, embedded within these agreements lies the appropriate framework for advocacy on behalf of the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.), given mutually agreed upon identification of issues and appropriate course of action. For instance, the 216th General Assembly (2004) passed a summary of Social Witness Policy statements in relation to Cuba, and then again when our Cuban friends asked, we listened.

Living Waters for the World in Cuba⁵⁹

“We do this for the witness. . . . We have cholera in the area and doctors prescribe our water”—*Jorge and Juanita, LWW water system operators, El Fuerte church, Matanzas.*

“It is hard work but it is beautiful work”—*Liudmila Hernandez, Pastor, Sancti Spiritus Church.*

[Living Waters for the World](#) (LWW) began its work in Cuba in 2009, in partnership with the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba (Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba–IPRC). Contaminated drinking water is a pervasive problem in Cuba, especially in rural areas, and this mission has positioned the church as the provider and source for safe water in the communities they serve.

LWW is a ministry of the Synod of Living Waters, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), that trains and equips teams of individuals, to assist operating partners in the installation of clean water systems. It has established regional networks in countries with a large number of installations to help identify clean water mission opportunities and to bring initiating and operating partners together to better assure sustainability of installed systems.

In Cuba specifically, the network has achieved its success through the strong support of the leadership of the IPRC and the [Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas](#) (Seminario Evangélico de Teología en Matanzas). They have committed their assistance and support for every LWW team installing in Cuba, regardless of denomination. The seminary has also committed to providing space and administration for a warehouse facility to store water systems and parts to support maintenance needs and sustainability.

A number of the thirty-two water partnerships to date in Cuba are in communities dealing with cholera. These water partnerships have been key in not only providing the message of the Living Water but also providing the only safe drinking water available in these affected communities. The gift of clean water has been a blessing to many others who have suffered from diarrhea, dysentery, and other gastrointestinal issues for their entire lives.

Appendix

The two statements included here are specific to the relationship of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The first, from 2000, distills considerable theological sharing in a conference celebrating the partnership since 1986. The earlier document is the Mutual Mission agreement adopted by the two churches in 1986. The experiences of the Cuba Partnership contributed to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s general policy on mission partnerships adopted in 2003: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/mission-partnership/>.

SHARING GOD’S VISION

Statement of the November 2000 IPRC-PC (USA) Partnership Celebration

We, Presbyterians from Cuba and the U.S., representing the Synod of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) and its presbyteries of El Centro, Matanzas and La Habana, the Worldwide Ministries Division of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and partner presbyteries, including Cascades, Chicago, Long Island, Monmouth, Santa Fe, South Louisiana and West Jersey, the Cuba Connection, McCormick Theological Seminary and other interested Presbyterians met at the Centro de Actividades Nacionales de la Iglesia Presbiteriana (CANIP), November 12-20, 2000, to celebrate our partnership in mission since 1986 and look forward to the new millennium before us.

We recognize that this is God’s mission and that we join God in it through partnership. We reaffirm through Bible study and our own experience that mission in partnership has several dynamics. First it requires movement (see Castellanos Bible study, Acts 14:21 and 15:31) and that movement is neither linear nor chartable. Second, it is contextual. This includes the religious, social, political and economic realities of this specific time, as well as personalities. The movement in specific context leads naturally to collisions (Castellanos Bible study). Third, mission in partnership is transformative. It opens doors where transformation is possible. Transformation occurs when there is true mutuality.

Paul’s letter to the Philippians (Rickabaugh’s Bible study on partnership and Philippians) reminds us that partnership in the gospel means five things: 1) our sharing in God’s grace; 2) our sharing in the Spirit; 3) our sharing in the sufferings of Christ; 4) our sharing in the troubles of others, and 5) our sharing with others by both giving and receiving.

In the letter to the Ephesians, we affirm that Christ has broken down the dividing wall of separation (Eph. 2:14). But, we confess that at times we have been busy rebuilding barriers.

This celebration gave opportunity to share the experiences of our journey. Each partner shared stories and gave testimony to what we have done and learned together. We identified six themes that represent a challenge as well as a vision for the immediate future.

1) We recognize that a spirituality of partnership and our partnerships are strengthened when they are grounded in Bible study, intercessory prayer, theological reflection and include the sharing of personal experiences.

2) We recognize that the new form of cooperation, such as the one we are experiencing, requires new lines of communication and coordination which involve all the partners involved.

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

3) We recognize the need to establish basic principles of financial accountability and planning that depend on the oversight and wisdom of the structures of the respective churches.

4) We recognize that the activities of the partnerships call for the establishing of priorities, for strategic planning and for creating a schedule of all partnership activities.

5) We recognize that we face the challenge of making our partnerships truly mutual, where each partner experiences a full sense of giving and receiving. Because this relationship is circular, we cannot break this circle, otherwise we will not experience God's intended transformation, and the walls that divide will not come down. The mutual nature of the relationship recognizes specific current realities in our churches, which includes the economic situation in Cuba with specific consideration to the material needs of the Cuban churches and the spiritual needs in the PC (USA) to which the IPRC can bear witness of faithfulness.

6) We recognize that our mission partnership:

- a) calls U.S. Presbyterian partners to the work of advocacy for the normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations; and
- b) calls us all to work together to prepare for the ministry after that normalization.

Unanimously adopted in plenary session in the First Presbyterian Church of Havana on November 20, 2000.

MUTUAL MISSION AGREEMENT Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and Presbyterian Church (USA) Adopted by the 198th General Assembly (1986)

Background (Excerpted)

From September 30 to October 6, 1985, a delegation from the Program Agency and the Mission Board visited the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba at its invitation. The delegation traveled to all three of its presbyteries and visited in twelve churches. The situation of each denomination was discussed and an Agreement of Mutual Mission was adopted concerning the relationship and shared ministry of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

MUTUAL MISSION AGREEMENT

The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (USA), meeting in consultation at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba on October 3-5, 1985, celebrate together the following:

- Our unity in Jesus Christ.
- Our common Reformed tradition.
- Almost a century of partnership in mission, looking forward to the celebration of the Centennial of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba in 1990.
- The effective witness and vitality of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba through its three presbyteries, thirty-five local congregations, active programs of Christian Education and leadership development, and important contributions to the new society coming into being in Cuba.
- The ministry of faith of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as it begins its life as a reunited church and seeks to be faithful in its ministries, such as worship, Christian education, congregation renewal, peacemaking, and social-economic justice.

We also affirm:

- That we share together in "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism."
- That we are called to deepen the bonds of unity, faith, and common witness between our two churches.
- That we share in one mission of Jesus Christ in Cuba, the USA, and the world.
- That we are called to be peacemakers, creating bonds of friendship and understanding between our peoples.
- That we are committed to sharing our gifts and resources with one another to strengthen the witness of our churches.
- That we shall place our partnership in the context of our common commitment to the church ecumenical.

Among the many common objectives between our two churches we agree to the mutual sharing of resources in the following ways:

A. Partnership in Mission

1. Exchange of seminary professors and students between the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (USA) and churches in other countries.
2. Participation of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba in the Mission to the USA Program.
3. Joint ministry in peacemaking programs.
4. Relating middle governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) with the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba once guidelines are agreed upon.

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

5. Exchange programs between youth, women, and other groups in the two churches.

B. Restoration of Facilities

We commit ourselves to share together in rebuilding and refurbishing church buildings and the conference center of national activities of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba. We shall implement a plan whereby both churches will use their resources to enable the rebuilding and refurbishing of church buildings, leading to the Centennial celebration of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba in 1990

C. Ecumenical Participation

We shall work together in the Reformed family through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Association of Reformed Churches of Latin America, the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches, the Latin American Council of Churches, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and the World Council of Churches.

D. Mission in a Third Country

We shall share our resources and persons to participate in mission in a third country.

E. Pension Funds

The Presbyterian Church (USA) shall seek to find a solution to the problem of transmitting pension benefits to Cuban pastors who are members of the Board of Pensions.

We express joy in our unity together as brothers and sisters in Christ and express through these concrete agreements to continue to strengthen our common participation in the one mission of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Both delegations unanimously adopt this mutual agreement and recommend it to our two churches for implementation.

Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba: Reinerio Arce, Carlos Camps, Rafael Cepeda, Raimundo García, Orestes González, Héctor Méndez, Javier Naranjo, Marina Pérez.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Carol Davies, Benjamin Gutiérrez, Clifton Kirkpatrick, J. Oscar McCloud, Jayne Ann Sherrod, Eugene Turner, Patricia Turner, David Young.

ANNEX: Cuba-D.C. Delegation/Consultation Participants

Cuba Partners Network:

Pat Metcalf, elder, First Presbyterian, Champaign, Ill.

The Reverend Dean Lewis, ret. director, Advisory Council on Church & Society; executive secretary, Cuba Connection, Medanales, N.M.

The Reverend Dr. Glenn Dickson, ret. pastor, Gainesville, Fla.

The Reverend David Cassie, former mission co-worker; ret. executive presbyter, N.J.

The Reverend Jose Luis Casal, general missionary, Tres Rios Presbytery, Midland, Tex.

Cuban representatives of the Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba:

The Reverend Daniel Izquierdo, general secretary

The Reverend Francisco Marrero, moderator

Members of ACSWP:

Dr. Christine Darden, co-chair, retired NASA PhD Hampton, Va.

The Reverend Dr. Ray Roberts, co-chair, pastor of Westfield, N.J., Presbyterian Church

Rachael Eggebeen, middle school teacher, Tucson, Ariz. (present Washington, D.C.)

The Reverend Kevin Johnson, pastor, Calvary Church, Detroit, Mich.

Dr. Marsha Fowler, professor of nursing & ethics, Azusa Pacific U., Altadena, Calif.

Dr. Steven Webb, ret. World Bank economist, Reston, Va.

The Reverend Dr. Linda Eastwood, physicist/professor of religion & science, Chicago, Ill.

Dr. Jean Demmler, sociologist, Denver, Colo.

Dr. Kathryn Poethig, professor of global studies, California State University

Mary Jorgenson, national moderator, Presbyterian Women; Kansas City, Mo.

Noelle Royer, administrator, Microsoft, Seattle, Wash.

Liaison from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns:

Dr. Nahida Gordon, ret. prof of statistics, Wooster, Ohio

Staff:

Dr. Alan Aja, associate professor, Latin@ Studies Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Reverend Virginia Bairby, ACSWP/*Unbound* managing editor, Louisville, Ky.

The Reverend Vernon Broyles, Office of the General Assembly, Louisville, Ky.

The Reverend Dr. Valdir Franca, coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean, World Mission, Louisville, Ky.

Catherine Gordon, Office of Public Witness, Washington, D.C.

The Reverend Dr. Jo Ella Holman, deployed mission co-worker, Dominican Republic

The Reverend Dr. Christian Iosso, ACSWP coordinator, Louisville, Ky.

References

Bardach, Ann Louise. *Cuba Confidential*. Penguin Books, 2004.

- Blue, Sarah A., "The Erosion of Racial Equality in the Context of Cuba's Dual Economy," *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Fall, 2007), pp. 35–68.
- Casal, Jose Luis. "Cuba and the Cuban Church within the Latin American Context," Testimony before Cuba Partners Network/ASCWP, Washington, D.C., Monday, June 15, 2015.
- Cepeda, Rafael and Carlos R. Molina Rodriguez, *The Infinite Sowing: Itineraries of Mission Work and Protestant Evangelization in Cuba*. Translated by John Walter (N. Charleston, S.C.: Create Space Independent Publishing, 2014).
- Cepero, Eudel Eduardo. *Environmental Concerns for a Cuba in Transition*. Miami: Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, 2004. Accessed at http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu/Research_Studies/ECepero.pdf.
- Chan, May Ling, and Eduardo Francisco Freyre Roach. *Unfinished Puzzle: Cuban Agriculture: The Challenges, Lessons and Opportunities*. Oakland, Calif.: Food First Books/Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2012.
- Chomsky, Aviva and Barry Carr, *The Cuba Reader*, 2004.
- Cuban Council of Churches, <http://www.nccusa.org/news/cuba/ccbackground.html>
- De La Fuente, Alejandro. *National Discourse and Politics in Cuba*. 1998.
- De La Fuente, Alejandro. *A Nation for All: Race Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (UNC Press, 2001)
- De La Torre, Miguel. *La Lucha for Cuba: Religion and Politics on the Streets of Miami*. 2003.
- Declaration of the *Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba* on Reestablishing Relations (Dec. 18, 2014) <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/12/18/declaration-presbyterian-reformed-church-cuba-rega/>
- Diaz-Briquets, Sergio, and Jorge F. Perez-Lopez. *Conquering Nature: The Environmental Legacy of Socialism in Cuba*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000. (A critique of Fidel Castro's environmental legacy.)
- Eckstein, Susan. *The Intra-Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the U.S. and their Homeland*. Routledge Press, 2010.
- Edmonds, Ennis B. and Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History: An Introduction*, New York University Press, 2010.
- Farber, Samuel. *Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959: A Critical Assessment*. 2007.
- Farber, Samuel. *Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered*, North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Frank, Marc. *Cuban Revelations: Behind the Scenes in Havana*. Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2013. (This includes information on the new agricultural co-ops).
- Funes, Fernando. *Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: Transforming Food Production in Cuba*. Oakland, Calif.: Food First Books, 2002.
- Helg, Alene. *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
- Hernandez Rodriguez, Rafael. *Looking at Cuba: Essays on Culture and Civil Society*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003. (Originally published in Spanish as *Mirar a Cuba: Ensayos sobre cultura y sociedad civil* by Editorial Letras Cubanas, Havana, Cuba, 1999.) (An argument for the strength of civil society in Cuba.)
- International Atomic Energy Agency. *Cuba: A Country Profile on Sustainable Energy Development*. Vienna, Austria: International Atomic Energy Agency, 2008. Accessed at http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1328_web.pdf.
- Lindsay, James M. "Getting Uncle Sam's Ear: Will Ethnic Lobbies Cramp America's Foreign Policy Style?" *The Brookings Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Winter, 2002), pp. 37–40.
- King, M. Dawn. "Cuban Sustainability: The Effects of Economic Isolation on Agriculture and Energy." Working paper, Lehigh University, 2012. Accessed at <http://wpsa.research.pdx.edu/meet/2012/kingmdawn.pdf>.
- Moore, Carlos. *Castro, the Blacks, and Africa*. Los Angeles, Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California at Los Angeles, 1988.
- PC(USA) Stated Clerk's Statement on Cuba-U.S. relations (January 1, 2015). <https://www.pcusa.org/blogs/stated-clerks-column/2015/1/1/january-2015-tear-down-walls-building/>.
- Rosset, Peter, and Medea Benjamin. *The Greening of the Revolution: Cuba's Experiment with Organic Agriculture*. Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Ocean, 1994.
- Rubenzon, Trevor, Campaign Contributions and U.S. Foreign Policy Outcomes: An Analysis of Cuban American Interests, *American Journal of Political Science*, 2011, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January 2011), pp. 105–16
- Scarpaci, Joseph L., Roberto Segre, Mario Coyula, and Roberto Segre. *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Sweig, Julia E. *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Stricker, Pamela. *Toward a Culture of Nature: Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development in Cuba*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2007. (Positive appraisal of Cuba's 1990s—"special period"—move to sustainable development.)
- Weissman, Deborah M. *The Moral Politics of Social Control: Political Culture and Ordinary Crime in Cuba*. 2010.

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Cuba's Future: *The Christian Century*. <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2014-12/cuba-s-future>.

Additional Readings from Presbyterian Mission Agency <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/cuba/>.

9 Key Questions About New Cuba Regulations (Washington Office on Latin America)

http://www.wola.org/commentary/9_key_questions_about_new_cuba_regulations?utm_source=January+16+Blast&utm_campaign=August+29+Blast&utm_medium=email.

Briefing on the Upcoming Migration and Reestablishment of Diplomatic Ties with Cuba (U.S. Department of State) <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/01/236090.htm>.

Cuba Timeline (Council on Foreign Relations) http://www.cfr.org/cuba/timeline-us-cuba-relations/p32817#/.

Where U.S. Cuba Relations Stand and What May Change (*Washington Post*, Jan. 15, 2014) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/world/cuba-2014/fact-sheet/>.

Obama Administration Breaks with Historic Cuba Policy (Council on Hemispheric Relations) <http://www.coha.org/obama-administration-breaks-with-historic-cuba-policy-implements-dramatic-changes/>.

White House Fact Sheet (Charting a New Course on Cuba): <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/17/fact-sheet-charting-new-course-cuba>.

The Future of the Cuban Revolution (Samuel Farber) <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/the-cuban-revolution/>.

Cuba and the United States: A Triumph of Political Realism (Roberto Yepe Papastamatin) <http://alc-noticias.net/en/2014/12/29/cuba-and-the-united-states-a-triumph-of-political-realism/>.

Eyewitnesses to Change in Cuba (*East Hampton Star*) <http://easthamptonstar.com/Lead-article/20141231/Eyewitnesses-Change-Cuba>.

On the Open Road (*New York Times*) http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/07/world/on-the-open-road-signs-of-a-changing-cuba.html?emc=edit_tnt_20150107&nid=40441890&tntemail=0=y&r=0.

Poll: Support increases for lifting Cuba embargo, travel restrictions (*Washington Post*) http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/12/23/poll-support-increases-for-lifting-cuba-embargo-travel-restrictions/?utm_source=February+13+Blast&utm_campaign=August+29+Blast&utm_medium=email.

What is behind U.S./Cuba thaw? (*BBC World News*) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-30524560>.

What does Cuba's Youth think of U.S. thaw? (*BBC World News*) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-31375493>.

Cuba: Racism and Revolution and the Afro-Cuban Experience http://jblun.org/issue/2/docs/black-activist-issue-2.htm#_Toc373339060.

Afro-Cubans Still At Mercy of White Wealth <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2015/01/afro-cubans-still-at-mercy-white-wealth-20151215457477713.html>.

Cuban Remix (*Stanford Social Innovation Review*) http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/cuban_remix.

Cuba: The Implications of Worker Self-Management (*Havana Times*) <http://www.havanatimes.org/?p=73935>.

Horizontalism as a Strategy: Taking Over the State Doesn't Lead to Real Liberation (*Havana Times*) <http://www.havanatimes.org/?p=107012>.

What Cuba can teach us about Food and Climate Change (*Slate*) http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/future_tense/2012/04/agro_ecology_lessons_from_cuba_on_agriculture_food_and_climate_change.html.

(Video) *Black in Latin America—Cuba*, The Full Episode—PBS, 2013 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/black-in-latin-america/featured/black-in-latin-america-full-episode-cuba-the-next-revolution/219/>.

(Podcast) – The Political Scene: A New Cuba (*The New Yorker*) <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/political-scene-new-cuba>.

Heirs of the Revolution: A Changing Cuba (NPR) <http://www.npr.org/series/324918619/heirs-of-the-revolution-a-changing-cuba>.

Polls Show Cuban-American Views on Cuba Are Nuanced (NPR) <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2014/12/17/371411659/polls-show-cuban-american-view-on-u-s-cuba-relations-is-nuanced>.

Forbidden Island: A Review (*America: The National Catholic Review*) <http://americamagazine.org/issue/culture/forbidden-island>.

As Obama makes history, will the Castros be the real winners? (*The Guardian*) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/21/obama-makes-history-and-the-castros-emerge-as-the-winners>.

CELAC Summit Concludes with Call to End the U.S. Embargo (CCTV America: Video) <http://www.cctv-america.com/2015/01/29/celac-summit-concludes-with-calls-to-end-the-us-embargo-on-cuba>.

Kissinger drew up plans to attack Cuba (*New York Times*) http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/01/world/americas/kissinger-drew-up-plans-to-attack-cuba-records-show.html?_r=0.

Back from the Margins: The Emergence of the Cuban Catholic Church <http://americamagazine.org/issue/5151/100/back-margins> (*America Magazine*).

Cuba's Dissidents and Exiles Seek a Leadership Role in the Future of Cuba <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article8605607.html> (*Miami Herald*).

Endnotes

1. As the study notes, Cuba moved to become a secular rather than atheistic state in 1991. The relevant sections of the Cuban constitution are: Artículo 8.-El Estado reconoce, respeta y garantiza la libertad religiosa. En la República de Cuba, las instituciones religiosas están separadas del Estado. Las distintas creencias y religiones gozan de igual te Article 8 -The State recognizes, respects and guarantees religious liberty. In the Republic of Cuba, religious institutions are separate from the State. Distinct beliefs and religions enjoy equal consideration. ARTICULO 55.-El Estado, que reconoce, respeta y garantiza la libertad de conciencia y de religión, reconoce, respeta y garantiza a la vez la libertad de cada ciudadano de cambiar de creencias religiosas o no tener ninguna, y a profesar, dentro del respeto a la ley, el culto religioso de su preferencia. La ley regula las relaciones del Estado con las instituciones religiosas. Article 55—The State, that recognizes, respects and guarantees freedom of conscience and of religion, recognizes, respects, and guarantees at the same time the freedom of every citizen to change religious beliefs or not to hold any, and to profess, within respect to the law, the religious group of his/her preference. The law regulates the relations of the State with religious institutions.
2. The compensation issue is complex, as settlement offers were made over time and now include claims based on losses incurred by the blockade (also see endnotes 27 and 28). On the U.S. side, the largest claimants are corporations, and there are differences between U.S. citizens who sustained losses and Cuban nationals who subsequently became U.S. citizens and pursue claims. A Brookings Institution study presents a balanced picture, noting this early offer based on declared tax valuation of lost property and bonds tied to sugar exports: “Notably, in the immediate aftermath of the 1959 agrarian reform law nationalizing large estates, Castro assured the U.S. ambassador in Havana that he recognized Cuba’s obligation to pay compensation (albeit based on assessed values for tax purposes and to be paid with 20-year bonds),” p. 12 in <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/12/01-reconciling-us-property-claims-cuba-feinberg/reconciling-us-property-claims-in-cuba-feinberg.pdf>

The July–October 1979 double issue of *Church & Society* magazine on Cuba included articles looking back on the widely known corruption of the Battista years and “Mob” control of much of Cuba’s tourism, which are important factors in understanding the expropriation of foreign (not only U.S.) assets. (*Church & Society* back issues are available from ACSWP). A short review of several options for settling U.S. claims noted, “According to a 2008 report from the US Department of Agriculture, Americans controlled three-quarters of Cuba’s arable land.” One option developed by a Creighton University team in 2006 “didn’t involve the transfer of cash or bonds [to corporate claimants]: Instead, they could be given tax-free zones, development rights, and other incentives to invest in the new Cuba.” Whether this would seem a reversion to external control by Cuba, it conceivably could provide needed capital if managed in a mutually beneficial way. See Leon Neyfakh, “Cuba, You Owe Us \$7 billion,” *Boston Globe*, April 18, 2014. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/04/18/cuba-you-owe-billion/jHAufRfQJ9Bx24TuzQyBNO/story.html>.
3. To look back at some of the documentation behind the assembly’s action: from <https://pc-biz.org/#/committee/521/business>: “The Council on Foreign Relations reviews human rights and intelligence reports to which there is public access and summarizes: “intelligence experts have been hard pressed to find evidence that Cuba currently provides weapons or military training to terrorist groups. In 1998, a comprehensive review by the U.S. intelligence community concluded that Cuba does not pose a threat to U.S. national security, which implies that Cuba no longer sponsors terrorism” (2010: <http://www.cfr.org/cuba/state-sponsors-cuba/p9359>). In their view, Cuba remains [remained] on the list because it may have relations with countries that may oppose the United States in some measure (Iran, Venezuela), it may shelter or hold foreign nationals of interest to the United States (not necessarily terrorists), and it may still be an important political concern for parts of the Cuban exile community.”
4. The key word in this sentence is, “unwanted.” The Philippines or other Pacific nations may want a limited U.S. presence to balance an increasing Chinese presence in the South China Sea or elsewhere. The larger issue is one of self-determination within a rule-governed world order.
5. A recent study of U.S.-Cuba relations is William LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh, *Back Channel to Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). One of their findings was that then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger proposed a massive military attack to “smash Cuba,” in response to Cuba’s sending troops to Angola to assist that country in fighting South African forces. Frances Robles, “Kissinger Drew Up Plans to Attack Cuba, Records Show,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 1, 2014, p. A 3.
6. The Wikipedia link illustrates the lack of information about the Cuban government’s military expenditure and military readiness, which is assumed to be focused on anti-drug patrols as well as the internal security of the state: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Revolutionary_Armed_Forces. The CIA World Factbook Cuba entry contains little information beyond noting the two-year compulsory military service and a generally professional army, presumably still with some senior officers who had experience overseas in Angola or elsewhere: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html>.
7. The cost estimate listed under “Financial Implications” included a legal contingency of \$15,000; by working with the Presbyterian Cuba Connection, even the remote possibility of incurring this cost was removed. Changes in U.S. travel regulation subsequent to the ACSWP-CPMN trip have further eased travel, though some limits remained as of mid-2015. This referral appears to have been the first time such a joint effort by a General Assembly committee and a Mission Network was recommended; Presbyterian World Mission involvement was implicit, but the assembly was effectively authorizing a volunteer organization to assist in the development of official church policy.
8. The official statement by the State Department noted that while the United States had “significant concerns and disagreements” with many of Cuba’s “policies and actions,” it fell outside the “criteria” relevant to the designation of state-sponsored terrorism. For more on the decision, and reactions from Congressional leaders, see Hirschfield Davis, Julie, “U.S. Removes Cuba from State-Sponsored Terrorism List,” *The New York Times*, May 29, 2015.
9. See “Growing Momentum to Repeal the Embargo,” *The New York Times*, Editorial page, August 3, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/03/opinion/growing-momentum-to-repeal-cuban-embargo.html>

10. See *Latin America Working Group* Press Release: http://lawg.org/storage/documents/Press_Release-us_and_Cuba_Embassies_Reopen.pdf July 20, 2015.
11. For a critical examination of the U.S. intervention in Cuba during the early 20th century, see the following: Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 2001.
12. During the early years of development of the Cuban exilic community in Miami, Florida, the U.S. government, in specific the C.I.A., spent several millions on the exilic community with mind to promote the virtues of capitalism on the island.
13. See political scientist Eckstein, Susan's latest book, who argues that Cuba's more recent "transnational" migrants, not the exiles, have done more to influence Cuba's economy and politics. *The Intra-Immigrant Dilemma*, 2007.
14. For ecumenical perspective, see Rafael Cepeda and Carlos R. Molina, *The Infinite Sowing: Itineraries of Mission Work and Protestant Evangelization in Cuba*, Translated by John Walter (N. Charleston, S.C.: Create Space Independent Publishing, 2014).
15. The *Presbyterian Cuba Connection* newsletter, in Spanish and English, edited by Dean H. Lewis, is an engaging chronicle of Cuban Presbyterian and U.S. relations, theology, and politics: <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/2/6/cuba-connection/>.
16. The presentations from that consultation, on the theme of partnership, are available from the World Mission Latin America office and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy. See: *Biblical Theological Symposium: Foundations of Partnership*, Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Villa Bacuranao, Cuba: January 19–21, 2004.
17. International Monetary Fund 2000, *Tax Code of the Republic of Taxastan*. IMF: Washington, D.C.; International Monetary Fund 2011. "Revenue Mobilization in Developing Countries", prepared by the Fiscal Affairs Department. Processed, March 8, 2011.
18. The arguments of this paragraph and its predecessor condense much material from books noted in the resource list; specific citations are available from Professor Alan Aja.
19. See "International Survey of Cubans Living in Cuba," Fusion/Univision, April 8, 2015. Available at: https://fusiondotnet.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/fusion_cuba-poll-charts-1.pdf.
20. The poll also found that Spain (12 percent) and Italy (6 percent) were the other two countries where the most money is sent to Cuba. See Bendixen and Amandi (2015).
21. For more, see *Radio Havana* transcription based on an article in the *Daily Granma*. This can be accessed at: <http://www.radiohc.cu/en/especiales/comentarios/31414-10w-birthrate-a-big-problem-in-cuba>.
22. The World Bank figure for 2011 is slightly higher at 9.74 per 1,000.
23. *Granma* is the official newspaper of the Communist Party in Cuba. It is named after the yacht that guerilla leaders took in 1956 from Mexico to Cuba to ignite the revolution. The yacht remains in an enclosed casing as a monument in La Habana Vieja (old Habana).
24. In 2014, numerous reports surfaced highlighting the potential economic impact of an aging population in Cuba. For example, see the following reports and articles by Strug (2014), Leandro (2014) and Pujol (2014): <https://nacla.org/news/2014/11/10/cuba%E2%80%99s-retired-population-struggles-economic-reforms>; <http://www.ascecuba.org/c/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/v22-pujol1rev.pdf>; <http://www.radiohc.cu/en/especiales/comentarios/31414-low-birth-rate-a-big-problem-in-cuba>.
25. For the full report, see: International Religious Freedom Report, State Department, October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2009/127386.htm>.
26. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge F. Pérez-López, *Conquering Nature: The Environmental Legacy of Socialism in Cuba* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 23 and 111–37.
27. Presentation to ACSWP, Luyanó, Havana, March 18th, 2015.
28. Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *Conquering Nature*, 157–58 and for broader cutting for survival, pp. 266–67.
29. Scarpaci, Joseph L., Roberto Segre, Mario Coyula, and Roberto Segre. *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
30. Cuba has large deposits of nickel. At the time of the 1959 "triumph of the revolution," U.S. investment in Cuba, totaling more than \$1 billion, was concentrated in the sugar and nickel industries. Julia E. Sweig, *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 76.
31. Diaz-Briquets and Pérez-López, *op.cit.*, 157 and 176–83.
33. Establishing rule of law for political transitions could also start at the local and provincial level by having local elections for a while and only later national elections. For instance, that's how the democratic transitions were done explicitly in Argentina and Brazil in the 1980s, and in some sense Colombia as well, where the 1990 constitution opened the door for parties other than the previous duopoly to win department and municipal elections. These countries have had economic and political problems in the last three decades, but have avoided military coups or other reversion to dictatorship. Subnational variation in winners reduces the problem of national elections being winner take all.

Mexico's more complex experience also supports this idea. Essentially all the elections in the country at all levels had been won by the PRI since 1930, and then a non-PRI party (PRD) won the (national) presidential election in 1988, but the results were cast aside and the PRI stayed in power. Then starting in 1989 and increasingly in the 1990s the PAN and PRD won state and local elections around the country and in 1997 took away PRI's majority in the national congress. Then by 2000, after Congress had taken away the President's big discretionary spending budget and strengthened the Electoral Commission, it was possible for the PAN to win the pres-

idential election and have a peaceful transition of the national executive. Subsequent reforms within the major parties have included primary elections.

34. See for example Susan Eckstein's *The Intra-Immigrant Dilemma* (2008), who argues that today's Cuban immigrants (relatively younger and "transnational") have done more to influence changes in Cuba than the more politically focused "exiles" (those who arrived between 1959 and 1979).
35. For a brief synopsis on the forces of political migration from Cuba, see Sylvia Pedraza's "Cuba's Refugees: Manifold Migrations," *Cuba in Transition*, ASCE, 1995.
36. See Susan Greenbaum's award-winning ethnography, *More Than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa*, 2000.
37. <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article17056742.html>.
38. The authors (Grenier and Gladwin, 1997) stressed the non-monolithic make-up of the Cuban American community, and made other important findings as compared to previous polls taken throughout the 1990s. Among them was evidence of increasing frustration over lack of regime change on the island and support for the Helms-Burton Act (over 75 percent). While only 25 percent felt that the embargo was effective, in contradiction more than 78 percent supported its continuation (including the continuation of penalizing companies who do business on the island). Support for travel to see relatives was also quite high (70 percent) amongst respondents, as was support for human rights groups operating on the island (over 92 percent) and even U.S. invasion of the island (66 percent).
39. See Table 7, "Establishing National Dialogue," Grenier and Gladwin, 1997.
40. See Tables 3 and 10 respectively, Grenier and Gladwin, 1997.
41. Rubenzer, T. (2011), Campaign Contributions and U.S. Foreign Policy Outcomes: An Analysis of Cuban American Interests. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55: 105–16. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00483
42. Rubenzer's study found that three largest recipients of PAC monies by Cuban American lobby all opposed (2004) Davis and Rangel amendments to the embargo. Exilic political leaders who are longtime members of Congress were the key recipients of political contributions. Mario Diaz-Balart (R), who represents a larger district in Miami-Dade County, received the highest level of individual contributions (\$74,000) while Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, another legislator out of Miami-Dade County, was second on list (\$54,000). Rubenzer further found that contributions from opponents to the embargo such as the agri-business PACs and chamber of commerce who are generally "dispersed" in the American political and geographic sphere did not to have an impact on voting behavior (even if they reflect the general sentiment of the American public). This suggests that campaign contributions do matter (especially in the context of Citizens United), and as the author noted, that a concentrated group of pro-embargo folks can outweigh a larger but dispersed group of anti-embargo opponents.
43. See for example <https://www.hrw.org/report/1994/11/01/dangerous-dialogue/revisited-threats-freedom-expression-continue-miamis-cuban>.
44. See Clinton, Hillary, Florida International University, July 31, 2015. http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/miami-hillary-clinton-calls-lifting-cuba-embargo?utm_source=July+31+Newsblast&utm_campaign=August+29+Blast&utm_medium=email. Also see Frumin, Aliyah, "In Miami, Hillary Clinton Calls for Lifting Embargo," MSNBC, 7/31/15.
45. The various categories to which a person can apply for licensed travel include the following: Family Visits, Journalistic Activities, Professional Research, Professional Meetings and Conferences, Educational Activities, Religious Activities, Public Performances (Athletic, Competitions), Humanitarian projects, work with Private foundations, Internet-based services, and other export related transactions.
46. See Cuban Military Transparency Act, 114th Congress, 1st session, found here: http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=files.serve&File_id=12dd41b0-7fa1-4238-8848-55e99dd7736b&utm_source=JUNE+19&utm_campaign=August+29+Blast&utm_medium=email. Also see Cuba Central, The Center for Democracy in the Americas, June 19, 2015.
47. A discussion of some of the theological changes in the Cuban church can be found in *Semper Reformanda Reformed World* (World Alliance of Reformed Churches) volume 52 number 2 (June 2002):

A Cuban experience of mission in unity—"From 1954, Fidel Castro waged a guerrilla campaign against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. At the end of 1958, Batista fled the country. On January 1 1959, Castro's army captured Havana and the Cuban revolution came to power. From the beginning, bread and an honorable life for everybody were the great objectives. Land and housing reform laws were signed. An important literacy campaign, strongly supported by Protestant leaders, taught all Cubans to read and write.

Many Protestant pastors and Christians in general supported the revolution because they saw in it a way of solving structurally the great social needs of the Cuban people, such as education or public health, which were hitherto the responsibility of the churches and private institutions. In fact, some of them even fought against the Batista regime in the 1950s, for example, José A González, Frank País, Esteban Hernández, Rafael Cepeda, Raúl Fernández Ceballos, etc.

Theodore A Braun, in his recent book, *Perspectives on Cuba and Its People*, analyzes this period in a positive and constructive way: "... as Christians who remained in Cuba began to see the hungry being fed, the naked being clothed, the poor being lifted (all of it by the government, outside the aegis of the church), they were filled with surprise. Here was God fulfilling the prayers and aims of the church through the instrument of a secular 'Cyrus.' But there was a big difference—the needs of all the people were now being solved by structural changes in society, not the needs of individuals by Christian charity. That raised a challenge for the church: What was its mission if there were no longer poor people to help? The answer came down to the basic hermeneutical calling of the church: to interpret what God is doing in the world and to join God there. Thus Christians began to have an increasingly active role in revolutionary society."

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

48. During the last day of our consultation in Cuba, members of the IPRC, ASCWP, and Cuba Partners formed groups to discuss openly our economic and political relationships as a church and discussed what we could “do together.” These recommendations stem from those collaborative meetings.
49. The following comment was made by one of the most respected and seasoned leaders of the IPRC. “People are afraid of being critical for fear of what might happen. People have lost the capacity to protest effectively. The church could help to recover that. If we remain silent we will never have any effect. We need to train people on how to protest!”
50. Presentations to ACSWP, in Havana, Matanzas, and Cárdenas, Cuba, March 17th to 20th, 2015.
51. Presentation to ACSWP, Luyanó, Havana, March 19th, 2015.
52. This requires no small commitment to system maintenance, and in some cases funds for filters and other parts come from partner churches in the U.S.A.
53. Presentation to ACSWP, in Cárdenas, Cuba, March 19th, 2015.
54. The Cuban government estimates that the embargo has cost the island nation 1.126 trillion in “economic damages.” See UN urges end of U.S. embargo on Cuba,” <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/10/un-urges-end-us-embargo-cuba-20131029181034233544.html>.
55. For a good summation of the Cuban embargo in context of current diplomatic efforts, see Council of Foreign Relations, *Backgrounders*, <http://www.cfr.org/cuba/us-cuba-relations/p11113> August 14, 2015.
56. For a brief synopsis of the CMPPP, see the State Department’s official 2006 announcement and description here: <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2009/115414.htm>.
57. See *New York Times* editorial board, “A Cuban Brain Drain, Courtesy of the U.S.” Nov. 16, 2014.
58. Here is an excerpt from the White House form letter (July 7, 2015) on this subject:

Many people have serious concerns about the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, and I appreciate hearing from you. The closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay is a national security priority. This is something I have called for repeatedly, because I believe we counter terrorism not only through intelligence and military actions, but also by remaining true to our ideals and setting an example for the rest of the world. I have also continued to call on Congress to lift the remaining restrictions on detainee transfers so we can move forward with closing the facility.

The Guantanamo facility weakens our Nation’s security by emboldening violent extremists, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and draining our resources—with costs of about \$2.7 million per year per detainee. As we keep working to close the facility, I have directed my Administration to transfer eligible detainees to the greatest extent possible consistent with national security and our humane treatment policy.

At my direction, there are now Special Envoys at both the Departments of State and Defense focused on transferring detainees. In addition, the Periodic Review Board process—a discretionary, interagency review of whether continued detention of certain Guantanamo detainees is necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States—ensures any ongoing detention is carefully evaluated and justified. My Administration will keep pursuing appropriate dispositions for Guantanamo detainees, including prosecution whenever feasible, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and consistent with our national security interests.

59. U.S. congregations of any denomination or civic organizations who wish to participate in the LWW Cuba Network can contact [Ed Cunnington](#), LWW Cuba Network moderator, for more information. Teams are trained at [Clean Water U](#), please [click here](#) for a list of Living Waters for the World training dates. Newsletters published by the Living Waters for the World Cuba Network may be viewed [here](#).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

- A. Questions from the Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Cuba, adapted from “A Cuban experience of mission in unity” by Carlos Emilio Ham in *Semper Reformanda Reformed World* World Alliance of Reformed Churches, volume 52 number 2 (June 2002)

These questions relate most to the section of the study on the Cuban Church and Partnership:

“The *Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba* as part of the body of Christ in the country is facing new challenges to its mission in unity:

- How to develop holistic diaconal projects in collaboration rather than in competition?
- As we try to do mission in society, how to be an expedition more than an institution?
- How to be faithful and promote justice in a dual-currency economy (where one can hardly survive without the “hard” currency) as a church, and as church leaders who often have better financial possibilities than those around them?
- How to cope with the “invasion” of “missionaries” (some of them “mercenaries”), who come with lots of dollars to try to “purchase” souls and even pastors and to proselytize?
- How to handle the “charismatic movement”, which can be a blessing, but also creates many divisions?
- How to minister in the context of ideological confrontations and polarization, both internally and in relation to the Cuban exiles?
- How to preach and teach the importance of reconciliation in society, starting right there in the church between the different groups in the congregations: those who remained faithful, those who are returning, and those who come for the first time?
- How to carry out mission in partnership with other churches and organizations abroad?

- How to cope with opportunism of both left and right?
- How to encourage the ecumenical spirit and commitment at a time when there is a reinforcement of denominationalism and apparently less ecumenical will or ethos?"

B. Questions Related to the New Changes in Cuban Society

1. How important are the social, educational, and health achievements attributed to the Cuban Revolution? Do they fulfill a set of human rights that complement the civil and legal rights emphasized most in the United States?
2. How much are the social values of Cuba today shaped by opposition to the excess and inequality of the pre-Revolutionary period? How much have the values of solidarity been undermined by economic hardship and governmental controls, and how much has the spirit of Cuba been shaped by resistance to *el bloqueo*?
3. Does the lack of energy resources make independence or self-determination for Cuba (or any other Caribbean island) almost impossible? Can newer green technologies change this equation?
4. The Caribbean nations are often divided into two sets by languages, English-speaking and Spanish-speaking, with French-speaking Haiti and a couple of others as exceptions. But is the real division between black and white Caribbean people? How is this divide played out in Cuba, and among Cubans who have emigrated? How different or similar are race relations in the U.S.?
5. How do you explain the aging population in Cuba? Is it simply hard to afford having children, despite assistance in childcare and other social benefits (including contraceptive availability)? Is it the pull of migration to the U.S. and other countries? Who is most affected by that pull?
6. What is the attraction of Cuban travel, and how much is it likely to change Cuba? Do the values of mission partnership conflict with the values of tourism? How much is tourism influenced by a desire to see a more egalitarian society, and how much is it an echo of the 1950s party island for outsiders?

C. Questions Related to U.S.-Cuban Relations

1. Given the society described in this report, does the nation of Cuba pose a threat to the United States of any kind? Does it pose a threat to other nations in the region?
2. Does the U.S. have a right and even a responsibility to seek regime change in Cuba? What is the role of international law and international institutions in this? Has the embargo been effective, and has it had unintended consequences?
3. How much has U.S. policy toward Cuba been influenced by Cuban Americans, particularly those of the initial wave of exiles in the 1960's? Is this a usual pattern of interest groups "capturing" or "owning" an issue, whether it is Wall Street influencing financial regulation, or traditional organized support for the three "I"s of Ireland, Italy, and Israel?
4. How much has the policy of regime change been driven by the desire to help Cubans gain more freedom, and how much has it been driven by a belief in the free enterprise system? How much has any commitment to capitalism for Cuba been influenced by desire to reclaim properties lost?
5. Does the U.S. have a responsibility to assist Cuba today? If so, through what measures—other than direct overthrow of the Cuban government? Are the expansion of markets and raising of living standards likely to change Cuba more than the embargo? Are they likely to change Cuban nationalism?
6. Does Cuba have a responsibility to assist the United States today? If so, what achievements and lessons do we need—other than more educated immigrants? How much does this question challenge a lingering paternalism and materialism—or consumerism—in U.S. attitudes?
7. Do you support "giving" Guantanamo Bay back to Cuba? What about ending immigration preferences and other report recommendations?

Item 12-08

Item 12-08 not referred for lack of concurrence.

Item 12-09

[The assembly approved Item 12-09 with amendment. See pp. 14, 68–69.]

On Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination—From the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to do the following:

1. **Express its appreciation for the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity" (May 4, 2015), and commend this report to congregations and presbyteries for study and action.**

2. **Commit the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to support the goals expressed in the report to**
 - a. **protect individuals from violence;**
 - b. **prevent torture and ill-treatment;**
 - c. **decriminalize homosexuality and to repeal other laws used to punish individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity;**
 - d. **protect individuals from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; ~~and~~**
 - e. **protect rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and to take part in the conduct of public affairs[-] [and]**
 - [f. protect access to travel and all public facilities.]**
3. ~~Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, to identify and encourage legislation to accomplish the above goals in the United States and U.S. territories, giving attention to the strategies enumerated in the report.]~~ **[Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Office of Public Witness, and the Office of the General Assembly to identify and oppose legislation that discriminates on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and to identify and encourage legislation to accomplish the above goals in the United States and U.S. territories, giving attention to the strategies enumerated in the report.]**
4. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, to pursue ways to advocate for these goals within the United Nations system, giving attention to the strategies enumerated in the report.**
5. **Communicate these goals to the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in particular the World Mission personnel, as well as other PC(USA)-related organizations engaging in global mission activities.**
6. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider context-sensitive ways to help mission co-workers address issues of safety and respect for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons.**
7. **Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to the ecumenical agencies to which the General Assembly belongs and our ecumenical partners, encouraging consideration and adoption of similar actions.**
8. **Direct the ~~[Office of the General Assembly to develop resources that are responsive]~~ [Presbyterian Mission Agency to give attention] to the particular needs of LGBT immigrants, and to provide support to congregations wishing to welcome LGBT persons seeking asylum.**

Rationale

In 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted a report to the U.N. Human Rights Council, describing a pattern of discrimination and violence against people in all regions on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

An updated report dated May 4, 2015, included approaches to overcoming violence and discrimination, applying existing international human rights law and standards. The full report is available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/29/23&referer=/english/&Lang=E.

The goals listed in the May 4, 2015, report are consistent with the PC(USA)'s longstanding commitment to civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons. These goals should guide the PC(USA) in its ministries.

Specific strategies enumerated in the report are:

To encourage all nations to address violence by:

- (a) Enacting hate crime laws that establish homophobia and transphobia as aggravating factors for purposes of sentencing;
- (b) Conducting prompt, thorough investigations of incidents of hate-motivated violence against and torture of LGBT persons, holding perpetrators to account, and providing redress to victims;
- (c) Collecting and publishing data on the number and types of incidents, while providing for the security of those reporting;
- (d) Prohibiting incitement of hatred and violence on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and holding to account those responsible for related hate speech;
- (e) Training law enforcement personnel and judges in gender-sensitive approaches to addressing violations related to sexual orientation and gender identity;

12 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON PEACEMAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

- (f) Ensuring that police and prison officers are trained to protect the safety of LGBT detainees, and holding to account State officials involved or complicit in incidents of violence;
- (g) Banning “conversion” therapy, involuntary treatment, forced sterilization and forced genital and anal examinations;
- (h) Prohibiting medically unnecessary procedures on intersex children;
- (i) Ensuring that no one fleeing persecution on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity is returned to a territory where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, that asylum laws and policies recognize that persecution on account of sexual orientation or gender identity may be a valid basis for an asylum claim; and eliminating intrusive, inappropriate questioning on asylum applicants’ sexual histories, and sensitizing refugee and asylum personnel.

To encourage all nations to address discrimination by:

- (a) Revising criminal laws to remove offenses relating to consensual same-sex conduct and other offenses used to arrest and punish persons on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression; ordering an immediate moratorium on related prosecution; and expunging the criminal records of individuals convicted of such offenses;
- (b) Repealing so-called “anti-propaganda” and other laws that impose discriminatory restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- (c) Ensuring that anti-discrimination legislation includes sexual orientation and gender identity among prohibited grounds, and also protects intersex persons from discrimination;
- (d) Integrating analysis of violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in national plans of action, thereby ensuring coordination and adequate resourcing of related activities, accountability for perpetrators, and redress for victims;
- (e) Sensitizing health-care workers to the health needs of LGBT and intersex persons, including in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights, suicide prevention, HIV/AIDS, and trauma counselling;
- (f) Establishing national standards on non-discrimination in education; developing anti-bullying programs and establishing helplines and other services to support LGBT and gender-non-conforming youth; and providing comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education;
- (g) Ensuring that housing policies do not discriminate against tenants based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and establishing shelters for homeless LGBT persons, with specific attention to youth, older persons and those in emergency situations;
- (h) Providing legal recognition to same-sex couples and their children, ensuring that benefits traditionally accorded married partners – including those related to benefits, pensions, and taxation and inheritance – are accorded on a non-discriminatory basis;
- (i) Issuing legal identity documents, upon request, that reflect preferred gender, eliminating abusive preconditions, such as sterilization, forced treatment and divorce;
- (j) Supporting public education campaigns to counter homophobic and transphobic attitudes, and addressing negative, stereotypical portrayals of LGBT persons in the media;
- (k) Ensuring that LGBT and intersex persons and organizations are consulted with regard to legislation and policies that have an impact on their rights.

Presbyterians are not of one mind about the teaching of Scripture concerning same-sex relationships, but all can agree that every human being should be afforded respect, dignity, and safety.

Concurrence to Item 12-09 from the Presbyteries of Boise, Detroit, and Southeastern Illinois.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-09.

Respect for all persons is a fundamental Christian and Presbyterian commitment. When any person is subjected to violence or discrimination, we are all diminished. As the United Nations report states, there are:

continuing, serious and widespread human rights violations perpetrated, too often with impunity, against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Since 2011, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands more injured in brutal, violent attacks. . . . Other documented violations include torture, arbitrary detention, denial of rights to assembly and expression, and discrimination in health care, education, employment and housing. These and related abuses warrant a concerted response from Governments, legislatures, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society. . . . Discrimination against LGBT individuals is often exacerbated by other identity factors, such as sex, ethnicity, age and religion, and socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and armed conflict. . . . (http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/29/23&referer=/english/&Lang=E)

As a part of the global community, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) both learns from and contributes to the mission of the United Nations to protect all persons from harm. This measure will enable the needs of a population often subject to violence and discrimination to be addressed more effectively by various ministries of the PC(USA).

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-09

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-09—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-09.

The ACWC supports the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, titled: “Discrimination and Violence Against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity” (http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/A_HRC_29_23_One_pager_en.pdf, May 4, 2015), and commend this report to congregations and presbyteries for study and action.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to live into its commitment of removing gender as a barrier to marriage after passing the authoritative interpretation during the 221st General Assembly (2014). This approval of the authoritative interpretation allows pastors and congregations in the PC(USA) to marry same-sex couples in states where it was legal.

Resources: Human rights council resolution Human Rights sexual orientation and gender identity (adopted 26, September 2014): <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/177/32/PDF/G1417732.pdf?OpenElement>.

Item 12-10

[The assembly approved Item 12-10 with amendment. See pp. 14, 69.]

On Committing to Play an Active Part in the Global Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic—From the Presbytery of Southern New England.

The Presbytery of Southern New England respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Give thanks for

- a. the medical advances that have enabled better management of HIV, slowing the spread of the virus and allowing HIV-positive individuals to live longer and fuller lives;
- b. the responses of national governments and international agencies that have helped to improve access to these life enhancing medications; and
- c. the sustained and compassionate responses of faith communities to the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

2. Acknowledge

- a. the continuing threat posed by HIV and AIDS, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa; and
- b. the current window of opportunity for eliminating the serious public health threat posed by HIV by 2030 through effective and coordinated action by a range of actors, including governments, medical professionals, community organizations, and faith communities.

3. Commend to congregations for study and action “Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action,” approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, pp. 72, 1370ff.).

4. Commit to playing an active part in the global response to HIV and AIDS at this critical juncture, and, in particular, to

- a. direct the Stated Clerk, in collaboration with PC(USA) Office of Public Witness, to urge the Secretary of State, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, and other relevant U.S. officials to increase global funding dedicated to fighting the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and to request that some of the funds be allocated to the support of faith-based organizations engaged in public education about HIV and AIDS and addressing the stigma and discrimination that continue to inhibit effective responses to the disease;

b. direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through World Mission, to

(1) encourage and accompany global partners working to raise awareness of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and to promote appropriate responses to the disease;

(2) educate PC(USA) constituencies, including congregations and mission networks, about the urgency of action to prevent a resurgence of HIV infections through media such as bulletin inserts, publications, and social media; and

~~[(3) mobilize financial resources to support education and stigma-reduction initiatives, both domestically and in cooperation with global partners.] [(3) encourage congregations to use existing methods of fundraising, such as the portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering retained locally to be used toward this cause, either by encouraging the support of the Presbyterian AIDS Network, or another HIV/AIDS ministry with which the PC(USA) is in partnership. The Presbyterian Mission Agency is not asked to fund the goals of this overture.]~~

c. direct the Stated Clerk to raise these concerns with other Christian denominations in the U.S.A., through ecumenical organizations such as the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and Church World Service, and to seek coordinated responses to expand access to affordable medical care, including appropriate medications and therapies to respond to the health challenges presented by HIV and AIDS.

[d. Direct the Stated Clerk to designate one Sunday a year, beginning with 2016 through 2020, as PC(USA) World AIDS Sunday for the purpose of raising awareness, lifting prayer, and promoting advocacy among PC(USA) members, and for the taking of a special collection to be used to support the prevention of HIV and AIDS both domestically and internationally.]

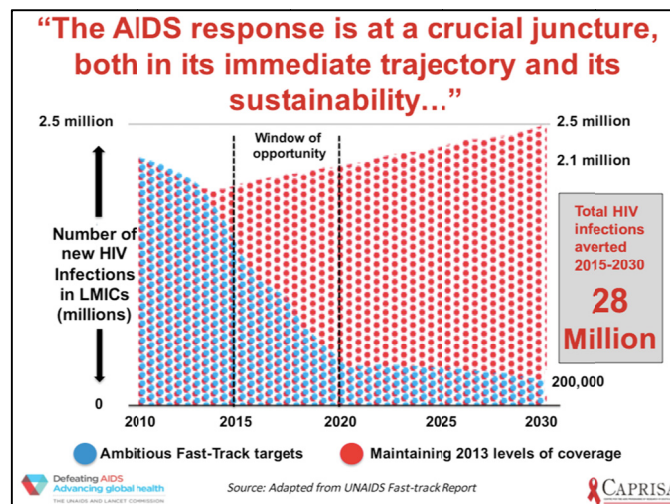
Rationale

The current situation of the HIV and AIDS epidemic demands an urgent global response, and faith leaders and communities are critical elements of that response. The purpose of this overture is to ensure that the PC(USA) acts with the moral urgency that the situation demands.

The HIV and AIDS epidemic is now more than three decades old. Almost forty million people have died from AIDS-related causes. Fortunately, at a critical juncture fifteen years ago, the world responded to the crisis. Without that response, the toll would have been much worse. Because of that response, fifteen million people are now receiving life-preserving medication. The PC(USA) was part of that global response through the creation of a special World Mission office dedicated to AIDS-related activities, through the Presbyterian AIDS Network and through the approval, by the 219th General Assembly (2010), of a policy statement designed to assist the PC(USA) to become an HIV and AIDS competent church, a concept explored more fully by the World Council of Churches in the 2008 Ecumenical HIV & AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) handbook, *Beacons of Hope: HIV Competent Churches—A Framework for Action*.

The epidemic is now at another critical juncture, and it is vital that the world respond again, and that PC(USA) again be part of the response. Thanks to advances in science and medicine, we have the knowledge to end HIV and AIDS as public health threats by 2030. However, we have only a very short window of opportunity to take advantage of that knowledge to achieve that goal. If, during the next five years, we do what we know how to do, then new infections will steadily decline. But if we fail to act during the next five years, the disease will come roaring back and new infections will start to rise again.

These two different futures are illustrated in a slide taken from a recent report from UNAIDS and *The Lancet*: The blue area shows the new infections if we apply our knowledge now. The red shows the new infections if we don't. The difference is 28 million—if we act now, we can prevent 28 million people from becoming infected with HIV! Those 28 million people give a moral urgency to our actions.



Social issues, such as stigma and discrimination, are important drivers of the epidemic. There are about seventeen million people living with HIV who are not receiving therapy, many of whom are in groups that are marginalized by society. They are afraid of the social reaction if they get tested and if they begin treatment; they are afraid of what their neighbors will say or what their employers or the authorities will do. Faith leaders have the social influence to change this situation. The authors of the UNAIDS-*Lancet* report have said that the most important thing for faith communities to do is to reach out to the marginalized with messages of inclusion, to ensure that they can be tested and treated without fear.

As we know from Luke 4:16–21, where Jesus reads the prophecy by Isaiah, Christ came for the marginalized. His earthly mission was devoted to the poor, the sick, the outcasts. Compelled by our faith, and recognizing the moral urgency of taking action, we must do our part in the global response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic at this critical point, with a particular emphasis on advocacy, stigma reduction, and support for our partner denominations in geographical regions that are especially burdened by the epidemic.

Concurrence to Item 12-10 from the Presbyteries of Denver, Elizabeth, New Covenant, and New York City.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-10.

As the Church of Jesus Christ we are called to serve not only at home but abroad. Therefore, in concert with Item 11-16, ACREC repeats from its Advice and Counsel on that overture:

Clear evidence from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicating that racial ethnic groups, particularly African Americans, constitute the majority of the population living with and at risk for the HIV/AIDS virus is readily available (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/ata glance.html>). That being the reality, ACREC, in concurrence with the action of the 219th General Assembly (2010) in its approval of “Becoming an HIV and AIDS Competent Church: Prophetic Witness and Compassionate Action” (Item 19-05: <https://pc-biz.org/#/search/3227>) in response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, strongly advises approval of this overture.

Note that ACREC’s Advice and Counsel above addresses not only those living with HIV/AIDS, but those at risk for contracting the virus.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-10

Advice and Counsel on Item 12-10—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-10.

The 219th General Assembly (2010) approved a comprehensive study that identified issues impacting people living with HIV and AIDS, both in the U.S. and globally, and recommended to the PC(USA) a response of compassionate action and prophetic witness. In order for the church to respond more creatively and comprehensively to the HIV and AIDS global pandemic, we provided resources and urged our congregations to become an ‘HIV and AIDS competent’ denomination (<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/becoming-an-hiv-and-aids-competent-church/>).

The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that the incidence of HIV and AIDS among young females, specifically adolescent females in developing countries is growing at an alarming rate. Their 2004 report states: “Of substantial consequence, yet largely ignored, is the fact that the majority of sexually active girls aged 15–19 in developing countries are married, and these married adolescent girls tend to have higher rates of HIV infection than their sexually active, unmarried peers. Thus married adolescent girls not only represent a sizeable fraction of adolescents at risk, but they also experience some of the highest rates of HIV prevalence of any group” (<http://www.popline.org/node/267054>).

Socio-cultural norms often restrict women’s access to information about sex and reproduction. Even when women, including married women, have access to information and condoms, women cannot negotiate their conditions of sex: gender norms that prescribe unequal and more passive role for women in sexual decision making undermine women’s autonomy, expose them to sexual coercion, and prevent them from insisting on abstinence or condom use by their male partners.

Paul Farmer notes “... risk of acquiring HIV does not depend on knowledge of how the virus is transmitted, but rather on the freedom to make decisions. Poverty is the great limiting factor of freedom indeed, gender inequality and poverty are far more important contributors to HIV risk than is ignorance of modes of transmission or ‘cultural beliefs’ about HIV” (Gender Inequality and the Persistence of AIDS- http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/acswp/pdf/aids-policy.pdf).

Therefore we acknowledge the advancement of medicine, and the better management of HIV/AIDS and the response of the national governments and international agencies that have helped to improve access to these life enhancing medications. Further we support the ongoing education and call to deeper commitment through the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA)

accomplished through World Missions as we seek to coordinate responses to expand access to affordable medical care, including appropriate medications and therapies to respond to the health challenges presented by HIV and AIDS.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-10

Comment on Item 12-10—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has consistently advocated to increase global AIDS funding through its Office of Public Witness, and was a key part of the coalition advocating for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This overture will enhance current social witness policy.

Some of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's global partners in Africa have made fighting AIDS and preventing its resurgence a priority. Our World Mission personnel were consulted in the drafting of the overture and its inputs are already reflected in the submitted overture.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency cannot presently devote an existing staff person for the activities suggested in the overture, but would need to create a new position outside the budget if financial resources became available. Mobilizing a funds development effort toward this new priority would require a significant diversion of resources away from currently established mission and funding priorities. The startup costs for a new effort would be unlikely to generate consequential funding for the cause during the first five years of such efforts. We would, therefore, encourage congregations to use existing methods of fundraising, such as the portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering retained locally to be used toward this cause, either by encouraging the support of the Presbyterian AIDS Network, or another Christian HIV/AIDS ministry with which the PC(USA) is partnership.

Item 12-11

[The assembly approved Item 12-11. See pp. 14, 69.]

Commissioner's Resolution. Reaffirming the Ministry of Sanctuary by Congregations.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016):

- 1. Reaffirms the support of previous General Assemblies for the ministry of sanctuary and for those congregations that have supported and offered sanctuary for refugees and immigrants threatened with deportation.**
- 2. Reaffirms the ethical responsibility of congregations and governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to defend the unity and integrity of families when an immigrant mother or father is threatened with deportation.**
- 3. Calls upon congregations and individual Presbyterians to provide hospitality, accompaniment, and sanctuary for mothers, children, unaccompanied minors, and refugees fleeing the murderous gang violence of the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras).**
- 4. Recognizes that offering sanctuary is one way in which Presbyterians are living out the Gospel call to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger, including but not limited to: advocacy to end family detention; visitation programs for detained immigrants; advocacy and organizing to stop the criminalization of immigrants and end the collaboration of local police with Immigration and Customs Enforcement; immigration legal clinics; support of and engagement with immigrant-led congregations and organizations; and advocacy and organizing for humanitarian, just immigration policies on the local, state, and federal levels.**

Rationale

Throughout the biblical narrative, God calls us to welcome the stranger. In Exodus 22:21, God declared that the people not oppress immigrants because they themselves were once strangers in a strange land. After the Judeans returned from exile, they expelled foreign wives and children (Ezra 10:10–11), contrary to God's call through the prophet Isaiah to welcome all people to God's house (Isa. 56:7). After Jesus was born, his family fled to Egypt because King Herod was persecuting young Israelite children (Mt. 2:13–14). During Jesus' ministry, he welcomed and healed people who were estranged from Jewish society, such as the Samaritan woman, a Roman centurion, lepers, and paralytics. Jesus declares that loving our neighbor follows loving God with our whole selves (Mk. 12:30–31). He then calls us in his parable of the sheep and the goats to welcome the stranger just as we would welcome him (Mt. 25:36). Sanctuary, providing immigrants shelter from deportation, is an act of faith founded upon the call of the biblical witness.

Successive General Assemblies (194th [1984]–198th [1986]) have supported the ministry of providing a safe haven for refugees fleeing the violence in Central America, which became known as the ministry of sanctuary.

The 211th General Assembly (1999) reaffirmed the guiding theological and ethical principles of the ministry of sanctuary contained in the resolution on, “Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors.”

The 211th General Assembly (1999) recommended that, “Christians should engage in pastoral, compassionate, educational, and prophetic ministries with refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants” (*Minutes*, 1999, Part I, p. 368). The provision of sanctuary for asylum seekers may be an appropriate moral response for churches.

The 221st General Assembly (2014), “Encourages Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations to consider preparations to provide sanctuary, safety, and support for LGBT refugees and asylum seekers” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 737).

The Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, wrote to the President of the United States in support of sanctuary and in hope of administrative relief on September 15, 2014. “These congregations are living out their love of neighbor by protecting families vulnerable to separation. They are doing justice by showing your administration that it is not abiding by its own enforcement policies. This denomination has a history of supporting its churches that find the offering of sanctuary to be an appropriate moral response. These churches are no different and have our support today.”

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, Presbytery of New Castle
Adan Mairena, Presbytery of Philadelphia

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-11—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 12-11 be approved.

The ACSWP notes that 197th and 198th General Assemblies (1985) and (1986) did indeed speak out in defense of religiously motivated sanctuary workers¹ and that recommendations approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) included that “The provision of sanctuary for asylum seekers may be an appropriate moral response for churches even though the United States government regards this witness as illegal.”²

The current situation of violence in Mexico and Central American has led to a number of Presbyterian churches being led by their faith to become part of the New Sanctuary movement. Item 12-11 affirms this practice. The committee may also wish to note the biblical and theological basis developed in the “Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States” as approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004), pages 13–15. (See also *Minutes*, 2004, Part I, pp. 737ff.)

Item 12-11 complements Item 09-06, “On Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or Internally Displaced.”

The ACSWP also notes that there is significant overlap between Item 12-11 and Item 12-12 and offers support resource should the committee wish to consider combining the two resolutions.

Endnotes

1. 1985 and 1986 PC(USA) statements in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 57.
2. *Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors* (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (USA), 1999), 3. See also *Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 353.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-11 with comment.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns agrees with the rationale commissioners provided with this resolution.

This resolution is also similar to Item 09-06 from the Presbytery of New York City that the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advised to be approved.

The ministry of sanctuary is based on our Christian responsibility to care and protect those who are the most vulnerable of our society.

The practice of sanctuary cities comes from the Old Testament and is based on the principle that every person deserves a new opportunity to rebuild their lives. This principle was also followed by Jesus in his relations with sinners and outcasts.

The adulterous woman, the Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus the tax collector, the Prodigal Son, and others in the Gospel had a new opportunity. They were not judged by the rule of law but by the rule of love.

As followers of Jesus we are commanded to follow the example of Jesus and be compassionate with those who are suffering. The Sanctuary Movement is a way to put in practice the love of Jesus and our Christian responsibility. The ACREC advises approval of this resolution.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-11

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-11—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-11.

The ACWC is in support of Item 12-11. Jesus commanded the church in John 21:17 to “feed my sheep.” He also told us in Mark 12:33 that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Part of fulfilling these commands of Christ includes offering sanctuary to displaced or migrant persons/families. We should absolutely affirm our ministry of sanctuary as the church and in individual congregations as a means by which we live out our Gospel call to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger. Many displaced and migrant persons across the United States currently struggle to keep their families together; whether these families are traditional nuclear families or nontraditional family units. There are laws as well as an absence of particular laws within the U.S. that blatantly disregard the basic human rights of displaced and migrant persons in countless ways. It is the call of the church to uphold the humanity of all people, especially those who are most vulnerable.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-11

Comment on Item 12-11—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly advises approval of Item 12-11.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members. Its responsibilities include supporting and reviewing the work of the Office of the General Assembly, including the Office of Immigration Issues.

Item 12-11 is consistent with the PC(USA)’s long history of extending welcome to the stranger, including the “We Choose Welcome” initiative of the Stated Clerk over the past year. This item usefully reinforces those existing policies, as well as the church’s position that the right of sanctuary is encompassed by the rights set forth in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. In a time when different states are taking contradictory views of such a right, reaffirming the position of the PC(USA) as to this fundamental right is vital.

Item 12-12

[The assembly approved Item 12-12 with amendment. See pp. 14, 69.]

Commissioners Resolution. On Affirming Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation in the Number of Displaced Person/Refugees.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) expresses our deep concern for the well-being of the refugee children, families and all migrants currently arriving at our borders, as well as those struggling to live within our borders. In response to the increased numbers of people around the world who are being forced to leave their home countries, and the simultaneous increase in punitive enforcement in many receiving countries, we affirm the following principles to guide and inspire our efforts to respond:

- ***Compassionate Response:*** We care deeply about these refugee children, families, and all migrants, and we urge our countries to have open arms to protect them and preserve their human dignity. We reject detention of migrants as a violation of human rights and dignity.
- ***Due Process:*** We advocate for fair and timely legal proceedings, competent legal representation, and due process for children, asylum seekers, and all migrants.
- ***Family Unity:*** We uphold and respect the unity of families as a basic human right.
- ***Restorative Justice:*** We desire revitalization and healing of our borderlands, not militarization. The only long-term solution is a holistic approach that prioritizes safety and opportunity for these migrants and addresses root causes.

- ***Civil Initiative:*** As long as our governments are not adequately addressing these humanitarian crises, citizens have the right and responsibility to respond with an approach that follows the mandate to provide sanctuary when needed and, above all, to love our neighbors.

Based on these principles, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approves the following:

1. We covenant to work together for just and humane response to all migrants, both at our borders and within our countries.

2. ~~[We direct the Stated Clerk to notify the President of the United States, the office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Homeland Security of our commitment to these fundamental principals and our commitment as a church to support efforts to welcome refugees, and of our particular concern for refugees from Syria and Central America at this moment in time.]~~ [We direct the Stated Clerk to notify the President of the United States, the office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Homeland Security of our commitment to these fundamental principles and our commitment as a church to support efforts to welcome all refugees. At this moment in time, our particular concern is for refugees from Syria, Central America, and conflict zones in Africa.]

3. We call on the Stated Clerk to share these principles with ecumenical and interfaith partners and to actively seek opportunities for collaboration with those partners.

4. We direct the Stated Clerk to work with the grassroots movement of Presbyterians who are working on these matters to interpret this opportunity for ministry through our mid councils.

Rationale

Over the last several months, there has been a group of colleagues from Germany, the NY Metro, and the U.S./Mexico border who have been meeting monthly by conference call to discuss common concerns around refugee support and sanctuary. This group has actually met in person twice since 2009, first with a visit by the Germans to the Arizona/Mexico borderlands and the New York Metro area that took place about seven years ago, followed by a visit to Germany by U.S. church workers a few years later.

Given the current crisis for Syrian refugees in Europe and Central American children and youth fleeing the economic desperation and gang violence in their home countries, this group has extended an urgent call to faith-based organizations to affirm these basic principles of sanctuary in responding to the needs of refugees and displaced persons. Below is the full-text of their statement.

From the Borders of Europe to the U.S.A.:
Principles of Sanctuary in Response to the Global Escalation of Displacement

June 2016

We, religious leaders and humanitarian groups from the European Union and the United States, who have practiced migrant and refugee hospitality for decades, express our deep concern for the well-being of the refugee children, families and all migrants currently arriving at the borders of Europe and the United States, as well as those struggling to live within our borders. In response to the increased numbers of people around the world who are being forced to leave their home countries, and the simultaneous increase in punitive enforcement in many receiving countries, our communities are working hard to support those in need with basic survival aid. But what is needed goes far beyond aid. What we desire is justice based on a recognition of the fundamental unity and interdependence of the human family.

Both in Europe and in the southern United States, the root causes of these migration trends include the economic and political priorities of the Global North. The wars, economic upheaval, and climate disasters befalling peoples of the Global South are more often than not driven by decisions and policies set in motion by the wealthiest nations in the world. As residents of these wealthy nations, our efforts to aid these migrants are carried out in recognition of this reality — in recognition of our role in their suffering — and in service of the “web of interdependence” which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of. We know that our ability to live truly dignified lives is bound up in their ability to do the same.

In an ideal situation, it is the responsibility of our governments to respond to these needs — and some governmental response has indeed taken place. The recent attention on the plight of refugee children and families arriving at the borders of Europe and the Mediterranean has spurred interest and compassion across the world. This spotlight on the European refugee crisis is similar to that of the Central American refugee crisis that received attention in the summer of 2014. Unfortunately, when the immediate flurry of attention wanes, we have seen how policymakers use such crises to promote fear-based strategies to detain and deter migrants, and to further the militarization of our border regions. At the grassroots, this is a tragedy. At the grassroots, we need living compassion much longer than the press interest lasts. These transit and migration points into Europe and the US have been, and undoubtedly will continue to be, protracted humanitarian crises as long as the strategy of deterrence prevails with a border enforcement-only approach. We yearn for a new, restorative and compassionate response to these global humanitarian crises of mass displacement — and it is toward this vision that we continue to act on a day-to-day basis.

We are clergy, academics and leaders of faith-based organizations who have worked in Europe and the United States to protect refugee children, families and all migrants, and to defend their human rights. We have been in relationship with one another for three decades since declaring sanctuary for refugees threatened with deportation from the U.S. and Germany. We have exchanged delegations to witness the work being done by faith-based organizations on the Southwest border of the U.S. and in Malta, Germany and Italy. Now we join together because of the common crises of alarmingly increased numbers of people being forced by war and economic upheaval to flee the Middle East and Africa, and the equally alarming increased numbers of people fleeing drug wars, poverty, and gang violence in Central America and Mexico. We join in solidarity with these migrants and with one another in faith, to uphold the human rights of all and the mandates of our faiths.

The following **principles** (further elaborated below) unite and embolden us to work together toward these ends at the borders of the US and Europe:

- **Compassionate Response:** We care deeply about these refugee children, families and all migrants, and we urge our countries to have open arms to protect them and preserve their human dignity. We reject detention of migrants as a violation of human rights and dignity.
- **Due Process:** We advocate for fair and timely legal proceedings, competent legal representation, and due process for children, asylum seekers, and all migrants.
- **Family Unity:** We uphold and respect the unity of families as a basic human right.
- **Restorative Justice:** We desire revitalization and healing of our borderlands, not militarization. The only long-term solution is a holistic approach that prioritizes safety and opportunity for these migrants and addresses root causes.
- **Civil Initiative:** As long as our governments are not adequately addressing these humanitarian crises, citizens have the right and responsibility to respond with an approach that follows the mandate to provide sanctuary when needed and, above all, to love our neighbours.

Based on these principles, we covenant with one another to work together for just and humane response to all migrants both at our borders and within our countries.

We ask our allies and supporters across Europe, the United States, and beyond to join us in this covenant, and in insisting that the above policies and principles serve as the basis for all countries receiving migrants in response to the current and ongoing international humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Church in Asylum, Germany

No More Deaths, Arizona

What these principles mean to us:

Compassionate Response: We care deeply about these refugee children, families and all migrants, and we urge our countries to have open arms to protect them and preserve their human dignity. We reject detention of migrants as a violation of human rights and dignity. Entering a country without documentation is not a crime if a refugee asks for asylum — the seeking of asylum should not be criminalized, and refugees should never be detained in prison-like conditions. In the US we oppose the proliferation of immigration detention centers maintained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and private prison corporations to hold captive immigrant men, women, and children. These detention centers are filled through national legislation mandating that 34,000 detention beds be filled at all times. This legislation creates demand for the policing and criminalization of immigrants for corporate profit. The results are devastating as detained individuals are often held far from family and face frequent transfers, impossibly high bonds, a lack of legal resources, and deportation. We are especially concerned by the re-opening of family detention centres, proven to be harmful to the well-being of children and families, and we urge collaboration with community-based centres for shelter. In Europe, some refugees have to stay in detention camps (for example Malta, Poland, Hungary), and others can live in refugee-houses or private homes. The rising numbers of refugees in more and more countries in Europe tend to move to a more restrictive policy against refugees, which leaves us very concerned. Flight is not a crime; refugees should not be detained. This principle stems from the belief that every person who arrives at the borders of Europe and the US has unique and sacred dignity, which is not bestowed by governments or by laws or based upon their wealth or where they or their parents happen to be born.

Due Process: We advocate for fair and timely legal proceedings, competent legal representation, and due process for children, asylum seekers, and all migrants.

Since the outpouring of support for the Central American and Mexican minors who arrived at the US–Mexico border in the summer of 2013, US Department of Homeland Security has introduced practices designed to expedite mass deportations that offend fundamental principles of due process and endanger mothers and children fleeing extreme violence, according to the CARA Project and Human Rights First.¹ Violations of due process and unreasonable delays in legal proceedings are also rampant in ICE and privately run detention centers throughout the United States.² In Europe more and more countries are defined as “sichere Herkunftsländer (ie. safe countries) — including Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, Mazedonia — which means that refugees from there have the most restricted means to apply elsewhere for asylum and almost no chance for acceptance. In Germany there are

discussions at the moment to declare Afghanistan a “safe country” — though currently 50% of all Afghani applicants to Germany are accepted for asylum under the Geneva Conventions — because the German government asserts that in some regions of Afghanistan, like Kundus, people are able to live peacefully. This is also happening with several countries in North Africa. In the US, we are also concerned with the due process of enforcement mechanisms such as the criminal prosecutions carried out by Operation Streamline. In Europe, more and more countries are implementing the policy of closing borders, even though it is arguably against EU policy. The EU Commission should challenge those countries, but because it is not seen as a “normal” situation, and because of the prevailing ‘culture of intolerance’ such actions are condoned. With the trauma that many of the migrants carry and their confusion about the immigration system, they should not have to defend themselves against a system stacked against them. We insist that the principles of due process and legal representation be upheld for these refugee families. We believe the justice system and the immigration system should not be used to criminalize or punish people who have had to migrate to feed, protect or re-join their families, or be used to expedite their removal.

Family Unity: We uphold and respect the unity of families as a basic human right. Many of the children and other migrants arriving at our borders, whether or not they have asylum or protection claims, are trying to unite with their parents or family members. We support this process for traditional nuclear families as well as non-traditional family units. In the US, we oppose the record number of deportations under the Obama Administration, and in Europe we are concerned about the practice of granting humanitarian status, a lower status which does not come with the right to family reunification. We oppose excessive time restrictions on reunification, and practices that link this right to costly monetary fees. We call for immigration policies that promote family unity and prioritize reunification. When families are travelling together, everything must be done to keep them together. We believe people have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families and that they should not have to choose between supporting their family and being with their family.

Restorative Justice: We desire revitalization and healing of our borderlands, not militarization. The residents, indigenous peoples, historical sites and wildlife of our borderlands feel the heavy impact of the migrations funnelled through them and the concentrated enforcement apparatus. We desire healing for all these communities and eco-systems. The plight of these vulnerable should not be used as an excuse to further promote fear of migrants and to militarize our borders. We believe that respect for basic human dignity, human and civil rights, as well as the restoration of environmental protections of public lands, must be prioritized. To achieve this, we must pursue more effective international cooperation. In Europe, the so-called “Dublin System” places the heaviest burden on the countries at the southern borders of Europe. In the southern US, it is the US-Mexico border that bears the burden of the migration from many Central American countries. We envision a system where every country is sharing equal responsibility, regardless of their proximity to the border. We suggest that refugees be registered near the countries from which they have to flee, and then be allowed to enter countries which will process their applications through safe corridors. Countries can decide about the number of refugees they will accept through this system. In Europe, those who are given a refugee status should be allowed to move freely within the EU and to choose the country in which they want to live. In the US, this vision implies cooperation between Canada, the US and Mexico. Refugees must take precedence — this will prevent family separation and deaths. The only long-term solution is a holistic approach that prioritizes safety and opportunity for these migrants and addresses root causes.

Civil Initiative: As long as our governments are not adequately addressing these humanitarian crises, citizens have the right and responsibility to respond with an approach that follows the mandate to provide sanctuary when needed and, above all, to love our neighbours. While the specific ways we extend support will vary, we are united in our commitment to respond. We seek to understand and educate others on the root causes of migration. We mourn with the families whose loved ones have perished in the Arizona desert and Mediterranean sea or other land borders. We recognize that a border-enforcement approach to the refugee children and families and the ongoing humanitarian crises will lead to more deaths, violence, human rights abuses and human trafficking already faced by vulnerable migrant populations. We urge the creation of transparent independent oversight groups to review customs and immigration officers’ practices and investigate allegations of abuse. We hold the belief that building just relationships with our neighbours should guide our efforts as a community to respond.

Endnotes

1. <http://immigrationimpact.com/2016/01/11/asylum-seekers-due-process/>.
2. <http://harvardcrcl.org/detained-without-due-process-is-indefinite-immigration-detention-unconstitutional/>.

Karen Turney, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
Elizabeth Shannon, Presbytery of Tampa Bay

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-12

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-12—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 12-12 be approved with the following amendment to the Recommendation 2: [Text to be deleted is shown with brackets and with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“2. We direct the Stated Clerk to notify the President of the United States, the office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Homeland Security of our commitment to these fundamental [~~principals~~] [principles] and our commitment as a church to support efforts to welcome refugees, and of our particular concern for refugees from Syria[] [~~and~~] Central America[], and conflict zones in Africa] at this moment in time.”

Item 12-12 builds upon the support of previous General Assemblies for welcoming the stranger, and for revising U.S. immigration policy. The 202nd General Assembly (1990), for instance, reaffirmed

the following principles, which are part of past General Assembly actions, as the basis for evaluating the [Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986] IRCA and advocating changes in U.S. immigration policy. Any immigration policy must:

- (1) provide for the human needs of refugees and immigrants;
- (2) assure non-discriminatory humanitarian aid and application of laws and policies;
- (3) uphold full constitutional and civil rights for refugees and immigrants as well as U.S. citizens;
- (4) protect the lives of persons;
- (5) give special consideration to the needs of women, children, individuals with special needs, and the unification of families;
- (6) insure provision of adequate resources, as needed, to communities in order to reduce possibilities of conflict between immigrant groups and racial/ethnic U.S. citizens; and
- (7) combat vigorously any expression of racism either in policies or the implementation of them.¹

Item 12-12 is in general terms consistent with the “Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States” as approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004), and with the policy document “Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounter with New Neighbors” approved by the by the 211th General Assembly (1999).

Item 12-12 complements Item 09-06, “On Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or Internally Displaced.”

In Item 12-12, Recommendation 2, ACSWP adds the wording “and conflict zones in Africa” to recognize humanitarian crises such as that in Sudan, not least as reported by our PC(USA) mission co-workers.

The ACSWP also notes that there is significant overlap between Item 12-12 and Item 12-11, and offers support resource should the committee wish to consider combining the two resolutions.

Endnote

1. 1990 PC(USA) Statement in *Presbyterian Social Witness Policy Compilation* (Louisville: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2000), 58. See also, *Minutes*, 1990, Part I, p. 520.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-12

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-12 with comment.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns agrees with the rationale commissioners provided with this resolution.

This resolution is similar to the Item 09-06 from the Presbytery of New York City that the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advised approval.

The growing number of armed conflicts in different parts of the world is generating an incredible number of refugees and displaced people. This is a global problem that needs to be addressed globally. We have to be part of the solution, and our church needs to develop strategies and alliances with other churches promoting collaboration to find solutions for short- and long-terms. The ACREC advises approval of this resolution.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-12

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-12—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-12.

The ACWC is in support of Item 12-12. Jesus commanded the church in John 21:17 to “feed my sheep.” He also told us in Mark 12:33 that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Part of fulfilling these commands of Christ entails advocating for our current structures of government to uphold and respect the human rights of all people; which includes our migrant populations. Many displaced persons and refugees across the world currently struggle to keep their families together; whether these families are traditional nuclear families or nontraditional family units. There are laws as well as an absence of particular laws within the U.S. and abroad that blatantly disregard the basic human rights of displaced persons and refugees in countless ways.

The ACWC is also concerned about how the current methods by which we are addressing these humanitarian crisis' are allowing for greater abuses to take place within migrant communities. The way we are currently responding to the massive influx of displaced persons and refugees is leading to more deaths, violence, human rights abuses, and human trafficking already faced by vulnerable migrant populations. It is the call of the church to uphold the humanity of all people, especially those who are most vulnerable.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 12-12

Comment on Item 12-12—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly advises approval of Item 12-12.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members. Its responsibilities include supporting and reviewing the work of the Office of the General Assembly, including the Office of Immigration Issues.

Item 12-12 is consistent with the PC(USA)'s long history of extending welcome to the stranger, including the "We Choose Welcome" initiative of the Stated Clerk over the past year. This item usefully reinforces those existing policies, as well as the church's position that the right of sanctuary is encompassed by the rights set forth in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. In a time when different states are taking contradictory views of such a right, reaffirming the position of the PC(USA) as to this fundamental right is vital.

Item 12-13

[The assembly approved Item 12-13 with amendment. See pp. 14, 69–70.]

Commissioners' Resolution. Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directs the PC(USA) to join its ecumenical partners, especially the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK), the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), the Korean Christian Federation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the National Council of Christian Churches in the USA (NCCCUSA), and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in efforts to pursue peace in the Korean peninsula by doing the following:

1. ~~Affirm~~ **[Receive]** the "Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula," adopted by the 10th assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) meeting in South Korea in November 2013, **and commend it for study and reflection**.

2. Urge PC(USA) members to actively participate in the global signature campaign for a Korean Peace treaty that is being led by the NCCCK and NCCCUSA with a goal of delivering 100,000 signatures of U.S. citizens to President Obama on July 27, 2016, the day that marks the 63rd anniversary of the armistice agreement.

3. Call on the president and the Congress of the United States to initiate a process for lasting peace in the Korean peninsula by working for nuclear disarmament in light of the fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) now has nuclear capability and the United States is intensifying militarization of the countries along the Pacific rim.

4. Request the U.S. government and the United Nations to secure a safe environment for the two Koreas to engage in dialogue and to develop a Korea-led process on healing, reconciliation, and peaceful reunification, and urge the U.S. government to make an effort to negotiate a peace settlement with North Korea.

5. Set aside June 25 (the date the Korean War broke out in 1950) through August 15 (the date when Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation in 1945) as a season of prayer and reflection in the Korean Peninsula as agreed upon on April 17–19, 2013, when delegates of the PCK met with leaders of the PC(USA) in Louisville, Kentucky.

6. Provide resources to congregations for meaningful reflection on the historical roles that the U.S. has played in relation to the Korean peninsula and to promote an increased awareness of the needs for peace, justice, and reunification in the Korean peninsula.

7. Designate and observe the Sunday before August 15 as the "Day of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula" using the common prayer and worship resources jointly prepared by the Korean Christian Federation of DPRK and the National Council of Churches in Korea, as was decided by the WCC at its 10th assembly.

Rationale

As people of Christian faith, Presbyterians in Korea and the United States have a long shared history in mission. As citizens of the world divided by nationalities, we also have a long shared history. When Korea was liberated from the Japanese occupation by the Allied Forces on August 15, 1945, Korean people overjoyed having finally gained freedom from occupation. This bliss, however, was soon shattered when the U.S.A. and the USSR, then the two allied superpowers, decided to divide the country into two along the 38th parallel under the pretext of disarming the evacuating Japanese forces. They promised to leave Korea in three months. Seventy-one years later since then, U.S.A. military forces are still in South Korea and the Korean peninsula remains one of the most militarized places in the world. The U.S.-South Korean joint military forces are engaging in massive military exercises annually that provoke retaliatory response from DPRK and North Korea has now acquired nuclear capability.

The Korean War is often called a “forgotten war” in the United States but this war cannot be forgotten by those living in the Korean peninsula. Because the war did not end with a peace treaty, but with an armistice treaty, the two countries across the dividing line are essentially still at war, and this has had most tragic consequences. Except for a few members of the Korean diaspora outside of Korea, an estimated 10,000,000 people who were separated from their families as a result of the Korean War and the following armistice treaty have never seen their family members on the other side of the military demarcation line, and that generation is almost all but gone. Furthermore, Korean peoples on both sides have been living with suspicion, hostility, and recurring incidents of violence as a result of the unresolved state of conflict and extensive militarization of the peninsula.

This armistice agreement had three signatories: U.S. Army Lieutenant General William Harrison Jr., representing the United Nations Command (UNC), North Korean General Nam Il, representing the Korean People’s Army and the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army. The agreement, in its preamble, states that the purpose of agreement is to “establish an armistice which will insure a complete cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed forces in Korea until a final peaceful settlement is achieved” and in Article 4, cause 60 is stated that “In order to insure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, the military Commanders of both sides hereby recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that within three (3) months after the Armistice Agreement is signed and becomes effective, a political conference of a higher level of both sides be held by representatives appointed respectively to settle through negotiation the question of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc.”

The experiences of Korean peoples prove that the armistice system is a very unstable and unsafe system that threatens peace all the time. The transition of the armistice into a peace system is the right alternative, and signing a peace treaty can pave a pathway to a peace system. A peace treaty as an international law may involve “certain political measures like normalization diplomatic relations, military measures like denuclearization, trust building and disarmament. It (could) also involve economic cooperation such as cultural, economic and social exchange” (From “Towards Sustainable Peace in the Korean Peninsula: A Korea Peace Treaty” NCKK, p 5). In essence, it will serve to “ending hostile behavior and recovering peace: that leads to reunification in the Korean peninsula.”

At the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Busan, South Korea, in November 2013, the WCC approved the following statement:

As a global body of believers in Jesus Christ, we confess our sins in having given in to the powers and principalities of the world in their wars and military conflicts full of hate and enmity, armed with nuclear arsenals and weapons of mass destruction targeting humanity and the whole of God’s creation. Also we lament our failure to adequately acknowledge the Korean people’s long suffering, caused by external powers fighting for colonial expansion and military hegemony. We hereby join the Christians in their confession of faith in Jesus Christ, who came to this world as our Peace (Ephesians 2:13–19); who suffered, died upon the Cross, was buried, and rose again to reconcile humanity to God, to overcome divisions and conflicts, and to liberate all people and make them one (Acts 10:36–40); who, as our Messiah, will bring about a new Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21–22). With this confession, we join in firm commitment with the Christians of Korea, both North and South, especially in Korean churches’ faithful actions to work towards peace, healing, reconciliation and reunification of their people and their land. (WCC Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has historically advocated for peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. Its most recent action, taken by the 219th General Assembly (2010), approved a resolution strongly supporting “the replacement of the present armistice agreement with a just and lasting peace treaty between North and South Korea, brokered by the United Nations, and endorsed by the United States and other powers with interests in the region” (*Minutes*, 2010, Part I, p. 976). Furthermore, when delegates from the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) met with select leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Louisville, Kentucky, on April 17–19, 2013, they issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to partnership in efforts to build peace in the Korean peninsula: “We affirm our commitment to walk in humility, with open minds, prepared to change our ways fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation as we follow the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)”

Since then, the World Council of Churches (WCC) held its 10th General Assembly in Busan, South Korea, and it was there that the above-mentioned “Statement on Peace and Reunification of Korea” was adopted. For lasting peace, it calls for a peace treaty to replace the current armistice treaty. In response to this call, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) has launched a global campaign for the signing of a peace treaty, and other ecumenical bodies, including the Na-

tional Council of the Christian Churches in the USA (NCCCUSA), are actively participating in this campaign. Most recently, NCCC sponsored a travel study workshop for a peace treaty in South Korea on May 16–23, and the Reverend Unzu Lee participated in this worship representing PC(USA). The participation of the citizens of the U.S.A. in this campaign is so vitally important considering that the U.S. was one of the three signatories of the armistice treaty, it still maintains military forces in South Korea, and the U.S. still maintains the control of South Korean troops in case of war. In addition, with the current U.S. Asia-Pacific “pivot” policy, the United States is repositioning military forces to the Pacific, increasing tension in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Korea that is caught between China, Russia, and Japan. Given this changing context, it is critically important that we advocate with the U.S. government and international community to commence a new process of peace-building across the Korean peninsula, which includes a commitment by all parties to help materialize the Peace Treaty. It is time to hear the words of the prophet Isaiah, “[God] shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4).

John Langfitt, Presbytery of San Fernando
David Hutchinson, Presbytery of the Cascades

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 12-13 be approved.

This well-designed resolution addresses a very long and tragic separation with wisdom and cultural sensitivity to concerns involving North Korea and China.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 12-13

Advice & Counsel on Item 12-13—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 12-13.

Item 13-01

Item 13-01 has not been assigned.

Item 13-02

[The assembly approved Item 13-02. See p. 26.]

Recommendation from the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) confirm the reelection of Marc Lewis to a third, four-year term as president and publisher of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

Rationale

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation has reelected Marc Lewis to a third, four-year term as president of the Publishing Corporation subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly.

During his two terms of service, Lewis

- helped the organization weather the storms caused by the shift in bookselling from physical stores to online retailers, the rapid growth of eBook sales, and a recession that caused many in the publishing industry—publishers, booksellers, and printers—to go out of business;
- led the organization during the development and publication of the well-received new hymnal for the denomination, *Glory to God*, the first new Presbyterian hymnal since 1990, without relying on any funding from the General Assembly;
- oversaw the creation of successful new online retail marketplaces to better serve the PC(USA) and the wider ecumenical church;
- practiced sound financial stewardship of the organization, allowing for the growth of financial reserves to \$2.7 million during a challenging economy.

Lewis received his undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee and his master's in business administration from Vanderbilt University. Prior to his role as publisher, he was general manager of PPC from 1999–2007 and, prior to that, served in a variety of management roles with Cokesbury and the United Methodist Publishing House.

Item 13-03

[The assembly approved Item 13-03. See pp. 14, 26.]

Recommendation to Confirm Election of Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.—From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) confirm the following directors of its subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., who have been elected for 2015–2016, consistent with the Deliverance for New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., as approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999) and amended by the 212th and 214th General Assemblies (2000) and (2002), and subject to applicable law:

Other:

- **Sandra Copenhaver Browne, Attorney, White, Female, Married, Lay, Under 50, Synod of the Northeast.**
- **Christopher Y. Nicholas, Retired, Asian, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.**

Rationale

Sandra Copenhaver Browne was elected on June 24, 2015, to fill the vacancy created upon the retirement of Director Sharon Z. Fesler.

Christopher Y. Nicholas formerly served as the OGA designee to the Board of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. Nicholas retired from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in March 2015 and vacated the seat of the OGA designee. There is

currently a vacancy in the position for the OGA designated board member while we await a nomination by the OGA. Shareholder action was taken on June 24, 2015, to increase the size of the Board of Directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., to eight. Christopher Y. Nicholas was elected to fill the newly created vacancy.

Item 13-04

[The assembly approved Item 13-04. See pp. 14, 26.]

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to do the following:

1. Continue its churchwide gifts program, as well as utilize the Foundation's subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., for the benefit of churches, church organizations, and individuals who wish to use the foregoing to make gifts as an expression of Christian faith and stewardship.
2. Explore and initiate ways to enhance its expertise and capacity in support of planned and deferred giving (including wills emphasis) and to explore the services of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., that will allow these programs and entities to be ever more effective contributors toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission for the Glory of God.
3. In consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, continue to explore and cultivate the growing number of national and worldwide ecumenical and business relationships consistent with the mission and witness of the PC(USA) to further advance the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation's & New Covenant Trust Company's (NCTC's) work to serve the church in ministry and mission.
4. Continue the Foundation's commitment to its fiduciary obligation to ensure funds are used in accordance with donor intent. This is especially important now as donors increasingly require more transparency from the mission and ministry organizations they support.

Rationale

Each General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation trustees ask the General Assembly to endorse the Foundation's work in support of mission and ministry throughout the church. This unbroken series of affirmations allows the Foundation to confidently pursue its ministry among congregations, presbyteries, synods, related organizations, and individual Presbyterians. General Assembly validation of our vital work on behalf of mission and ministry is essential to our effectiveness throughout the church.

A total of \$118 million was made available through the Foundation for mission and ministry in congregations, mid councils, national agencies, and related entities in 2014 and 2015. Additionally, as a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation's efforts to nurture the accumulated resources of Presbyterians to further the mission of the Church, call us to grow the resources that support mission giving for the future. New gifts and accounts amounting to more than \$125 million were received over the course of the two-year period.

These striking results are a testament to the power of giving witnessed by the Foundation as it lives its goal of bringing people and mission together. Because of the generosity of faithful Presbyterians, over the past five years the Foundation has made available more than \$304 million for the work and mission of the Church.

Item 13-05

[The assembly approved Item 13-05. See pp. 14, 26.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) confirm the following named individuals to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Board of Directors:

- Steven Bass, Caucasian Male Ruling Elder, 56–65, Presbytery of Seattle, Synod of Alaska-Northwest, PCUSA Foundation Board, New Nomination
- David Ezekiel, Caucasian Male Teaching Elder, 46–55, Presbytery of Chicago, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, New Nomination
- Chad Herring, Caucasian Male Teaching Elder, 36–45, Presbytery of Heartland, Synod of Mid-America, Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, New Nomination

- **Thomas McNeill, Black Male Ruling Elder, 56–65, Presbytery of Southern New England, Synod of the North-east, At-Large New Nomination**
 - **Manley Olson, Caucasian Male Ruling Elder 75+, Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod New Nomination**
 - **Josephene Stewart, Caucasian Female Ruling Elder, 56–65, Presbytery of Charlotte, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, At-Large PILP Corporation New Nomination**
 - **In Yang , Asian American Teaching Elder 46–55, Presbytery of Riverside, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, At-Large Re-nomination**
-

Item 13-06

[Item 13-06 was removed. It will be dealt with in Item 00-03, General Assembly Nominating Committee 2016 Nominations, G. Board of Pensions.]

Item 13-07

[The assembly approved Item 13-07. See p. 26.]

The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) confirm the election of James G. Rissler to the office of president of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., for a four-year term.

Rationale

The 1995 Deliverance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (“PILP”), as well as its bylaws, as amended, provide that its board of directors elect the president to a four-year term subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Due to the 1995 Deliverance providing that PILP reports to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”), this request for confirmation by the General Assembly is being forwarded through the PMA.

On October 25, 2014, the board of directors elected James G. Rissler to serve a four-year term as president of PILP, effective January 1, 2015.

The PILP Board of Directors formed a president search committee in January 2014 to find a successor to James L. Hudson, whose planned retirement was set for December 31, 2014. Following an extensive national search that included nearly two hundred Presbyterian leaders from across the country, the committee nominated James G. Rissler for president/CEO in October 2014 to the PILP Board of Directors. Subsequently, the board elected Rissler to the position at their October board meeting.

James G. Rissler is a resident of Louisville, Kentucky, and worships as a member of the congregation at Harvey Browne Memorial Presbyterian Church. He was ordained as a ruling elder in 1983 and has served as a trustee of Harvey Browne multiple times. Rissler has served on a number of committees mostly in the administrative, budget, and stewardship areas.

Rissler joined PILP in 1999 as vice president finance and administration and was elected to the position of senior vice president in 2004. During this time in his first two roles with the organization, PILP grew from \$23 million in assets to \$102 million and generated a surplus the last fourteen consecutive years. Prior to joining PILP, he spent seventeen years in the banking industry, most recently serving as a vice president with PNC Bank, N.A. Rissler earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and Business Administration from Vanderbilt University.

Rissler served as the chair of the Board of the Presbyterian Homes & Services of Kentucky, Inc., served on the Board of the Presbyterian Homes & Services Foundation, Inc., and currently serves as a trustee on the Board of Spalding University.

Item 13-08

[The assembly disapproved Item 13-08 with comment. See pp. 12, 26–27.]

[Comment: In the interest of Christ’s reconciliation and the hope for closure, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) would strongly recommend that both parties (commissioners and Foundation) avail themselves of the Foundation’s offer to mediate all issues in this resolution.]

Commissioners' Resolution. On Creating a Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and General Assembly Restrictions on the Administration of the Jarvie Service.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs:

1. That a special committee be appointed to conduct an administrative review, which shall have the power and responsibility to investigate the recent restructuring of the Jarvie Service and compliance thereof with the terms of the 1934 Trust Agreement and the General Assembly's instructions to its constituent bodies, and to take what action it finds necessary to assure that the Jarvie Service continues to be in compliance with the Trust Agreement and those instructions, including the power to speak with appropriate witnesses and obtain relevant documents from any Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) body; and including the authority to ask the Office of the General Assembly to provide for staff support;
2. That the special committee shall complete the first phase of its work and prepare an interim report and set of recommendations, bearing in mind the needs of the Jarvie Service recipients, which shall be presented to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly; and a final report that shall be made to the 223rd General Assembly (2018);
3. That the expenses incurred by the special committee shall be paid by the Board of National Missions (BNM) or its fiduciary, the Presbyterian Foundation, out of the Jarvie endowment or the earnings thereon, to the extent permitted by the Trust Agreement.

Rationale

The General Assembly has the responsibility and authority as an ecclesial matter to oversee the work of its bodies, and to ensure that those bodies honor express promises made to donors, and to promote openness and accountability in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Jarvie Commonweal Service (the "Jarvie Service") is an old age and relief service for people in the Greater New York City area that was created and operated by James N. Jarvie in the 1920s and subsequently transferred to the Board of National Missions ("BNM") pursuant to a 1934 Trust Agreement.

The BNM is currently a constituent corporation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation ("Foundation") and shares a board and staff with the Foundation.

The Jarvie Service is entirely financially supported by the earnings on the Jarvie endowment, which is now worth approximately \$100 million and is held and managed by the Foundation.

The 1934 Trust Agreement created a special "Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee" and charged it with the responsibility of conducting the Jarvie Service, requiring that the BNM "shall charge said committee with the duty of administering the commitments above assumed and of adding thereto and continuing as outlined herein, in fact and in spirit, the Jarvie Concept of Old Age Relief and Service."

The Jarvie Concept of Old Age Relief and Service is not merely care for elderly people; rather, as stated in the 1934 Trust Agreement, the aged needy must be helped to live, not merely to exist:

The aged needy have many real problems and perplexities which their infirmities do not permit them to solve unaided. Once on our list, they become members of our family. We help them to live, not merely to exist. We visit, aid and comfort them in sickness and in sorrow; we contact them with physician and minister, with clinic and hospital; we arrange and rearrange their budgets, advise as to housing and food, and our case records are full of examples of consequent health improvement and mental and moral restoration. Practical sympathy with practical service have given these fellow human beings a new spiritual happiness and a new belief in their God.

The new Form of Government in G-4.0101 requires that any corporation formed by the General Assembly to hold property, such as BNM and the Foundation, shall "receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the council," including a council such as the General Assembly.

The General Assembly has placed express restrictions on the management of property by the BNM and the Foundation designed to preserve this property and ensure that the national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) honors the express terms of any gift accepted by the Foundation or its constituent corporations.

The 198th General Assembly (1986) included such restrictions in the "DELIVERANCE IMPLEMENTING A DESIGN FOR THE CORPORATION STRUCTURE OF CERTAIN AGENCIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY" issued in 1986, which states in Section 3(d)(3) that "in every case where a donor has specified the purposes for which principal or income may be expended, refrain from making any expenditure inconsistent with the terms of the gift."

In addition, Article 2.2 of the Articles of Agreement for the Plan of Reunion for the reuniting Churches, according to the 1986 Deliverance, provides in part that "the continuity and integrity of all funds held in trust by such trustees or corporations shall be maintained, and the intention of the settlor or testator as set out in the trust instrument shall be strictly complied with."

Until mid-2015, the Jarvie Service and its staff were administered directly by the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee created by the 1934 Trust Agreement.

In mid-2015, the Jarvie Service was fundamentally restructured when officers of the Foundation, along with selected members of the Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee, caused the Jarvie Service to be outsourced to a for-profit home care agency, all without the prior approval and knowledge of the entire Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee.

Questions have been raised as to whether the outsourcing of the Jarvie Service to a for-profit home care agency unaffiliated with the PC(USA) without the approval of the entire Jarvie Commonweal Service Committee was consistent with the express legal requirements of the 1934 Trust Agreement and the procedures followed by the BNM and the Jarvie Service Committee since 1934 in their administration of the Jarvie Service.

The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission has already declined to consider the compliance concerns raised by the Jarvie Service restructuring, stating: “Trust agreements, including an alleged breach of fiduciary duty under such agreements, are typically interpreted under state law. Whether Respondents breached their fiduciary duties in this case rests on an interpretation of the Trust under New York law. Therefore, the Complaint does not state a claim upon which this Commission can grant relief” (*The Session of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church v. The Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of National Missions, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency*, Remedial Case 222-08).

Jill Schaeffer, Presbytery of New York City
Jonathan M. Brown, Presbytery of Palisades

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 13-08

Advice & Counsel on Item 13-08—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 13-08 be approved.

The Jarvie Commonweal Service has long been known in the New York City metropolitan area as a unique social service agency dedicated to helping Presbyterians, often older widows, stay in their homes and congregations, among other activities. Jarvie was a dedicated Presbyterian and made other generous donations to the church, and in this case the provisions of the trust allowed some of the funds from it to be used for broader housing needs. Over the years, dedicated Presbyterians have served on the board of Jarvie and the social services have been provided under the direction, usually, of a Presbyterian elder and by providers explicitly linked to the Presbyterian church.

The sudden administrative changes wrought in 2015 raise their own questions as to process to which this memorandum cannot address. Nor can we review the definitions of mission under which it might be determined that such a unique service agency does not fit within the goals of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or deserve particular administrative treatment by the Presbyterian Foundation. This item does not provide those sides of the story. However, Presbyterian mission work has often been led by generous personal gifts that expand the church’s thinking and diversify its “mission ecology.” More basically, trust agreements should not be set aside without careful public review, which this action seeks to have performed after the fact.

Although the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy is tasked to help the church speak to larger systemic justice questions and the rights of populations subject to war and deprivation, it is also important to remember the quality of care provided at any given time to the 50 to 150 individual clients of this social service agency. Jarvie’s model of care may need updating, but he sought to extend the ministry of the church in some uniquely personal ways. Does a for-profit secular firm represent his intentions and hopes? How much outsourcing can be done in the church overall without reducing our internal capacities and making us more dependent on outside, for-profit entities?

The concerns of the NYC area commissioners bringing this item, in our view, deserve attention. Their concerns reflect on the ethos of our church and our respect for particularity. They present the scope and costs of their proposal as reasonable. It does not contradict long Presbyterian concern for the common welfare funded by adequate public taxation to encourage generous personal donations for needs that may not easily be seen. How many of our own historic church buildings themselves carry both gifts and burdens from past visions of ministry and worship?

Item 13-A

[The Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, Foundation approved Item 13-A. See pp. 26, 27.]

Minutes, Board of Pensions.

Item 13-B

[The Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, Foundation approved Item 13-B. See pp. 26, 27.]
Minutes, Foundation.

Item 13-C

[The Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, Foundation approved Item 13-C. See pp. 26, 27.]
Minutes, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

Item 13-D

[The Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, Foundation approved Item 13-D. See pp. 26, 27.]
Minutes, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc.

Item 13-Info

A. *Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary—2016.*

Mission Statement

“Building on the Reformed tradition, the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation seeks to glorify God by contributing to the spiritual vitality of Christ’s church. To that end, PPC publishes resources that advance religious scholarship, stimulate conversation about moral values, and inspire faithful living.”

Introducing the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), one of the six entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), exists to serve and support the church’s mission. To do so, PPC combines an emphasis on the mission and ministry of the PC(USA) with a strategic focus on customer service and the employment of sound business practices. PPC, which has a religious publishing heritage of more than 175 years, was formally incorporated in 1994 as a nonprofit corporation. PPC is financially self-sustaining and receives no mission funding for its publishing activities.

PPC carries out its work by building on the Reformed theological tradition and its commitment to the ministry of the Word, the life of the mind, and engagement with the needs of the world. Accordingly, PPC’s publications are intended to address the needs of the denomination, to make original contributions to religious and theological thinking, and to clarify ethical and moral issues that confront church leaders and the wider society. These publications include but are not limited to

- educational and worship resources for Presbyterian congregations and members;
- practical and thought-provoking material for pastors and other church professionals;
- theological and religious books and other materials for use in religious higher education;
- books on spirituality, Bible study, Christian living, life challenges, and social issues for mainline Christian and the religiously unaffiliated.

With a diverse staff of twenty-six employees plus worldwide distribution of more than 2,000 titles, PPC continues to build one of the most successful and respected publishing programs in the fields of church, academic, and general religious publishing—a program recognized around the world for challenging works by leading authors of diverse viewpoints.

Organizational Overview

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation is comprised of

- Westminster John Knox Press (WJK)—the corporation’s prestigious academic and trade book imprint;
- Geneva Press—the corporation’s imprint that prints titles that are specific to the needs of the PC(USA) community;
- PCUSASore.com—a comprehensive selection of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) resources that provide the information and materials necessary to support new and existing congregations, leaders, study groups, and individuals;

- FeastingontheWord.net—an online retail site that offers pastors and church educators focused resources for sermon preparation and education;
- TheThoughtfulChristian.com—an ecumenical marketplace dedicated to helping Christians and seekers find resources to help them understand, share, practice, and be challenged in their faith;
- *These Days*—a quarterly devotional magazine that has been a source of comfort and hope throughout the world for more than thirty-five years

PPC Highlights in 2015

- Ended the year with a positive surplus and positive cash flow.
- Began a partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to produce a new lectionary commentary series, *Connections*, to be edited by Cynthia Rigby (Austin Seminary), Thomas Long (Candler School of Theology), Luke Powery (Duke Divinity School), and Joel Green (Fuller Theological Seminary).
- Completed a long-range strategic plan designed to bring the publishing house into a new economic, academic, and denominational publishing future.
 - Published sixty new books and resources, including titles that were featured on ABC's *Good Morning America*, CBS's *48 Hours*, the front cover of *Christian Century*, and other media, as well as titles that received awards such as the Book of the Year Award from *Christianity Today* and the Reference Book of the Year Award from the Academy of Parish Clergy.
 - Provided retail marketplaces at the PC(USA) Big Tent, Presbyterian Women, and Association of Presbyterian Church Educator conferences.
 - Served the church through a new retail marketplace, PCUSASore.com, adding the sales of Congregational Ministries Publishing resources through the site, as well as TheThoughtfulChristian.com and FeastingontheWord.net.
 - Continued to promote *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*, while developing additional hymnal-related resources for congregations, worship leaders, and families.
 - Continued development of the revised *Book of Common Worship*, to be published in 2018 on its 25th anniversary, along with the Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians.

PPC Benevolence Programs

PPC supports the work of ministry within the PC(USA) through various benevolence programs created for the express purposes of assisting those in need and contributing to the overall mission of the PC(USA). It is a sign of PPC's commitment to this mission that the benevolence programs are maintained as well as possible even in years of financial difficulty.

Included in PPC's benevolence programs are the following:

BENEVOLENCE

Books Across Borders & The Theological Book Network

PPC provides current publications to international seminaries in need of books through a partnership with Presbyterian World Mission and with the Theological Book Network.

Disaster Assistance

Churches that have experienced lost and damaged property and are recovering from disaster receive a package of replacement resources, including copies of the Presbyterian hymnal, *Glory to God*, and the *Book of Common Worship* (BCW). In collaboration with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Resources for New Worshiping Communities, Church Developments, and Fellowships

Newly formed worshiping communities, church developments, and fellowships receive complimentary resources of their choosing, as they begin their ministries and build a community of faith. In collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly.

Resources for Newly Ordained Teaching Elders

Newly ordained teaching elders in the PC(USA) receive complimentary resources of their choosing as they begin a new phase of ministry to the church. In collaboration with the Office of the General Assembly.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Robert W. Bohl Racial/Ethnic Internship Program

PPC provides a ten-week internship in its offices to a racial ethnic seminary student (PC(USA) preferred) who is interested in considering religious publishing as ministry.

ADDITIONAL COLLABORATION

Book of Common Worship—PPC is collaborating with the Office of Theology and Worship to revise the BCW for 2018.

Feasting on the Word Curriculum—PPC collaborated with Congregational Ministries Publishing of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to produce a downloadable curriculum resource that incorporates the Feasting on the Word commentaries.

Glory to God Hymnal—PPC collaborated with the Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians to develop and produce the new Presbyterian hymnal.

PCUSAStore.com—PPC is collaborating with Congregational Ministries Publishing and other agency partners to provide this central online store for PC(USA)-produced books, curriculum, and downloadable resources.

Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal

The *Glory to God* hymnal was developed by the fifteen-person Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song (PCOCS), a volunteer committee composed of musicians, scholars, pastors, and theologians. The project was a collaborative effort between Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), the Office of Theology and Worship (TAW) of the PC(USA), and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM). In 2012 the hymnal was commended for use in the PC(USA) by the General Assembly, and it was published in September 2013. PPC has assumed all the costs associated with the development and production of the hymnal, including the expenses of the PCOCS. No PC(USA) mission funding was used.

FACTS ABOUT *GLORY TO GOD*

- There are 853 hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs in the new hymnal.
- *Glory to God* contains music covering all major historical and contemporary sacred genres, including African American/gospel hymns, contemporary praise songs, global music, hymns that have never been published in a Presbyterian hymnal, and more.
- *Glory to God* has several indexes, allowing congregations to use the hymnal for worship preparation and a study/devotional resource.
- *Glory to God* contains liturgical resources, including the Service for the Lord's Day, Baptism, and Reaffirmation of Baptism.
- This excellent church resource is available in red or purple. There are also two cover editions to choose from: the Presbyterian version (which features the PC(USA) seal and the words "The Presbyterian Hymnal") and the Ecumenical version (which features the words "Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs").
- There are several accompanying resources, in addition to the pew hymnal, including: accompaniment editions, large-print and large-print text only editions, projection editions, a CD for families and children, a hymnal companion, and more.

Westminster John Knox Press (WJK)

Westminster John Knox Press (WJK) is one of the most respected academic religious publishers in the world. For more than 175 years, WJK and its predecessors have served scholars, students, clergy, church members, and general readers. The result has been an award-winning depth and breadth of publications for the training of seminarians, the dissemination of religion scholarship, and the spiritual and ethical formation of clergy and laity.

Books and resources published under the WJK imprint cover the spectrum of religious thought and represent the work of scholarly and popular authors of many different religions and theological affiliations. WJK publishes approximately sixty new books and other resources each year and manages a backlist of more than 2,000 titles that are sold throughout the world.

A few of the top books published by WJK and its predecessors include:

- 1838—*The Way of Salvation Familiarly Explained in a Conversation between a Father and His Children* by Presbyterian Board of Publication
- 1841—*Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin
- 1958—William Barclay's Daily Study Bible series begins
- 1962—*Race and the Renewal of the Church*, by Will Campbell
- 1966—*The Gospel According to Peanuts* by Robert L. Short
- 1974—*Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective*, by Letty Russell
- 1977—*The Bible Makes Sense*, by Walter Brueggemann

- 1982—*Prophesy Deliverance!* by Cornel West
- 1992—*Women’s Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe
- 2008—WJK starts printing volumes in the twelve-volume preaching commentary series, *Feasting on the Word*, a partnership with Columbia Theological Seminary
- 2015—WJK begins partnership with Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on the new lectionary commentary series called *Connections*

Retail Marketplaces

PPC operates several online retail marketplaces to serve the church. These include the following:

The Thoughtful Christian (www.thethoughtfulchristian.com) is an online religious marketplace including digital and print resources that are perfect for Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, clergy and preachers, Christian educators and teachers, religious academic scholars, students, and individuals who seek to grow, nurture and even ask questions to develop their faith and inform their faithful action in the world. By offering current and theologically sound books; studies for youth, adults, and parents; and retreat guides, we strive to encourage Christians to share their thoughts and beliefs while wrestling with questions that inform the way we live out our faith in everyday life.

PCUSASStore.com is a central online store where you can find PC(USA)-produced books, curriculum, and downloadable resources related to the Presbyterian faith, including information about the new Presbyterian hymnal, *Glory to God*. Providing excellent customer service and an overall positive shopping experience are top priorities for the PC(USA) Store team. The store is maintained by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, the publishing house of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in partnership with Congregational Ministries Publishing and other agency partners.

Feasting on the Word offers pastors and church educators focused resources for sermon preparation and education. All the resources in the Feasting on the Word collection utilize the biblical texts assigned by the Revised Common Lectionary, and for each text, readers will find brief essays on the exegetical, theological, homiletical, and pastoral challenges of the text. The three main collections under Feasting on the Word are the lectionary commentary series Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Feasting on the Gospels: A Feasting on the Word Commentary; and Feasting on the Word Curriculum: Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary.

These Days

These Days is a quarterly devotional magazine that offers powerful daily inspirational meditations interspersed with Bible verses, reflective prayers, and action steps to encourage readers to apply what they have read to their daily lives. *These Days* is published by PPC in cooperation with the PC(USA), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the United Church of Christ, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

How to Contact PPC

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation
 100 Witherspoon Street
 Louisville, KY 40202
 1-800-533-4371 or 1-800-554-4694
 1-800-541-5113 (FAX)
www.ppcbooks.com

PPC Board of Directors, 2015–16

Adlai Amor (Chair)
 Washington, D.C.
 The Reverend Mary Gene Boteler (Secretary)
 Cincinnati, Ohio
 The Reverend Dr. Elizabeth Caldwell
 Nashville, Tenn.
 The Reverend Dr. Cynthia Campbell
 Louisville, Ky.
 The Reverend Christine Chakoian
 Lake Forest, Ill.
 Jesse Hite (Vice Chair)
 Charlotte, N.C.
 Robert Holben
 Harbor Springs, Mich.

LaVert Jones
 Roswell, Ga.
 The Reverend Dr. Cynthia Rigby
 Austin, Tex.
 Olivia Hudson Smith
 Denver, Colo.
 Tony de la Rosa, *ex officio*
 Executive Director
 Louisville, Ky.
 Gradye Parsons, *ex-officio*
 Stated Clerk
 Louisville, Ky.

B. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary**Mission Statement*

A vital part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation cultivates, attracts, and manages financial resources of individuals and institutions to serve Christ's mission.

Summary

The Foundation remains true to its original charge from the 1799 General Assembly to solicit from individuals and congregations, "pious donations and bequests in order to supply the funds which are absolutely necessary to carry on with advantage the great and charitable work" (*Minutes, Old School, 1799, Part I, p. 182*) of the church.

Today we partner with congregations, councils, agencies and related ministries to gather, steward, and distribute funds for their mission and ministry. Our nationwide staff of ministry relationship officers works with pastors, ministry leaders, and individual donors to develop communities of Christian generosity in support of Christ's mission in the world.

In countless ways, the Foundation offers charitable expertise and services that unite and empower Presbyterians and the ministries about which they are passionate. We strive to do so in a trustworthy, clear, and accessible manner that reflects the faith and values of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Foundation has much to offer the church:

Stability. The Foundation has been forging partnerships with donors, congregations and others to fund mission for more than two centuries. One of six national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Foundation is composed of highly skilled officers and support staff trained in the areas of gift administration and compliance, accounting, law, communications, funds development, philanthropy, trust services, and more.

Connection. We work in leadership and partnership with the whole denomination to fund its mission. The Foundation does not compete with local congregations or any other institution of the church for charitable gifts. To the contrary, we are committed to strengthening these entities by developing gifts and managing funds on their behalf.

Commitment. We provide all Presbyterians with an avenue to realize their philanthropic goals through a variety of giving options. We maintain a strong focus on the Presbyterian values and principles that drive our stewardship initiatives.

*Highlights of Our Work**Ministry Relationship Officers*

Our nationwide staff of ministry relationship officers works to cultivate funds for mission and grow communities of generosity throughout the church. Combining decades of pastoral, leadership, and funds development experience, these officers help church leaders assess the financial health, generosity capacity, and stewardship practices of their congregations, then build on their strengths and address their weaknesses.

Project Regeneration

Faithful stewardship of church resources always looks to the future because congregations go through life cycles. The re-invention of a congregation, the closing of a church building, or the merger of multiple congregations can mean more than the end of a previously vibrant ministry. It can also mean the opportunity for the sale or transformation of excess church property into funds for new ministry. It can mean freeing an existing congregation from the burden of supporting a facility that no longer meets its mission needs.

The Presbyterian Foundation is partnering with churches and presbyteries across the denomination to discover and explore creative options for ministries that need adequate funding in order to grow and prosper. Endowment funds are among the many options available to leave a lasting legacy of the faith community by naming a ministry and specific purpose for the use of the fund, and provide support in perpetuity.

Online Giving

Presbyterians are generous by nature—we are passionate about mission and give joyfully to the projects, causes, and organizations that touch our hearts and engage our minds. To help expedite that generosity, the Foundation has created the Presbyterian Mission Exchange—a web-based giving hub with tools to facilitate easy online donations. Congregations can quickly and easily offer online giving to their members through the Mission Exchange.

Presbyterians use the Mission Exchange to discover and fund churches and charities that are sharing their gifts to heal the sick, feed the hungry, clothe and shelter the poor, educate and build up their communities, and promote the good news of

Jesus Christ throughout the world. In 2015 alone donors made more than 8,800 gifts totaling more than \$2.9 million to 332 congregations and ministries using the Presbyterian Mission Exchange.

Donor-Advised Funds

The fastest-growing charitable gift vehicle is the Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), and the Presbyterian Foundation offers a flexible and easy-to-use DAF program. Donors make an initial gift (which may offer immediate tax benefits), then recommend over time when to make grants from the fund, which ministries to support, and what amounts to give.

The Foundation provides online tools to manage the funds, including making gifts and grant recommendations, changing investments options, and tracking giving over time.

Donor-Advised Funds are excellent tools for teaching generosity and developing family giving patterns across generations.

Wills Program

Annually, the Presbyterian Foundation offers a Wills Emphasis program to congregations throughout the denomination. At the program's beginning in the 1950s, wills were the main focus of gift development. Currently, that focus has shifted to remembering the church in estate planning. While simple bequests in a will are still important, now the Foundation can provide guidance for complex estate plans in coordination with an individual's tax and legal advisors.

To complement congregation-based bequest and planned giving efforts, the Foundation offers pastors a package of wills program resources including a leadership guide, website, sample appeal letters, bulletin inserts, social media content, and more. These materials are provided free of charge to any Presbyterian congregation—the only expenses are the shipping and handling costs.

Expanded Investment Options

The Foundation and its subsidiary New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., offer a range of investment services to congregations and related Presbyterian institutions. New Covenant Funds provide an easy entry point and daily liquidity for congregations who want to self-direct their investment portfolio within the PC(USA)'s mission responsibility through investment framework. New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., offers a variety of more customized investment options to match the congregation's policy objectives. Presbyterian Endowment Funds are held permanently by the Foundation, invested in a diverse yet socially responsible portfolio by Cambridge Associates, and pay out according to an established spending formula designed to provide stable funding over many years.

Transformational investment options allow congregations and other Presbyterian institutions to invest positively in organizations creating positive solutions to challenging situations. These include a series of development projects in Israel and Palestine developed in response to the 220th General Assembly (2012)'s call for positive investment in the region.

Care for the Environment

While Presbyterians continue to discuss how best to provide care for God's creation and mitigate the negative effects of climate change, the Foundation's Board of Trustees has adopted a five-pronged approach to leveraging denominational investments to address environmental concerns:

- The Foundation's investment committee has allocated an initial investment of at least 1 percent of the Presbyterian Endowment Fund into investments that target climate change solutions.
- The Foundation has directed its investment managers to consider environmental factors in their security selection process. New Covenant Funds (a family of mutual funds created and sponsored by the Foundation) adopted ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) positive screening in 2014.
- The Foundation continues to work with MRTI in dialogue with energy companies to bring about change.
- The Foundation is utilizing a portion of the Church Loan Program, for which the Foundation is the fiduciary, for loans that implement renewable energy or carbon-reduction solutions. This effort is in partnership with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., which administers the loans, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Mission Development Resource Committee, which sets terms for loans and grants.
- The Presbyterian Foundation subsidiary, New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., provides fossil-free, managed portfolios to congregations, institutions, and other clients desiring a customized approach.

Stewardship Education

The Presbyterian Foundation is the denomination's hub for stewardship education. It's a natural extension of the work we've been doing since 1799—helping Presbyterians and their congregations to become people and places of joyful generosity.

ty. The Foundation provides an array of stewardship resources, including training seminars and conferences, publications, e-newsletters, planning ideas, case studies, and online tools.

In 2015, the Foundation was awarded a \$1 million grant to take part in the Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. The initiative supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they address the financial and economic struggles that can impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively. In this three-year program, the Foundation will further develop stewardship resources for congregations, along with training programs in financial literacy and leadership for pastoral and lay leaders. The Foundation is working in close collaboration with the Board of Pensions on this, which also received a Lilly program grant.

To learn more about the Presbyterian Foundation, visit our website at <http://www.PresbyterianFoundation.org> or call 800-858-6127.

C. *New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.*

New Covenant Trust Company, N.A. (NCTC), a subsidiary of the Presbyterian Foundation, was chartered January 2, 1998. The company serves as trustee of various types of trust instruments and provides investment management services. NCTC's board has enacted policies and procedures to ensure compliance with banking laws and provides oversight of the delivery of services to the Presbyterian community.

NCTC partners with individuals and Presbyterian and related organizations in the delivery of trust services, such as personal trusts, wholly charitable trusts and charitable remainder trusts, and investment management services. These services allow NCTC to create custom solutions such that trust, investment management, and philanthropic goals and objectives can be met. NCTC consistently strives to deliver superior service to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and seeks to enhance opportunities available to Presbyterians to express their Christian faith and generous stewardship.

NCTC provides shareholder services to New Covenant Funds, a family of mutual funds organized with participation from the Presbyterian Foundation. The services provided by NCTC help ensure the investments in New Covenant Funds are aligned with the social witness principles of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

NCTC also provides customized investment portfolios for individual and institutional investors that align with their mission values. Mission-driven portfolios may include screens for one or more of the following:

- Companies involved in alcohol, tobacco, gambling, war materials
- Companies that are making a major contribution to carbon dioxide emissions
- Positive investment in certain parts of the world

The following individuals were confirmed by former General Assemblies and continue in their service as directors of New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.:

Foundation Trustee: Stephen C. Kelly, Banker, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.

Former Foundation Trustee: Timothy P. Clark, Senior Bank Officer, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Living Waters.

Presbyterian Mission Agency Designee: Donald S. Hunt, Retired Bank Executive, White, Male, Married, Lay, Over 50, Synod of Lincoln Trails.

Other: Richard H. White, Retired Hospital Chaplaincy Director, White, Male, Married, Clergy, Over 50, Synod of the Northeast.

D. *The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. Report to the 222nd General Assembly (2016)*

Vision and Mission Statement: In gratitude for God's abundance, The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("PILP") promotes the growth of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) bringing together the visions of church developers and the resources of Presbyterian investors and financial partners.

PILP offers low-cost loans for capital purposes to churches, mid councils, and other organizations within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the "PC(USA)" or the "church"). As one of the six agencies of the PC(USA), we are the national lender for the denomination. We fund these loans from two sources, investor funds and endowment funds. The investor funds are raised through the sale of investments called Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts. These investments provide a competitive financial return plus the opportunity to participate in the development of the church through the loans PILP issues. Investor-funded loans and the investments themselves are assets and liabilities of PILP.

The endowment funds are the result of donations from generous Presbyterians over many years dating back to 1843—donations given specifically to support the growth and development of the Presbyterian church. PILP manages the entire loan process for both the investor-funded loan portfolio and the endowment-funded loan portfolio from beginning to end. However, the endowment funds—both the loan portfolios and the uncommitted funds for each endowment fund—are held in trust by the PC(USA) Foundation or the Presbyterian Mission Agency and sit on their respective balance sheets.

When we refer to our lending for “capital purposes,” our deliverance issued at the 207th General Assembly (1995) directed us to lend to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) organizations “to enable them to acquire or improve real property.” We can help fund the purchase, construction, expansion, or renovation of worship and mission space. We can also fund the purchase of unimproved land for the purposes of future construction of church buildings or for parking areas. Donor restrictions received with the endowment funds have similar restrictions allowing for only capital purpose loans. We cannot extend loans to churches for operating expenses or program or mission purposes; nor can we lend to individuals for any purpose.

Guided by the best practices of the financial industry, PILP is committed to faithful stewardship of the resources entrusted to us for the support and growth of the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

PILP experienced the most significant year of transition in leadership since its inception during 2015 as the entire senior management changed. The Reverend James L. Hudson, president and CEO for eleven years retired as of December 31, 2014. After a national search across the denomination, James G. Rissler, former senior vice president and COO, was selected to follow the expert leadership of Rev. Hudson. The request for confirmation of Rissler’s election will come to this General Assembly. Lorraine Recchia brought her extensive background in commercial banking to fill Rissler’s previous position. Ben Blake, vice president sales and marketing, retired just three months after Hudson’s retirement after seventeen years heading up our sales and marketing efforts. Clare Lewis, formerly of Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Congregational Ministries Publishing, joined PILP to fill this role. It was an eventful year to say the least but one that marked a transition with minimal disruption that was mostly seamless to our customers.

The last two years (since our reporting to the General Assembly) were as different as night and day for PILP and the investor-funded loans. In 2014, we started off the year with an average amount in the loan pipeline (that is, loans approved but not yet closed and loans closed but not yet fully disbursed) of \$8.9 million (“M”). Much of this pipeline was never realized as actual loans for various reasons. Loan requests withdrawn by churches leaving the denomination due to concerns surrounding General Assembly actions were a large piece of this. A couple borrowers did not draw the full amount of their loans as campaigns and campaign collections were stronger than anticipated—wonderful developments for the congregations. Throughout the first eight months of the year, overall loan demand was slow (as it had been for all of 2013), so declines in the pipeline were not being fully replaced. Our disbursements for 2014 hit the lowest point since 1997 at \$3.3M. Combined with higher payoffs (in part, also due to churches leaving the denomination) of \$11.2M, the disbursed loan portfolio dropped 10.4 percent to \$68M, a level not seen since 2009.

Activity in loan demand began to pick up during the fall of 2014. We began to see more construction projects, both expansion and renovation, as this increase in activity continued through 2015. Additionally, we worked with several churches, and one camp and conference center, on refinancing their current commercial loans. Some moved to PILP to find better interest rates, some were facing banks that were decreasing their exposure to nonprofit lending by creating unfavorable terms, and we had two that found value in borrowing from the denominational lender as a way of doing mission—their loan interest dollars would go back into a program to fund Presbyterian church growth. Although we lost one sizable loan due to a church leaving our denomination, activity surrounding churches seeking dismissal appeared to be waning throughout the year. We ended 2015 with record loan disbursements of \$23.6M, easily clearing the bar set in 2009 at \$15.7M. Even with slightly higher than normal pay downs/payoffs, our year-end disbursed loan portfolio grew to \$80.5M, an 18.4 percent growth rate.

The endowment-funded loan portfolio did not experience this wide swing in activity over the past two years. The endowments fund the smaller projects, the smaller loans. These size projects are not as vulnerable to economic swings as the larger projects that are funded by investor funds. However, the endowment-funded loan portfolio did have the impact of churches leaving the denomination and the general slowdown in loan activity that had occurred up until the fall of 2014. Although loan activity has picked up, it has still not recovered to the levels seen prior to the financial crisis of 2008/2009. During the five years up through 2009, average annual endowment disbursements were \$15.2M. Since 2009, the average has dropped to \$9.5M. The loan portfolio has declined steadily during this time, dropping to \$75.7M by the end of 2015. The increased activity during 2015 did eventually show as the portfolio experienced a \$500 thousand increase during the fourth quarter of the year.

Throughout both 2014 and 2015 PILP was able to generate a surplus, something achieved for the past fifteen consecutive years. This is very important to our regulators. As we are not a commercial bank, we are not subject to oversight from federal regulators. However, we are reviewed on an annual basis by state regulators that generally use the North American Securities Administrators Association Statement of Policy as guidelines for their oversight. Generating a surplus is one of the primary guidelines. In addition to meeting the regulatory requirement, surpluses help assure investors of the strength of our program, help provide capital for future expansion of the program, and help raise our capital adequacy ratio (another regulatory item). The combined surpluses from 2014 and 2015 have helped us toward our goal of building our capital adequacy beyond the 5

percent required by regulators to the 10 percent level. At the end of 2015, PILP had \$9.5M in unrestricted net assets, which supported a capital adequacy of 9.3 percent—up from 7.8 percent two years ago.

PILP's investment products are securities regulated under The Uniform Securities Act, which is administered state-by-state. The North American Securities Administrators Association (mentioned above) establishes program guidelines for denominational investment and loan programs. At the end of 2015 ILP met or exceeded all of the guidelines. In addition to the capital adequacy previously discussed, PILP is expected to maintain a liquidity ratio of liquid assets to Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts ("DARs") of at least 8 percent. At the end of 2015 our liquidity ratio was 25.8 percent. Another primary guideline is the limitation of senior secured debt to no more than 10 percent of total assets. At the end of 2015 PILP had no senior secured debt.

Our low-cost loans have low-interest rates, no application fees or points, and no prepayment penalties. However, we also offer an opportunity that no other lender we know has, the opportunity to get back some of the interest paid. Through the "Get the Point" program, borrowing congregations earn rebates based on supporting investments. For 2015, PILP returned \$304,829 to borrowing congregations, bringing the total returned to congregations since the inception of the rebate program to \$3.4 million. This is \$3.4 million that went right back into the mission and ministry of the congregations and thereby lowered the effective interest rate on their loan.

Equally important to the loans we offer is the consulting services we provide. We have issued more than a thousand loans to Presbyterian organizations—the vast majority to churches—over the years. We have gained a wealth of knowledge over this time. Working with congregations and presbyteries to help them determine the appropriate size project and loan amount, cash flow requirements, and debt service capabilities, can help avoid pitfalls. We work with the congregation to determine the best loan package for their project. Our goal is to help the congregation avoid a future situation where the debt service for a loan has any negative impact on their ability to fulfill the mission and ministry of their church.

Upon the request of their board and synod, in late 2012 we began the process of transferring the ministry of the Church Development Corporation, an investment and loan program of the Synod of Mid-America, to PILP. They felt that services were being duplicated and if PILP could service the borrowing needs of the synod, they would be able to use their resources for other programs. The majority of the loans have been refinanced. We are hopeful that the transfer will be complete by the end of 2016.

The 221st General Assembly (2014) had a tremendous amount of interest surrounding the fossil fuel issue. As a positive step in responding to the General Assembly's fossil fuel concerns, congregations and mid councils can implement capital improvements focused on reducing energy use through energy efficient upgrades to congregational facilities, such as renewable energy sources and other green initiatives.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment & Loan Program, Inc., met in 2014 to explore the possibility of encouraging proactive steps within congregations to advance green initiatives. A new loan product was developed named the "Restoring Creation Loan" that is available to churches and other PC(USA) organizations for the funding of sustainable energy systems, highly efficient heating/cooling systems, or other improvements aimed at reducing their carbon footprint. This loan can be up to \$600,000 and offers very low rates, easier equity terms, and utilizes the cost savings into the debt repayment plan.

The Restoring Creation Loan was introduced during the second half of 2015. We are still working to get the word out across our denomination but have had many conversations with potential borrowers, received several applications, and have actually closed a few loans. Rather than just responding to borrowing needs from churches and other PC(USA) organizations, our goal is to proactively initiate renovation/construction projects that intentionally reduce our denomination's carbon footprint while moving energy savings into mission opportunities.

PILP has maintained careful underwriting standards, believing that relaxed standards do not benefit the lender or the borrower. We maintain a review process for all lending relationships and work intentionally with mid councils, who guarantee our loans. This process has resulted in a loan portfolio that continues to have low delinquency rates and a very high collection history. At the end of 2015, PILP had no thirty-day or longer delinquencies.

PILP continues to be in sound financial shape. The balance sheet is strong with total assets of \$102 million. As mentioned above, our financial ratios are at healthy levels. We have received an unqualified audit every year. We have been approved for the sale of our Term Notes in every state and jurisdiction for every year since we began our general offering of Term Notes. Although the size of our loan portfolio had declined in three of the four years prior to 2015, we generated surpluses every year through close management of assets and liabilities, operating expenses, pricing, and margins.

Our hope is that PILP will be the premier provider of financing for capital projects within the PC(USA). We want Presbyterians to think about PILP first when it comes to financing a capital project. We will not compromise our underwriting standards to grow the business, but will build the kind of relationships that help congregations determine what they can afford

and what they cannot. We are building an investment base of individuals that has a vision of investing for financial and mission return. We are making it possible for Presbyterians to lend to Presbyterians.

We remain committed to promoting awareness of PILP throughout the church. We continually work to maintain strong and healthy ties with General Assembly agencies and mid councils. We continue to build a competent and diverse staff to serve the church. The program will focus energy on the following areas of activity in 2016:

1. We will continue to develop new avenues to inform congregations and presbyteries of our services. We have encountered many congregations that could have used our consulting services and/or our loan services to improve the management of their capital projects. With the transitional nature of both presbytery and congregational leadership, the challenge is keeping our name in front of church leadership.
2. We anticipate that interest rates will increase gradually in 2016. We anticipate that our cost of funds will increase more rapidly than our income from interest on loans. We will manage our costs, interest rates, and margins to help keep loan interest rates as low as possible for our borrowing congregations.
2. We will market the Restoring Creation Loan actively to help initiate capital projects that will improve the energy efficiency of our church buildings and lower the carbon footprint of our denomination.
4. Although fewer than in the past, we anticipate that additional congregations with loans and mortgage grants will ask to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We will work with presbyteries to reinforce the language of the loan documentation, including the acceleration clause making the loan due and payable before the congregation can be released. We will work with presbyteries seeking to provide “gracious separation” for congregations wanting to leave the denomination to understand that the mortgage and guarantee remain in place until the loan is paid in full. This will require working with PC(USA), A Corp., the presbyteries, and congregations to ensure the repayment of existing loans and to provide the documentation and recovery of the funds provided many years ago through mortgage grants.
5. The program will continue to transfer the ministry of the Church Development Corporation to the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. We are currently administering their \$6 million loan portfolio of six loans. We are administering the interest payments, redemptions, and reporting to their board of directors for the investments they have sold to individuals, congregations, and mid councils. We will continue to work toward refinancing their loans into the PILP portfolio, and we will use the proceeds of this refinancing activity to redeem the Savings Certificates and Stewardship Accounts. We will offer their investors the opportunity to invest the funds from these redemptions in PILP Term Notes and Denominational Account Receipts.
6. The staff and the board will use the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as an opportunity to promote the program, to further strengthen existing relationships, and to establish new relationships among PC(USA) entities, mid council leaders, and congregational leaders.
7. The program will continue to develop more effective use of social networking and other new technologies. We will complete a new branding for better name/logo recognition.
8. The staff will further develop our consulting role in advising and guiding churches and presbyteries on financial implications of debt financing.
9. The staff will work to strengthen connections between the marketing team and the underwriting team to create a seamless organization for our customers and prospects; reviewing current processes to uncover opportunities to simplify the loan process for our customers and shorten response times.
10. The staff will continue to explore strategic initiatives to fulfill our desire for continued growth in the loan portfolio. The marketing staff will use leads from the annual statistical reports and conversations with mid council leadership.
11. Senior leadership will work with the board of directors to determine the best structure for board effectiveness. The board and staff will work collaboratively to explore new markets and products to meet changing needs within the church and the program.

The Board of Directors of PILP is elected by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and is confirmed by the General Assembly. The 2015 board of directors included: Stephen Bacon; Linda Bailey; Kenneth Godshall; Margaret Jorgensen, chair; Terry W. Nall; Rebecca New; Ronald Patterson; Linda Scholl; Joyce Smith; Josephene Stewart; Connie M. Tubb, vice chair; Louise Westfall; Catesby Woodford; Richard H. White; In Yang.

The Officers of the Corporation in 2015 were: James G. Rissler, president and chief executive officer; Lorraine Recchia, senior vice president finance and administration and treasurer; Clare Lewis, vice president sales and marketing; Martha E. Clark, secretary; Michael Kirk, assistant secretary; Laura J. Olliges, assistant treasurer.

Item 14-01

[The assembly disapproved Item 14-01. See pp. 15, 16.]

On Amending W-4.9000 by Replacing with New Text—From the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas.

The Presbytery of Kiskiminetas overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall W-4.9000 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-4.9000

“9. Marriage

“W-4.9001

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between ~~two people, traditionally a man and a woman,~~ *one man and one woman* to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. *The couple is called to live out the sacrificial love modeled for us by Jesus Christ that unites the couple sustains them* as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community.

“W-4.9002

“In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

“W-4.9003

“If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, ~~a man and a woman~~ *couple* may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the teaching elder, who may agree to the couple’s request only if, in the judgment of the teaching elder, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the teaching elder may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.

“W-4.9004

“*Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, ~~The~~ the marriage service is shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the teaching elder and the supervision of the session (W-1.4004–.4006). *The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service that focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. Celebration of the Lord’s Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord’s Day upon authorization by the session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper (W-2.4010; W-3.3503).* ~~In a service of marriage, the couple marry each other by exchanging mutual promises.~~*

“*The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. ~~The teaching elder witnesses the couple’s promises and pronounces God’s blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises;~~*

“*Prayers shall may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God, the teaching elder shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.*

“W-4.9005

“A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by ~~a man and a woman~~ *the couple*. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the

statements made shall reflect the fact that the *man and woman are couple* is already married to one another according to the laws of the civil jurisdiction.

“W-4.9006

“Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder’s or the session’s discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.”

Rationale

Whereas we are a denomination that bases our trust in Jesus Christ as the sole means of salvation, which is evident in our *Book of Order* and our *Book of Confessions*, and they in turn state that our constitution is grounded in Scripture (F-1.0401) when we seek reform and fresh direction we look first to Jesus Christ (F-1.0401).

When we fail to seek Christ’s direction we are subject to the direction of the culture in which we reside and therefore can make errors in our judgment failing to glorify Jesus Christ in whom we seek to serve first and foremost. When the PC(USA) passed amendment W-4.9000 there was no biblical background given for its consideration and then its passing. The rationale offered for the most recent revision to the definition of marriage referred mainly to society’s views and civil legality, not what is in Scripture and the Confessions.

Christ commands us to love everyone and to welcome all into a community of faith. He also commands us to follow his teachings in Scripture and while he offers love and forgiveness, he does not condone that which God calls sin. In John 8, Christ offers love but directs the woman to “go and sin no more.” We look to Scripture for guidance on how God wants us to live out our lives of faith. Our *Book of Order* section F-3.0107 states: “That all Church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no Church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. In 2 Timothy 3:16–17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (NRSV). The Scots Confession, 3.18 and 3.19, reminds us to look to the plain word of Scripture and its authority over us.

Scripture repeatedly confirms the act of homosexuality as sin. Romans 1:18–32 speaks of God’s wrath on sin, including that of a woman who lusts after a woman or a man who commits shameful acts with another man. It is stated in 1 Corinthians 6:9, “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God” (NRSV). See also 1 Timothy 1:8–11. As with all sin, we are called to repent of that which God calls sin and to strive daily to live a life pleasing to our Lord and Savior. We recognize that all sin is wrong in the eyes of God. Allowing marriage that involves homosexuality is celebrating sin condemned by God. If we no longer resist sin, then we no longer need the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the foundation of our faith.

Scripture consistently describes marriage as between a man and a woman, from Genesis 1:26–31 to Mark 10:6–9, where Jesus himself describes marriage. No place does it define it any other way other than the relationship between Christ and his Church. Our confessions also define marriage as between a man and a woman in many places. The Westminster Confession, Section 6.131, defines marriage as between one man and one woman. The Second Helvetic Confession 5.246 says that marriage “was instituted by the Lord God himself, who blessed it most bountifully, and willed man and woman to cleave one to the other inseparable, and to live together in complete love and concord.”

While we understand and acknowledge that all are sinners and laws like those for divorce are permitted to deal with sin they certainly are not celebrated within our congregations. So must it be with homosexual behavior. While we as humans may feel compassion to those who are treated differently based on their sexual orientation, we are called to follow the instructions from Scripture and the teachings of Christ in those Scriptures. Therefore, while we all sin, we are called to repent as we seek to become more Christ-like. We are also called not to judge the behavior of others as we are all sinners and all sin is equally wrong in the eyes of God. So we seek to include all people, regardless of sexual orientation, but continue to teach the Word of God that all may be saved and called to a life obedient in Christ. While we may not understand God’s order for our lives, we trust that God knows what is best for us. Celebrating what God calls sin is blasphemous.

While our government and society continue to expand acceptance of same-sex marriage, Christ’s Church is called to follow his teachings. We are to be a light in the darkness; in the world, but not of the world. The Apostle Paul teaches us in Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God’s—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (NRSV). The Apostle Peter said as recorded in 1 Peter 1:14–15, “Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formally had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct” (NRSV). Therefore, we need to stand as those who desire to love the sinner without redefining their behavior as acceptable.

Same-sex couples may seek civil unions through legal contracts, but that does not require that the church follow the civil government example instead of Christ's. Our *Book of Order*, G-3.0501c, states our responsibility to nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ to include "... warning and bearing witness against errors in doctrine or immorality in the church and in the world; ... discerning and presenting with the guidance of the Holy Spirit matters of truth" The Scots Confession, Chapter XX, 3.20, states "... But if men, under the name of a council, pretend to forge for us new articles of faith, or to make decisions contrary to the Word of God, then we must utterly deny them as the doctrine of devils, drawing our souls from the voice of the one God to follow the doctrines and teachings of men. ..."

Concurrence to Item 14-01 from the Presbyteries of Atlantic Korean, Eastern Korean, Midwest Hanmi, Mississippi, and San Fernando.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-01

Advice on Item 14-01—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that Item 14-01 presents the following issues that the assembly should consider.

The issue of marriage has been before the General Assembly repeatedly in recent years. The definition of marriage was changed by the action of the 221st General Assembly (2014) to substitute new language for W-4.9000, which was approved by a majority of the presbyteries. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has advised previous General Assemblies on similar overtures on marriage. Two items from that advice are reviewed here.

1. Constitutionally, the General Assembly must act on overtures submitted by the presbyteries. Also, one of the responsibilities of the General Assembly is "deciding controversies brought before it" (G-3.0501c; see also F-3.0206). Objections have been raised in previous General Assemblies about whether it is in order for the assembly to consider a change to the definition of marriage. This is a determination of parliamentary procedure, upon which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution does not advise.

2. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has advised previous General Assemblies about the role of Scripture and the confessions in its discernment on overtures about marriage. Section F-3.03 notes that if tensions and ambiguities are perceived between proposed and existing provisions of the Constitution, it is the task of the General Assembly to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions. (An example might be the Confession of 1967, 9.47). This discernment moves beyond constitutional to biblical and theological interpretation, which is beyond the purview of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. The committee reminds the assembly of the resource, "The Confessional Nature of the Church, Section II. C. The Authority of Confessions in the Reformed Tradition," found in the Preface of the *Book of Confessions*.

If the 222nd General Assembly (2016) determines that the intent of Item 14-01 is appropriate, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed language can be made clearer and more consistent with that intent by addressing the following:

- In proposed W-4.9001, "for us" may be deleted without changing the intent of the sentence.
- Section W-4.9004 presents a list of elements to be included in a worship service for a marriage. Much of this list does not provide new information, but either restates other parts of the Directory for Worship, or presents information more appropriate to a service manual, such as the *Book of Common Worship*. This section should be edited to remove this material.

Additionally, if the assembly concurs with the intent of Item 14-01, the General Assembly should consider whether the authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000 approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014), should be recovered. (The text of Item 14-01 is similar to the text of W-4.9000 prior to June 21, 2015.) (<https://www.pc-biz.org/#!/search/4599>)

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) will be asked to consider a complete revision to the Directory for Worship. If the new Directory for Worship is approved by the General Assembly and by a majority of the presbyteries and Item 14-01 is also approved by a majority of the presbyteries, this new language of W-4.9000 will become the language in the new Directory for Worship at W-4.06.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-01

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-01—From the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns (ACWC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) disapprove Item 14-01.

The ACWC believes that in withholding the right to marry from same-gender loving people, the church is upholding a patriarchal standard for humanity. Committed to standing against patriarchy and its effects within the world and the church, ACWC advocates giving access to all that Christian marriage provides to same-gender couples in committed and loving relationships who are in the PC(USA).

The proposed amendment is a statement in opposition to the gift of God that marriage provides to human beings, which encourages healthy families, congregations, and communities.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-01

Comment on Item 14-01—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

This overture asks the General Assembly to reverse the decision of the last assembly and define marriage as only between one man and one woman. Over the last several years the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has sought to fashion a careful path amidst our strong disagreements with regard to faithful sexual relationship, where our disagreements have focused on ordination standards and marriage.

The General Assembly recognized as fully legitimate the affirmation that faithful sexual relationships find their place only in the marriage of a woman and a man and the affirmation that faithful sexual relationships can include same-gender marriages.

The denomination has therefore declined to label only one view of these matters “faithful.” This approach is evident in the decision to adopt Amendment 10-A on ordination and the recent adoption of Amendment 14-F on Marriage, both now included in the *Book of Order*. This approach to our understanding of church amid disagreement on these issues is explored in the paper “Our Challenging Way: Faithfulness, Sex, Ordination, and Marriage” (<http://bit.ly/1TIVcCB>) from the Office of Theology & Worship. In addition, commissioners may find helpful “Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians in Times of Disagreement,” a document written to help Presbyterians deal with difficult conversations in healthy and productive ways: http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/guidelines.pdf.

Item 14-02

[The assembly approved Item 14-02. See pp. 12, 16.]

Regarding Endorsing the Clergy Letter Project—From the Presbytery of the Cascades.

The Presbytery of the Cascades overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the PC(USA) to join with the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Southeast Florida Diocese of the Episcopal Church, the Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and with 13,013 members of Christian clergy, 514 rabbis of Judaism, 286 clergy of Unitarian Universalists, and 25 Buddhist clergy in endorsing the Clergy Letter Project and the Christian Clergy Letter printed below:

“Within the community of Christian believers there are areas of dispute and disagreement, including the proper way to interpret Holy Scripture. While virtually all Christians take the Bible seriously and hold it to be authoritative in matters of faith and practice, the overwhelming majority do not read the Bible literally, as they would a science textbook. Many of the beloved stories found in the Bible—the Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the ark—convey timeless truths about God, human beings, and the proper relationship between Creator and creation expressed in the only form capable of transmitting these truths from generation to generation. Religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth. Its purpose is not to convey scientific information but to transform hearts.

“We the undersigned, Christian clergy from many different traditions, believe that the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist. We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as “one theory among others” is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children. We believe that among God’s good gifts are human minds capable of critical thought and that the failure to fully employ this gift is a rejection of the will of our Creator. To argue that God’s loving plan of salvation for humanity precludes the full employment of the God-given faculty of reason is to attempt to limit God, an act of hubris. We urge school board members to preserve the integrity of the science curriculum by affirming the teaching of the theory of evolution as a core component of human knowledge. We ask that science remain science and that religion remain religion, two very different, but complementary, forms of truth.”

Rationale

This overture is brought in the spirit of faith that joyfully acknowledges

- that “God brings all things into being by the Word” (*Book of Order*, W-1.2001),
- that “God transcends creation and cannot be reduced to anything within it” (*Book of Order*, W-1.2002),
- that God created the material universe and pronounced it good,
- that “the material world reflects the glory of God” (*Book of Order*, W-1.3031), and,
- with the understanding that in prayer we earnestly thank “God for creation and providence” (*Book of Order*, W-3.3613).

Evolution has been wrongly viewed in some Christian communities as contrary to Christian beliefs. According to a Gallup Poll in May 2014, 46 percent of Americans think that evolution is “inconsistent with [their] religious beliefs” (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/21814/evolution-creationism-intelligent-design.aspx>)

As a scientific theory based solidly on extensive scientific evidence, it has shaped our thinking in the natural sciences and has become the underlying theory for numerous medical advances. As a scientific theory it does not contradict the existence of God, but can be seen as a natural, creative process in God’s creation. It is important for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be clear that people do not need to reject evolution to affirm their faith.

In a recent study of why young people are leaving the church, 29 percent of the youth reported being discouraged by the church’s antagonistic view of science, and that many young people are “turned off by the creation-versus-evolution debate.” The research also “shows that many science-minded young Christians are struggling to find ways of staying faithful to their beliefs and to their professional calling in science-related industries” (*You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church...and Rethinking Faith*. David Kinnaman, 2011, The Barna Group).

The 214th General Assembly (2002) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has stated that it:

1. Reaffirms that God is Creator, in accord with the witness of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions.
2. Reaffirms that there is no contradiction between an evolutionary theory of human origins and the doctrine of God as Creator.
3. Encourages State Boards of Education across the nation to establish standards for science education in public schools based on the most reliable content of scientific knowledge as determined by the scientific community.
4. Calls upon Presbyterian scientists and science educators to assist congregations, presbyteries, communities, and the public to understand what constitutes reliable scientific knowledge. (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, pp. 46, 495–96)

Other denominations have also recognized the compatibility of modern science and theology. For example, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2012, states, in part,

We recognize science as a legitimate interpretation of God’s natural world. We affirm the validity of the claims of science in describing the natural world and in determining what is scientific. We preclude science from making authoritative claims about theological issues and theology from making authoritative claims about scientific issues. ... We find that science’s descriptions of cosmological, geological, and biological evolution are not in conflict with theology. (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*—2012. Copyright 2012 by The United Methodist Publishing House. 160.F)

The Clergy Letter Project, www.theclergyletterproject.org, founded by Dr. Michael Zimmerman, and signed by more than 13,000 Christian clergy, has helped clergy and congregations present the scientific theory of evolution in a manner that respects and engages a thinking faith.

Concurrence to Item 14-02 from the Presbyteries of Eastern Virginia Upper Ohio Valley.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-02

Comment on Item 14-02—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 14-02 seeks General Assembly endorsement for the Clergy Letter Project, which affirms that “the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist,” and urges Presbyterians to contribute to discussions about the teaching of evolution in public science education.

What follows is a review of existing General Assembly policy on this topic:

In 1969 the Presbyterian Church in the United States affirmed “Evolution and the Bible,” the statement on evolution that continues to guide the PC(USA) to this day, “Neither Scripture, our Confession of Faith, nor our Catechisms, teach the Crea-

tion of man by the direct and immediate acts of God so as to exclude the possibility of evolution as a scientific theory” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1969, Part I, p. 59).

In addition, the assembly has affirmed the statements on scripture found in “Biblical Authority and Interpretation” (*Minutes*, UPCUSA, 1982, Part I, pp. 316–35) and “Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1983, Part I, pp. 607–61) concerning the authority and interpretation of scripture. “Biblical Authority” notes that there are several models of authority and interpretation of scripture and does not describe any one of them as exclusive for Presbyterians. “Presbyterian Understanding and Use” articulates the manner in which the plain (or literal) interpretation of the text has been a formative practice in our tradition.

Item 14-03

[In response to Item 14-03, the assembly approved an alternate resolution. See pp. 15, 17.]

On Amending W-2.4011 by Adding Language Regarding Who Can Access the Lord’s Supper—From the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.

The Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois respectfully overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall W-2.4011 be amended as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“a. The invitation to the Lord’s Supper is extended to all who ~~have been baptized~~ *seek the presence of Jesus Christ*, remembering that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. In preparing to receive Christ in this Sacrament, the believer is to confess sin and brokenness, to seek reconciliation with God and neighbor, and to trust in Jesus Christ for cleansing and renewal. Even one who doubts or whose trust is wavering may come to the Table in order to be assured of God’s love and grace in Christ Jesus.

“Baptized Children

“b. ~~Baptized~~ *e*Children who are being nurtured and instructed in the significance of the invitation to the Table and the meaning of their response are invited to receive the Lord’s Supper, recognizing that their understanding of participation will vary according to their maturity. (W-4.2002)”

Alternate Resolution:

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall W-2.4011 be amended by striking the current text and inserting new text to read as follows:

“Theology of the Lord’s Supper

“a. The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.

“Worshippers prepare themselves to celebrate the Lord’s Supper by putting their trust in Christ, confessing their sin, and seeking reconciliation with God and one another. Even those who doubt may come to the table in order to be assured of God’s love and grace in Jesus Christ.

“Welcoming to the Table

“b. In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, the session should provide an occasion to welcome them to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord’s Supper should include ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.”

Rationale

We acknowledge the importance of Baptism in the life of a Christian and fully support the goal that every Christian should be strongly encouraged to acknowledge the lordship of Christ in her/his life with the act of Baptism. Having said that,

we also realize that the current wording in the *Book of Order* regarding who can partake in Holy Communion excludes those developing Christians who have not yet made the baptismal declaration. Children whose parents decided to not partake in infant baptism would be excluded until such time as (usually during the Confirmation experience) they themselves choose to be baptized. People who are new to the faith and are being nurtured by a congregation would also be excluded. In both of these cases it appears that the *Book of Order* would exclude these people from participation and require them to stay behind in the pews while everyone else goes forward to receive the elements.

We believe that few congregations actually follow the *Book of Order* in this regard. Holy Communion is routinely open to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ, with no mention of having to have been baptized.

We feel strongly that the *Book of Order* should be changed in the above ways so that we can walk arm-in-arm with all of our seeking brothers and sisters as we go forward to receive this holy sacrament.

Concurrence to Item 14-03 from the Presbyteries of Cimarron, Florida, Huntingdon, and Palo Duro.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-03

Advice on Item 14-03—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Item 14-03.

The ACC finds that the language of this overture/item is clear and would accomplish its stated intent.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes that the proposed Directory for Worship addresses this concern by providing that “All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup” and that “an invitation to baptismal preparation and baptism should be graciously extended” (proposed W-3.0409) to those who come to the table but have not been baptized.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) will be asked to consider a complete revision to the Directory for Worship. If the new Directory for Worship is approved by the General Assembly and by a majority of the presbyteries and Item 14-03 is also approved by a majority of the presbyteries, the language of the new Directory for Worship will be used.

ACWC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-03

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-03—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 14-03.

The ACWC acknowledges the importance of Baptism in the life of a Christian and fully supports the goal that every Christian should be strongly encouraged to acknowledge the lordship of Jesus in her/his life with the act of baptism. However, the wording in W-2.4011, Who May Receive, serves to exclude those who, while acknowledging their need of our Lord and Savior, have not yet made a decision to be baptized. Furthermore, the ACWC strongly believes in our Reformed understanding of God’s freely given grace, which we do nothing to earn, and is the very rationale that supports infant baptism. Hence, the ACWC supports the welcoming of children to the Lord’s Table as it is Christ who both prepares the table and does the inviting, not humankind. The ACWC strongly encourages the approval of Item 14-03.

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-03

Comment on Item 14-03—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

This overture seeks to amend the language of the current Directory for Worship in W-2.4011. Before this assembly is a recommendation by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (see Item 14-04) to revise the entire Directory for Worship in response to the actions of previous assemblies (216th General Assembly (2004), Item 04-12; 221st General Assembly (2014), Item 13-02)). Included in this proposed revision of the Directory for Worship is new language in W-3.0409 (that replaces what is presently W-2.4011) consistent with the overall theological framework of the Directory for Worship.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency advises that this overture be answered with the action on the Directory for Worship. “The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended” (W-3.0409 of the proposed Directory for Worship).

Item 14-04

[The assembly approved Item 14-04 with amendment. See pp. 15, 17–19.]

Revised Directory for Worship—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed revised Directory for Worship to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote.

[PLEASE NOTE that the latest draft of the proposed revision to the Directory for Worship incorporates the new language on Christian marriage as approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) in Amendment 14-F.]

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Directory for Worship**

DRAFT OF PROPOSED REVISION: November 2015

“†”—In the Directory for Worship, the functions described as belonging to teaching elders may be, in particular circumstances, also performed by ruling elders.

Preface

This Directory for Worship reflects the conviction that the faith, life, and worship of the Church are inseparable. Its theology is based on the Bible, instructed by the *Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and attentive to ecumenical relationships. It reflects and encourages a rich heritage of traditions and diversity of cultures.

A Directory for Worship is not a service book with fixed orders of worship and collections of prayers. Rather, it describes the theology that underlies our worship, outlines appropriate forms for worship, and highlights connections between worship and Christian life, witness, and service.

This directory presents standards and norms for worship in the congregations and councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As a vision for Reformed worship, it suggests possibilities, invites development, and encourages ongoing reform. As the constitutional document ordering our worship, the Directory for Worship shall be authoritative for this church.

Direct references to Scripture, the *Book of Confessions*, and other sections of the *Book of Order* are provided in parentheses; other biblical, confessional, and ecumenical sources will be indicated in footnotes.

**Chapter One:
The Theology of Christian Worship**

W-1.01: Christian Worship: An Introduction

W-1.0101: Glory to God

Christian worship gives all glory and honor, praise and thanksgiving to the holy, triune God. We are gathered in worship to glorify the God who is present and active among us—particularly through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. We are sent out in service to glorify the same God who is present and active in the world.

W-1.0102: Grace and Gratitude

God acts with grace; we respond with gratitude. God claims us as beloved children; we proclaim God’s saving love. God redeems us from sin and death; we rejoice in the gift of new life. This rhythm of divine action and human response—found throughout Scripture, human history, and everyday events—shapes all of Christian faith, life, and worship.

W-1.0103: God’s Covenant

The Old Testament tells the story of God’s steadfast love from generation to generation. To Adam and Eve, to Noah and his family, to Abraham and Sarah, to Moses and Aaron, and to the house of David, God made everlasting promises of faithfulness, calling the people to respond in faith. In the fullness of time, God made a new and everlasting covenant with us through Jesus Christ.

W-1.0104: Jesus Christ

“Fully human, fully God” (B. Stat. 10.2), Jesus Christ came into the world to show God’s love, to save us from sin, and to offer eternal, abundant life to all. Jesus is God’s Word: spoken at creation, promised and revealed in Scripture, made flesh to dwell among us, crucified and raised in power, interceding for the redemption of the world, returning in glory to judge and reign forever. Scripture is God’s Word: the Old and New Testaments together testify to Jesus Christ. Proclamation is God’s Word: we bear witness in word and deed to the good news of Christ our Savior.

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God’s gracious action in history and the model for our grateful response to God. In Jesus we find the full and clear revelation of who God is; in him we also discover who God is calling us to be. Therefore we worship Jesus Christ as Lord, even as he leads us in the worship and service God desires.

W-1.0105: The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is “the giver and renewer of life” (B. Stat. 10.4), who instills our faith and enables us to follow Jesus Christ. The Scriptures describe how the Spirit moved at the dawn of creation, anointed Christ in baptism, raised Jesus from the dead, and was poured out on the Church at Pentecost. The same Spirit is still at work in the life of the Church and the life of the world.

The Holy Spirit manifests God’s gracious action and empowers our grateful response. The Spirit gathers us for worship, enlightens and equips us through the Word, claims and nourishes us through the Sacraments, and sends us out for service. To each member of Christ’s body, the Spirit gives gifts for ministry in the Church and mission in the world.

W-1.0106: Word and Sacrament

In Christian worship Jesus Christ is truly present and active among us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Wherever the Scriptures are read and proclaimed and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are celebrated, the Church bears witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word, and proclaims the mystery of faith. Through these means of grace, God imparts and sustains our faith, orders our common life, and transforms the world. Through these same acts of worship, we share in the life of the Spirit, are united to Jesus Christ, and give glory to God.

W-1.0107: Worship and the Church

God’s gifts of Word and Sacrament establish and equip the Church as the body of Christ in the world. The mission of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church flows from Baptism, is nourished at Lord’s Supper, and serves to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. In the same way, the Church’s ministry emerges from the font, arises from the table, and takes its shape from the Word of the Lord. Therefore the worship of the triune God is the center of our common life and our primary way of witness to the faith, hope, and love we have in Jesus Christ.

To be a Christian is to worship Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. To be a member of Christ’s body, the Church, is to share through Word and Sacrament in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

W-1.02: Time, Space, and Matter*W-1.0201: Creation and Redemption*

Time, space, and matter are all created by God, redeemed by Christ, and made holy by the Spirit. Through Christian worship—at certain times, in particular places, and with material gifts—we participate in God’s plan for the redemption of time, space, and matter for the glory of God.

W-1.0202: Time

Because God is the author of history, we may worship at any time. The psalms reflect the daily worship of the people of God, while the Torah teaches that one day in seven is to be set apart as holy to the Lord. The prophets anticipated God’s judgment and triumph over evil on the day of the Lord. The Gospels all testify that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The apostles came to speak of this as the Lord’s Day, claiming God’s victory over sin and death through the power of Jesus’ resurrection.

The first Christians began to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection every Lord’s Day, gathering to proclaim the Word and celebrate the Sacraments. The Church continues to gather, **[especially] [traditionally]** on the first day of the week, to hear the gospel and break bread in Jesus’ name, with the confidence that the risen Lord is with us.

Through two thousand years of Christian worship, the Church has developed ways of keeping time—many of them adapted from the feasts and fasts of Israel that Jesus kept. This pattern of the Christian year keeps us centered in Christ as

we seek to proclaim the story of our faith, grow as Jesus' disciples, and serve Christ's mission. The year begins with a focus on Christ's incarnation, with the seasons of Advent and Christmas encompassing the Nativity and Epiphany of the Lord. After Epiphany we celebrate Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration. At the heart of the Christian year is the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, with the seasons of Lent and Easter encompassing Ash Wednesday, the Great Three Days—Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil—the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord, and the Day of Pentecost. After Pentecost we commemorate Trinity Sunday, All Saints Day, and the Reign of Christ.

The pattern of daily prayer also connects the Church with the worship of ancient Israel, centuries of Christian tradition, and Jesus' own practices. Whether in large assemblies, with small groups, or at home, daily prayer serves as a bridge between public worship and personal affairs, helping us to live out our faith each day.

We mark other occasions in worship, reflecting the cycles of civic and agricultural life, cultural and family celebrations, the commemoration of significant persons and events, and the programs and activities of the church. It is appropriate to observe such things, provided that they never distract from the worship of the triune God.

W-1.0203: Space

Because heaven and earth belong to God, we may worship in any place. The Old Testament describes stone altars, tabernacles, temples, and other places where the people gathered and encountered God. The Gospels tell us that Jesus worshiped at the synagogue and temple, but he also worshiped in the wilderness, on hillsides, and at lakeshores, demonstrating that God cannot be confined to any one place.

The first Christians worshiped at the temple and in synagogues, homes, catacombs, and prisons. The important thing was not the place, but the gathering of Christ's body—the people of God—and the presence of Christ among them in Word and Sacrament. Later the Church began to build special places to meet for worship. To this day, space for Christian worship is primarily established by the presence of the risen Lord and the communion of the Holy Spirit in the gathering of the people of God.

Space that is set apart for worship should encourage community, be accessible to all, and open us to reverence for God. It is not to be an escape from the world, but a place for encountering the God of all creation who gathers us in and sends us out. Space for Christian worship should include a place for the reading and proclamation of the Word, a font or pool for Baptism, and a table for the Lord's Supper. The arrangement of these symbols of Word and Sacrament conveys their relationship to one another and their centrality in Christian worship.

W-1.0204: Matter

Because God created the world and called it good, we use material gifts in worship. The Old Testament tells of various things that were used in the worship of God: the ark, linens and vessels, oil and incense, musical instruments, grain, fruit, and animals. At the same time, the prophets warned of the danger of idolatry: mistaking physical objects for divine presence. The Gospels show how Jesus used common things—nets and fish, jars and ointment, a towel and basin, water, bread, and wine—in his ministry of teaching, healing, and feeding. On the cross, he offered his body as a living sacrifice.

The first Christians, following Jesus, took three primary elements of life—water, bread, and wine—as symbols of God's self-offering to us and our offering of ourselves to God. We have come to call them Sacraments: signs of God's gracious action and our grateful response. Through the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, God claims us as people of the covenant and nourishes us as members of Christ's body; in turn, we pledge our loyalty to Christ and present our bodies as a living sacrifice of praise.

The offering of material gifts in worship is an expression of our self-offering, as an act of gratitude for God's grace. We give our lives to God through Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us. The practice of offering also reflects our stewardship of God's good creation. Mindful that the earth and everything in it belong to God, we present tithes and offerings for use in Christ's ministry and mission.

We offer creative gifts in worship as well, including music, art, drama, movement, media, banners, vestments, vessels, furnishings, and architecture. When such gifts only call attention to themselves, they are idolatrous; when, in their simplicity of form and function, they give glory to God, they are appropriate for worship.

W-1.03: Language, Symbols, and Culture

W-1.0301: The Word Made Flesh

God brings all things into being by the Word. Through the incarnation, this same, eternal Word of God became flesh and lived among us, in a particular person in a particular time and place—Jesus of Nazareth. Our use of language, symbols, and cultural forms in Christian worship is founded on the gift of Jesus' incarnation. Through Jesus Christ, God

speaks to us in truth and reaches out to us with grace; through Jesus Christ, we may speak truthfully to God and lift up our hearts with gratitude.

W-1.0302: Language

The mystery and reality of God transcend our experience, understanding, and speech, such that we cannot reduce God to our ways of speaking. Yet we are compelled to speak of the glory, goodness, and grace of the God who is revealed in the world around us, in Scripture, and above all, in Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament speaks of God in personal ways, as creator, covenant-maker, comforter, liberator, judge, redeemer, midwife, mother, shepherd, sovereign, bearer, begetter. It addresses God as “Lord,” a word that conveys the sovereignty of God while standing in for the hidden name revealed to Moses at the burning bush. It also borrows images from nature, describing God as rock, well-spring, fire, light, eagle, hen, lion. The Gospels show how Jesus used and adapted these images when speaking to and about God, particularly in his intimate use of Abba, Father. He also claimed some of these terms in speaking about himself—as good shepherd, bridegroom, and Son of Man. New Testament writers continued to use and adapt Old Testament language in speaking about Jesus—especially in their use of “Lord” to convey his sovereignty over the powers of this world, and to identify him with the Holy One of Israel.

In worship the church shall strive to use language about God that is intentionally as diverse and varied as the Bible and our theological traditions. Language that appropriately describes and addresses God is expansive, drawing from the full breadth and depth of terms and images for the triune God in the witness of Scripture. Language that authentically describes and addresses the people of God is inclusive, respecting the diversity of persons, cultures, backgrounds, and experiences that flow from God’s creative work. Such language allows for all members of the community of faith to recognize themselves as equally included, addressed, and cherished by God.

Since Pentecost, the Church of Jesus Christ has been a community of many nations and cultures, united by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore our churches worship in many languages. The words we use in worship are to be in the common language or languages of those who are gathered, so that all are able to receive the good news and respond with true expressions of their faith. Through the rich variety of human speech we bear witness to God’s saving love for all.

W-1.0303: Symbols

Certain biblical images have come to have deeper significance, multiple associations, and lasting meaning for the people of God. We call these symbols. There are numerous examples in the Old Testament—tree, temple, rainbow, river, sheep, scroll, building, body. New Testament writers drew on this treasury of common meaning to convey their understanding of Christ, the gospel, the Church, and the realm of God. Certain prominent symbols from Scripture, such as light, book, water, bread, cup, and cross, play an important role in Christian worship. Such things are not objects to be worshiped, but signs that point to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

We come to know God’s Word more fully when it is both proclaimed and enacted in worship. The Old Testament describes symbolic actions in worship—fasting and feasting, rejoicing and lamenting, dancing and singing, marking and anointing, cleansing and offering, doing justice and showing mercy. The Gospels demonstrate how Jesus brought new meaning to existing practices of faith—especially baptism and breaking bread—and transformed ordinary acts of compassion—healing the sick, giving alms to the poor, feeding the hungry, and washing feet—into new ways of serving God. Christian worship includes a variety of symbolic actions, with strong ties to these and other biblical practices—gathering and sending, kneeling and standing, speaking and singing, cleansing and offering, marking and anointing, eating and drinking, blessing and laying on of hands. All of these convey the gracious action of God and communicate our grateful response.

W-1.0304: Culture

God has poured out the Holy Spirit on all flesh; Scripture promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The book of Acts and the New Testament epistles record the challenges and controversies of an emerging Church that would be “no longer Jew or Greek” (Gal. 3:28), but one in Jesus Christ. As the Church has grown and spread over two thousand years, it has taken root and flourished in cultures and lands all around the globe—bearing witness to the love of God for all the world and Christ’s sovereignty in every place. Finally, from the book of Revelation, we know that the company of the redeemed will be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, and people, singing praise to the Lamb of God.

Christian worship is contextual—emerging from a particular community and incorporating the words, images, symbols, and actions that best convey the good news of Jesus Christ in that gathering of God’s people. It is also cross-cultural—reflecting the diversity of traditions and cultures within and beyond the community of faith. Christian worship is transcultural—proclaiming the universal message of God’s grace in Jesus Christ and rooted in common elements of human life that transcend all cultures. It is also countercultural—asserting the scandal of the gospel and anticipating

God's reign of righteousness, justice, and peace. Finally, faithful worship should be an intercultural event—fostering mutuality, dialogue, and equality among all people.

Whenever and wherever we gather in Jesus' name, we join the praise and prayer of the people of God in every time and place. Therefore, it is fitting that we share stories and sing songs from cultures other than our own as we pray for and with the Church throughout the world.

Chapter Two: Christian Worship in the Reformed Tradition

W-2.01: Sources and Principles

W-2.0101: Sources of Order

Worship shall be faithful to the Holy Spirit who speaks in Scripture. The witness of Scripture provides the Church's preeminent, authoritative source for the ordering of worship. Those responsible for planning and leading worship are also to be guided by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), instructed by the wisdom of the Reformed tradition, attentive to the traditions of the universal Church, and sensitive to the culture and context of the worshiping community.

W-2.0102: Form and Freedom

Christian worship has always been marked by a tension between form and freedom. Some traditions have emphasized established orders of worship, seeking to be faithful to the Scriptures. Others have resisted fixed forms of worship, asserting our freedom in Christ. We acknowledge that all forms of worship are provisional and subject to reformation according to the Word of God. Fixed forms of worship are valuable in that they offer consistent patterns and practices that help to shape lives of faith and faithfulness. More spontaneous approaches to worship are valuable in that they provide space for unexpected insight and inspiration. In whatever form it takes, worship is to be ordered by God's Word and open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

W-2.02: The Worshiping Assembly

W-2.0201: A Royal Priesthood

In Jesus Christ, the Church is called to be a royal priesthood, giving glory to God in worship and devoting itself to God's service in the world. Worship is a collective activity of the people of God and an expression of our common life and ministry. It demands the full, conscious, and active participation of the whole body of Christ, with heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Children and youth bring special gifts and grow in their faith through their regular participation in worship. Those who plan and lead worship should provide for their full participation in the Service for the Lord's Day.

The ordering of worship should reflect the richness of cultural diversity in the congregation and the local context in which it ministers. The order of worship should provide for and encourage the participation of all; no one is to be excluded.

W-2.0202: Prayerful Participation

Prayer is at the heart of worship. It is a gift from God, who desires dialogue and relationship with us. It is a posture of faith and a way of living in the world. Prayer is also the primary way in which we participate in worship. Christian prayer is offered through Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Faithful prayer is shaped by God's Word in Scripture and inspires us to join God's work in the world.

There are many kinds of prayer—adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, intercession, dedication. There are many ways to pray—listening and waiting for God, remembering God's gracious acts, crying out to God for help, or offering oneself to God. Prayer may be spoken, silent, sung, or enacted in physical ways.

The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is a vital and ancient form of prayer. Singing engages the whole person, and helps to unite the body of Christ in common worship. The congregation itself is the church's primary choir; the purpose of rehearsed choirs and other musicians is to lead and support the congregation in the singing of prayer. Special songs, anthems, and instrumental music may also serve to interpret the Word and enhance the congregation's prayer. Furthermore, many of the elements of the service of worship may be sung. Music in worship is always to be an offering to God, not merely an artistic display, source of entertainment, or cover for silence.

Participation in worship may involve a range of other actions: kneeling, bowing, standing, lifting hands; dancing, drumming, clapping, embracing, or joining hands; anointing and laying on of hands.

The gifts of the Spirit are for building up the Church. Every action in worship is to glorify God and contribute to the good of the people. Worshipers and worship leaders must avoid actions that only call attention to themselves and fail to serve the needs of the whole congregation.

W-2.03: Leadership in Worship and Ordered Ministries

W-2.0301: Gifts for Service

God pours out the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon each Christian in Baptism, and all are called to use these gifts for the glory of God. Therefore it is appropriate for any member of the church to pray, read Scripture, or assist in worship in other ways according to his or her gifts.

By their gifts and training, some are called to particular acts of leadership in worship and have particular responsibilities for ordering the service. These specific roles and responsibilities are undertaken in service to God and to the congregation, and should in no way diminish the leadership of other members or overshadow the primary participation of the worshipping assembly.

W-2.0302: Deacons

Deacons are called to lead the congregation in compassion, witness, and service, representing the ministry of the church in the world and the presence of the world in the church. While deacons have no particular responsibilities for the ordering of worship, the session should ensure that deacons (where present) have regular opportunities to lead in worship, and that their ministries of compassion, witness, and service are reflected in the public services of the church.

W-2.0303: Ruling Elders

Ruling elders are called to nurture the common life of the people of God through their gifts of discernment and governance. They should also cultivate an ability to teach the Word when called upon to do so. When appropriately prepared and commissioned by the presbytery, ruling elders may proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments in a particular congregation (G-2.1001).

In a particular congregation, ruling elders shall provide for the church's worship and encourage the people's participation. Specifically, when serving together on the session, ruling elders and **[pastors] [teaching elders]†**: make provision for the regular preaching of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments, corporate prayer, and the offering of praise to God in song; oversee and approve all public worship in the congregation, with the exception of responsibilities reserved for the teaching elder†; determine occasions, days, times, and places for worship; and have responsibility for the arrangement of worship space, the use of special appointments (flowers, candles, banners, paraments, and other objects), and the ministries of music, drama, dance, and visual arts.

W-2.0304: Teaching Elders

Teaching elders† (also called ministers of Word and Sacrament) are called to proclaim the Word, preside at the Sacraments, and equip the people for ministry in Jesus' name. Specifically, teaching elders† are responsible for: the selection of Scriptures to be read, the preparation of the sermon, the prayers to be offered, the selection of music to be sung, **[printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service,]** and the use of drama, dance, and other art forms in a particular service of worship.

W-2.0305: Shared Responsibility and Accountability

In a particular congregation, the order of worship~~], including printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service,~~ is the responsibility of the teaching elder† with the concurrence of the session. The selection of hymnals, service books, Bibles, and other more permanent worship resources is the responsibility of the session with the concurrence of the teaching elder†, and in consultation with church musicians and educators.

Where there is a music leader or choir director, the teaching elder† will confer with that person on anthems and other musical offerings; the session will see that these conferences take place appropriately and on a regular basis. The teaching elder† may confer with a committee in planning particular services of worship.

The session is responsible for educating the congregation about the church's worship, in order to facilitate their full and active participation. **[The] [It is appropriate that the]** session **[should]** provide for the regular study of this Directory for Worship, particularly in the training of ruling elders and deacons.

In fulfilling their responsibilities for worship, sessions are accountable to presbytery. **[Presbyteries] [It is appropriate that the presbyteries] [should]** discuss with sessions the character of their congregation's worship, the standards governing it, and the fruit that it bears in the mission and ministry of the church. **[Presbyteries] [It is appropriate that**

the presbyteries [should] provide instruction in worship, making use of this Directory for Worship in the preparation of candidates for ordination, and in the ongoing nurture of teaching elders†.

Chapter Three: The Service for the Lord's Day

W-3.01: Worship on the Lord's Day

W-3.0101: The Day of Resurrection

We gather to worship God on the Lord's Day (Sunday) because the gospels testify that Jesus rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. The Lord's Day is also called the "eighth day" of creation, a sign of the new creation that has begun with Christ's resurrection. While we may worship God on any day and at any time, the Sunday service in particular is a celebration of Christ's resurrection and an anticipation of the fullness of God's coming reign.

W-3.0102: The Pattern of Lord's Day Worship

The Service for the Lord's Day is a service of Word and Sacrament. We meet in the presence of the living Lord, who appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week—the day he rose from the dead—to interpret the Scriptures and break bread. Following Jesus' example, the Church proclaims the fullness of the gospel in Word and Sacrament on the Lord's Day.

The Service for the Lord's Day includes other actions as well: gathering and singing, confession and pardon, prayer and offering, blessing and sending. Through all of these actions, we are drawn into Christ's presence and sent out in the power of the Spirit.

The pattern of Lord's Day worship may be applied to days and times other than Sunday morning. Saturday evening services such as the Easter Vigil appropriately follow the order of Lord's Day worship since, in the ancient Jewish and Christian reckoning of time, the new day begins at sunset. Services of daily prayer provide a pattern for worship at other times and on other days of the week.

W-3.0103: The Order of Worship

An order of worship offers a meaningful and reliable structure for the church's encounter with the living God. Over time, an order of worship helps to shape our faith and faithfulness as the people of God, becoming a pattern for how we live as Christians in the world.

The order of worship offered here for the Service for the Lord's Day is rooted in Scripture, the traditions of the universal Church, and our Reformed heritage. In particular, it seeks to uphold the centrality of Word and Sacraments in the Church's faith, life, and worship. This description of the Service for the Lord's Day is presented as one commendable model, but is not intended to exclude other ways of ordering worship. Other patterns may be appropriate in the context of a particular congregation or culture, provided that they are faithful to the Word, open to the Spirit, and dedicated to the glory of God.

W-3.02: Gathering

W-3.0201: Preparing for Worship

Worship begins as the people gather—greeting one another, praying in silence, sharing announcements, or offering music to the glory of God. The act of assembling in Jesus' name bears witness to the Church's identity and mission as Christ's body in the world.

W-3.0202: Opening Sentences

A call to worship, typically drawn from sentences of Scripture, expresses God's invitation to gather as Christ's body in this place. A greeting in the name of Jesus Christ or the triune God establishes the context for worship as an encounter with the Holy One who calls all things into being.

W-3.0203: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs

For millennia the people of God have sung psalms as praise and prayer to God. Early Christians continued to sing, pray, and study the psalms, interpreting them in the light of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Singing psalms remains an important part of the Reformed heritage. To the psalms the Church has added other hymns, canticles, and spiritual songs. Through the ages and from varied cultures, the Church has developed many other forms of congregational song, accompanied by a great array of instruments. We draw from this rich repertoire in the Service for the Lord's Day, singing glory to God.

W-3.0204: Prayer

A prayer may be offered, giving thanks and praise to God, expressing joy in the presence of Christ, and calling for the gifts of the Spirit to be poured out upon the gathered community. This prayer may employ themes and images that are drawn from the biblical readings for the day or from the setting in the Christian year.

W-3.0205: Confession and Forgiveness

Having praised the holiness of God, we must also face the sinful state of the world and of our lives, confessing our unworthiness to enter into God's presence. Nevertheless we approach God with confidence, trusting in the mercy of Jesus Christ. This turn from communal praise to corporate confession, established on the promise of God's grace, is one of the hallmarks of the Reformed tradition.

A call to confession expresses God's initiative in calling for repentance and promising forgiveness in Christ. As members of Christ's body, we confess the reality of sin, captivity, and brokenness in personal and common life and ask for God's saving grace. The prayer of confession may include the singing of a prayer for grace, such as "Lord, have mercy." A declaration of forgiveness proclaims the good news of God's mercy and offers the assurance of pardon in Jesus' name. Leading this element of worship from the font connects our confession with the grace and cleansing of Baptism, and the baptismal call to new life in Christ. Because of these associations with the ministry of Word and Sacrament, it is fitting for a teaching elder† to lead the call to confession and proclaim the good news of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Other actions may follow—a song of praise, such as "Glory be to the Father" or "Glory to God"; a summary of the law or call to faithfulness; and the sharing of peace as a sign of reconciliation in Christ.

W-3.03: Word*W-3.0301: Theology of Proclamation*

The Scriptures bear witness to the Word of God, revealed most fully in Jesus Christ, the Word who "became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). Where the Word is read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ the living Word is present by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, reading, hearing, preaching, and affirming the Word are central to Christian worship and essential to the Service for the Lord's Day.

A teaching elder† is responsible for the selection of Scriptures to be read in public worship. Selected readings are to be drawn from both Old and New Testaments, and over a period of time should reflect the broad content and full message of Scripture. Selections for readings should be guided by the rhythms of the Christian year, events in the world, and pastoral concerns in the local congregation. Lectionaries ensure a broad range of biblical texts as well as consistency and connection with the universal Church. The teaching elder† is also responsible for the version of the Bible to be used in public worship. The Scriptures are to be read in the common language(s) of the worshiping community. The congregation is to be informed of significant adaptations, paraphrases, or new translations.

The Word proclaimed shall be based on the Word written in Scripture. Preaching requires diligence and discernment in the study of Scripture, listening for the voice of God through the discipline of daily prayer, theological reflection on the message of the gospel, sensitivity to the context of the congregation, attentiveness to what the Spirit is saying to the church, awareness of events in the world, and consistent and personal obedience to Jesus Christ. The sermon will present the gospel with clarity and simplicity, in language that all can understand. The gifts of song, drama, dance, and visual art may be employed in the proclamation of the Word.

We respond to the proclamation of the Word in a variety of ways: confessing the faith of the Church, celebrating or reaffirming the Sacrament of Baptism, praying for the Church and world, and offering our lives in gratitude for God's grace. The proclamation of the Word is incomplete if it fails to evoke the response of the people of God. When the Word is proclaimed, we are called, above all, to discern Jesus Christ, receive his grace, and respond to his call with obedience. All of these things depend on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, whom we seek in prayer.

W-3.0302: Prayer for Illumination

A prayer for illumination calls on the Holy Spirit to empower the reading, understanding, proclaiming, and living of God's Word. This sense of utter reliance on the illumination of the Spirit is an important and distinctive mark of the Reformed tradition. The prayer for illumination precedes the reading of Scripture and preaching of the sermon and applies to all of the readings, as well as the proclamation of the Word.

W-3.0303: Scripture

The public reading of Scripture is to be clear, audible, and attentive to the meaning of the text. Reading from the church's Bible conveys a sense of the permanence and weight of the Word of God, and demonstrates the communal na-

ture of the biblical story. Anyone may be invited to read Scripture, including children and youth. Because deacons are charged with the ministry of witness to the gospel and ruling elders are responsible for the proclamation of the Word, it is fitting for a deacon or ruling elder to read Scripture. The session will ensure that all readers are prepared for this important ministry.

The role of the congregation is to listen prayerfully, actively, and attentively to the Word that is read and proclaimed. Such listening requires expectation, concentration, and imagination. The congregation may participate in the presentation of Scripture through unison, responsive, or antiphonal readings, or by following along with printed or projected materials. Spoken responses may conclude the reading of Scripture. Scripture may also be presented through music.

W-3.0304: Musical Responses

Psalms, canticles, anthems, alleluias, songs of praise, or other musical responses may accompany the reading of the Word. A psalm may be sung in response to the first reading, giving the congregation an opportunity to reflect on and pray from that text.

W-3.0305: Proclamation

A sermon, based on the Scripture(s) read in worship, proclaims the good news of the risen Lord and presents the gift and calling of the gospel. Through the sermon, we encounter Jesus Christ in God's Word, are equipped to follow him more faithfully, and are inspired to proclaim the gospel to others through our words and deeds. The sermon may conclude with prayer, an ascription of praise, or a call to discipleship. In keeping with the ministry of Word and Sacrament, a teaching elder† ordinarily preaches the sermon.

Other forms of proclamation include song, drama, dance, visual art, and testimony. Like the sermon, these are to illuminate the Scripture(s) read in worship and communicate the good news of the gospel. When these forms of proclamation are employed, worship leaders should connect them with the witness of the Scripture(s) to the Triune God.

W-3.0306: Affirmation of Faith

Responding to the Word proclaimed, we affirm our faith in the holy, triune God. This affirmation of faith is drawn from sentences of Scripture or the creeds, confessions, and catechisms. A congregational song, anthem, or other musical response may serve as an affirmation of faith. Opportunities for personal testimony may also be provided at this time. When Baptism or the reaffirmation of Baptism takes place, the Apostles' Creed is spoken in the context of the baptismal liturgy. The Nicene Creed, our earliest ecumenical confession of faith, is traditionally associated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

W-3.0307: Baptism and Baptismal Discipleship

The Sacrament of Baptism (W-3.0402–W-3.0408) and other services associated with the baptismal covenant ordinarily take place as a response to the Word. Such services include the reaffirmation of Baptism on profession of faith (W-4.0203), the reception of new members (W-4.0204), commissioning for service (W-4.03), ordination and installation to ordered ministry (W-4.04), transitions in life or ministry (W-4.05), commemorations of communal events, Christian marriage (W-4.06), and witness to the resurrection (W-4.07). An invitation to discipleship may also be spoken at this time, calling worshipers to be baptized or to live into the promises of their Baptism.

W-3.0308: Prayers of Intercession

In response to the Word, we pray for the world God so loves—joining Christ's own ministry of intercession and the sighs of the Spirit, too deep for words. These prayers are not the work of a single leader, but an act of the whole congregation as Christ's royal priesthood. We affirm our participation in the prayer through our "amen" and other responses.

Prayers of intercession and supplication are offered for: the mission and ministry of the universal Church and the local congregation; care of creation and the right use of resources; peace and justice in the world; the leaders and peoples of all nations; the poor, hungry, and oppressed; compassion and reconciliation in the local community; healing and wholeness for all who suffer; and other special needs. These prayers may be led from the communion table or from the midst of the congregation. They may include musical responses or symbolic action. The peace of Christ may follow, if not previously shared.

Because pastors are called to serve as good shepherds for God's people, it is fitting for a teaching elder† to lead the prayers of intercession and supplication. Because deacons are responsible for ministries of compassion and ruling elders are charged with the nurture of the congregation, it is also fitting for a deacon or ruling elder to lead these prayers. Other persons with a gift for prayer may be invited to lead the intercessions.

W-3.0309: Offering and Lord's Supper

The collection of tithes and offerings (W-3.0411) and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (W-3.0409–W-3.0414) take place as a response to the Word. These actions are signs of our gratitude for the grace of God proclaimed in the gospel. If the Lord's Supper is omitted, a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication follows the collection of the offering (W-3.0415).

W-3.04: Sacrament*W-3.0401: Theology of the Sacraments*

The Sacraments are the Word of God enacted and sealed in the life of the Church, the body of Christ. They are gracious acts of God, by which Christ Jesus offers his life to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are also human acts of gratitude, by which we offer our lives to God in love and service. The Sacraments are both physical signs and spiritual gifts, including words and actions, surrounded by prayer, in the context of the Church's common worship. They employ ordinary things—the basic elements of water, bread, and wine—in proclaiming the extraordinary love of God. The Reformed tradition recognizes the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (also called Eucharist or Holy Communion) as having been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ through the witness of the Scriptures and sustained through the history of the universal Church.

W-3.0402: Theology of Baptism

Baptism is the sign and seal of our incorporation into Jesus Christ. In his own baptism, Jesus identified himself with sinners—yet God claimed him as a beloved Son, and sent the Holy Spirit to anoint him for service. In his ministry, Jesus offered the gift of living water. Through the baptism of his suffering and death, Jesus set us free from the power of sin forever. After he rose from the dead, Jesus commissioned his followers to go and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to obey his commands. The disciples were empowered by the outpouring of the Spirit to continue Jesus' mission and ministry, inviting others to join this new way of life in Christ. As Paul wrote, through the gift of Baptism we are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11).

The Sacrament of Baptism holds a deep reservoir of theological meaning, including: dying and rising with Jesus Christ; pardon, cleansing, and renewal; the gift of the Holy Spirit; incorporation into the body of Christ; and a sign of the realm of God. The Reformed tradition understands Baptism to be a sign of God's covenant. The water of Baptism is linked with the waters of creation, the flood, and the exodus. Baptism thus connects us with God's creative purpose, cleansing power, and redemptive promise from generation to generation. Like circumcision, a sign of God's gracious covenant with Israel, Baptism is a sign of God's gracious covenant with the Church. In this new covenant of grace God washes us clean and makes us holy and whole. Baptism also represents God's call to justice and righteousness, rolling down like a mighty stream, and the river of the water of life that flows from God's throne.

Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's redeeming grace offered to all people. ~~[Baptism is God's gift of grace and also God's call to respond to that grace.]~~ **[Baptism is at once God's gift of grace, God's means of grace, and God's call to respond to that grace.]** Through Baptism, Jesus Christ calls us to repentance, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit gives the Church its identity and commissions the Church for service in the world.

Baptism is the bond of unity in Jesus Christ. When we are baptized, we are made one with Christ, with one another, and with the Church of every time and place. In Christ, barriers of race, status, and gender are overcome; we are called to seek reconciliation in the Church and world, in Jesus' name.

Both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love. The baptism of believers witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for our grateful response. The baptism of our **[young]** children witnesses to the truth that God claims people in love even before they are able to respond in faith. These two forms of witness are one and the same Sacrament.

God's faithfulness to us is sure, even when human faithfulness to God is not. God's grace is sufficient; therefore Baptism is not repeated. There are many times in worship, however, when we may remember the gift of our baptism and acknowledge the grace of God continually at work in us. These may include: profession of faith; when participating in another's baptism; when joining or leaving a church; at an ordination, installation, or commissioning; and at each celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Baptism marks the beginning of new life in Christ. The new way of life to which God calls us is one of deep commitment, disciplined discernment, and growth in faith. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, given with and through Baptism, equip and strengthen us for the challenges of Christian faith and life.

Baptism is ordinarily celebrated on the Lord's Day in the gathering of the people of God. The presence of the covenant community bears witness to the one body of Christ, into whom we are baptized. When circumstances call for the administration of Baptism apart from public worship, the congregation should be represented by one or more members.

As there is one body, there is one Baptism. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes all baptisms by other Christian churches that are administered with water and performed in the name of the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

W-3.0403: Responsibility for Baptism

Baptism shall be authorized by the session and administered by a teaching elder†. The session's responsibilities for Baptism include: encouraging parents (or those exercising parental responsibility) to present their children for Baptism without undue haste or undue delay; encouraging new believers to be baptized; examining candidates for Baptism, or their parents, and instructing them in the significance of the Sacrament; enrolling those who are baptized as members of the congregation; and providing for their ongoing nurture and formation for baptismal life in the world. The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the universal Church, is responsible for nurturing baptized persons in Christian life. The session may designate certain members of the congregation as sponsors or mentors for those who are baptized or for their parents.

When a **[young]** child is presented for Baptism at least one parent (or person exercising parental responsibility) **[will]** **[should]** be an active member of a Christian church, normally the congregation in which the baptism takes place. The session may consider a request to baptize a child whose parent is an active member of another church. If the session approves such a request, it **[must]** **[should]** communicate with the council of the other congregation and notify them when the Sacrament has been administered. Those presenting children for Baptism will promise to nurture and guide them until they are ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership.

A council may authorize a Baptism, to be administered by a teaching elder†, in certain situations beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other ministry settings. In these cases, the teaching elder† is responsible for ensuring that the name of the newly baptized person is placed on the appropriate roll of a **[congregation]** **[council]** (G-3.02, G-3.03).

W-3.0404: Presentation

The teaching elder† introduces the Sacrament of Baptism with sentences of Scripture; other sentences of Scripture may be spoken by ruling elders, members of the congregation, or ecumenical witnesses. On behalf of the session, a ruling elder presents each candidate for Baptism. Those desiring Baptism for their children or themselves express their intent to receive the Sacrament. Parents, sponsors (if applicable), and the congregation make vows to support and nurture those being baptized. No one comes to Baptism alone; we are encouraged by family or friends and surrounded by the community of faith.

W-3.0405: Profession of Faith

Candidates for Baptism or their parents shall renounce evil and profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who are being baptized upon profession of faith declare their intent to participate actively and responsibly in the church's worship and mission. **[They join]** **[Together with]** the congregation **[they profess]** **[in professing]** in professing their faith, using the Apostles' Creed, the baptismal affirmation of the early Church.

W-3.0406: Thanksgiving over the Water

At the place of baptism, a teaching elder† leads the people in prayer: giving thanks for God's covenant faithfulness through history; praising God's gracious and reconciling action in Jesus Christ; and asking the Holy Spirit to attend and empower the Baptism, give deliverance and rebirth, and equip the church for faithfulness.

W-3.0407: The Act of Baptism

Accompanied by a visible and generous use of water, the teaching elder† shall address each person by their Christian or given name and say: "[Name], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). The water used for Baptism should be from a local source, and may be applied with the hand, by pouring, or through immersion.

Other actions signifying the gift of the Holy Spirit, such as the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, may be included. However, the central act of baptizing with water in the name of the triune God must not be overshadowed.

W-3.0408: Welcome

The newly baptized person is welcomed as a member of the Church, the body of Christ. Appropriate gifts may be given, such as a candle (reflecting the light of Christ) or a baptismal garment (signifying being clothed with Christ). The peace of Christ may be exchanged, if not previously shared.

The Church's way of welcome into the body of Christ involves the unrepeatable Sacrament of Baptism and the repeatable Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Christ bathes us with mercy, then feeds us with grace. Since this ancient pattern of initiation includes both Sacraments, the Lord's Supper appropriately follows Baptism; those who have just been baptized may be invited to receive communion first.

W-3.0409: Theology of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (or Eucharist) is the sign and seal of our communion with the crucified and risen Lord. Jesus shared meals with his followers throughout his earthly life and ministry—common suppers, miraculous feasts, and the covenant commemorations of the people of God. Jesus spoke of himself as the bread of life, and the true vine, in whom we are branches. On the night before his death, Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples. He spoke of the bread and wine as his body and blood, signs of the new covenant and told the disciples to remember him by keeping this feast. On the day of his resurrection, Jesus made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of the bread. The disciples continued to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayers, and the common meal. As Paul wrote, when we share the bread and cup in Jesus' name, "we who are many are one body" (1 Cor. 10:17).

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper offers an abundant feast of theological meaning, including: thanksgiving to God the Father; remembrance of Jesus Christ; invocation of the Holy Spirit; communion in the body of Christ; and a meal of the realm of God. The Reformed tradition understands the Lord's Supper to be a sign of God's covenant. The bread of the Lord's Supper is linked with the bread of Passover and the gift of manna in the wilderness. The Lord's Supper thus connects us with God's saving power and providential care from generation to generation. Like the offering of sacrifices, a sign of Israel's thanksgiving for God's faithfulness, the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice of praise and a sign of our gratitude for God's steadfast love. The Lord's Supper represents God's gracious invitation to an everlasting covenant. The Lord's Supper also reflects our calling to feed others as we have been fed, and offers a foretaste of that heavenly banquet when God will wipe away every tear and swallow up death forever.

The Lord's Supper enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's sustaining grace offered to all people. **[The Lord's Supper is God's gift and also God's call to respond to that grace.] [The Lord's Supper is at once God's gift of grace, God's means of grace, and God's call to respond to that grace.]** Through the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ nourishes us in righteousness, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit renews the Church in its identity and sends the Church to mission in the world.

When we gather at the Lord's Supper the Spirit draws us into Christ's presence and unites with the Church in every time and place. We join with all the faithful in heaven and on earth in offering thanksgiving to the triune God. We reaffirm the promises of our baptism and recommit ourselves to love and serve God, one another, and our neighbors in the world.

The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.

Worshippers prepare themselves to celebrate the Lord's Supper by putting their trust in Christ, confessing their sin, and seeking reconciliation with God and one another. Even those who doubt may come to the table in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated as a regular part of the Service for the Lord's Day, preceded by the proclamation of the Word, in the gathering of the people of God. When local circumstances call for the Lord's Supper to be celebrated less frequently, the session may approve other schedules for celebration, in no case less than quarterly. If the Lord's Supper is celebrated less frequently than on each Lord's Day, public notice is to be given at least one week in advance so that all may prepare to receive the Sacrament.

W-3.0410: Responsibility for the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be authorized by the session and administered by a teaching elder†. It is appropriate that a presbytery authorize and train ruling elders to administer the Lord's Supper in the event of the absence of pastors (G-3.0301b). The session may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper at events other than the Service for the Lord's Day, including services of Christian marriage, ordination and installation, services of wholeness, ministry to the sick, and

services of witness to the resurrection. At all such events, the Word is to be read and proclaimed. When the Lord's Supper takes place apart from public worship, the congregation shall be represented by one or more members.

A council may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper in certain contexts beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other ministry settings (G-3.02, G-3.03).

W-3.0411: Offering

Christian life is an offering of one's self to God. In the Lord's Supper we are presented with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ for the life of the world. As those who have been claimed and set free by his grace, we respond with gratitude, offering him our lives, our spiritual gifts, and our material goods. Every service of worship shall include an opportunity to respond to Christ's call to discipleship through self-offering. The gifts we offer express our stewardship of creation, demonstrate our care for one another, support the ministries of the church, and provide for the needs of the poor.

Tithes and offerings are gathered as an act of thanksgiving to God. Gifts of food for the poor may also be collected at this time, and the table may be prepared for the Lord's Supper. All of these gifts are received with a prayer of dedication to God, spoken or sung. Because ruling elders and deacons are charged with the stewardship of the church's resources and leadership in ministry to the poor, it is fitting for a ruling elder or deacon to lead this prayer. Signs of Christ's peace and reconciliation may be exchanged, if this did not take place earlier in the service.

W-3.0412: Great Thanksgiving

Following the offering and the preparation of the table, a teaching elder† invites worshipers to the Lord's Supper using sentences of Scripture. At the table, facing the people, the teaching elder† shall lead the people in a prayer to the triune God: giving thanks for God's creative power, providential care, and covenant faithfulness, along with particular blessings of the day; remembering God's acts of salvation through Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return, as well as Jesus' institution of the Sacrament (if not otherwise spoken at the invitation to the table or the breaking of the bread); and calling on the Holy Spirit to draw worshipers into the presence of the risen Lord, nourish them in the body and blood of Christ, unite them with Christ in the communion of saints and the Church in every place, and send them in mission to the world. The prayer ends with praise to the triune God. Musical acclamations, such as "Holy, holy, holy," "Christ has died," and "Amen," may be included. The Lord's Prayer follows.

W-3.0413: Breaking the Bread

At the table, in full view of the people, the teaching elder† breaks the bread and pours the cup, or lifts a cup that has already been filled. These actions may be accompanied by sentences of Scripture or performed in silence. The use of one loaf and one cup expresses the unity of the body of Christ and the communal nature of the Sacrament. The bread used for the Lord's Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation; those who prepare the bread shall make provision for ~~[persons with food allergies]~~ **[the full participation of the congregation]**. The session will determine whether wine is used; a non-alcoholic option shall be provided and clearly identified.

W-3.0414: Communion

The bread and cup are shared in the manner most appropriate to the occasion. Worshipers may gather at the table, come forward to meet the servers, or receive the bread and cup where they are. The bread may be broken and placed in people's hands or they may receive pieces of bread prepared for distribution. They may drink from a common cup, receive individual cups, or dip the broken bread into the cup. Ordinarily ruling elders, deacons, and teaching elders† serve the bread and cup; the session may authorize other church members to do so. While the bread and cup are shared worshipers may sing, other music may be offered, appropriate passages of Scripture may be read, or the people may pray in silence.

When all have received the bread and cup, the remaining elements are placed on the table. The teaching elder† then leads the people in prayer, thanking God for the gift of the Sacrament and asking for grace to live and serve faithfully until the coming of Christ's realm in fullness.

As soon as possible after the service (ordinarily on the same day), the bread and cup may be shared with absent, homebound, or hospitalized members by two or more persons in ordered ministry. Those who carry out this extended service of communion shall be authorized by the session; equipped with the necessary theological, pastoral, and liturgical gifts and resources; and instructed to maintain the unity of Word and Sacrament through the reading of Scripture and offering of prayers.

At the conclusion of the Service for the Lord's Day, the bread and cup are to be removed from the table and used or disposed of in a manner approved by the session, in keeping with the Reformed understanding of the Sacrament and principles of good stewardship. This may be accomplished by consuming what remains or returning the elements to the earth.

W-3.0415: If the Lord's Supper Is Omitted

The Lord's Supper is integral to the Service for the Lord's Day, a service of Word and Sacrament. If, in local circumstances and by the decision of the session, the Lord's Supper is to be omitted from Sunday worship, the service continues after the prayers of the people with the offering and a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

W-3.05: Sending*W-3.0501: Acts of Commitment*

Having encountered the risen Lord in Word and Sacrament, we affirm Christ's call to discipleship through acts of commitment. Such acts of commitment may include: closing hymns, psalms, or spiritual songs that send us out to live the gospel by God's grace; creative or symbolic actions expressing our resolve to share in Christ's mission; declarations of intent to prepare for or desire to receive the Sacrament of Baptism, or to reaffirm the baptismal covenant; commissioning to ministries of evangelism, compassion, justice, and reconciliation; farewells to members of the church who are departing; and brief invitations or announcements related to the church's mission.

W-3.0502: Blessing and Charge

The Service for the Lord's Day concludes with a blessing in the name of the triune God, such as the priestly blessing or apostolic benediction. Because this blessing is an expression of the gospel of God's grace and an extension of the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, a teaching elder† ordinarily speaks the blessing.

We are blessed in order to be a blessing to others. The charge calls the church to go forth as agents of God's mission in the world. Because deacons are responsible for the church's ministry of witness and service, and ruling elders have oversight of the church's faithfulness to God's mission, it is fitting for a deacon or ruling elder to speak the charge.

W-3.0503: Service in the World

Christian worship and service does not end at the conclusion of the Service for the Lord's Day; we go forth to love and serve the Lord in daily living. In so doing, we seek to fulfill our chief end: to glorify and enjoy God forever.

**Chapter Four:
Pastoral and Occasional Services**

W-4.01: Services Claiming and Completing Baptism*W-4.0101: Flowing from Baptism*

As a sign and seal of God's gracious action and our grateful response, Baptism is the foundation for all Christian commitment. The following pastoral and occasional services are all rooted in the baptismal covenant and flow from the promises of Baptism. Such occasions may be appropriately celebrated following the proclamation of the Word during the Service for the Lord's Day, or may be recognized in other services of public worship. They are fittingly led from the church's baptismal font or pool.

W-4.02: Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant*W-4.0201: Nurturing the Baptized*

In Baptism each Christian is set free from sin, marked as Christ's own, sealed by the Holy Spirit, welcomed to the Lord's Supper, made a member of the Church, and set apart for a life of service. It is the responsibility of the whole congregation, particularly exercised through the session, to nurture those who are baptized as they grow in faith and seek to respond to Christ's call to discipleship. When a person is baptized as a child, the session should equip and support the parent(s) (or those exercising parental responsibility) in this endeavor. When a person is baptized upon profession of faith, the session should provide ongoing opportunities for Christian formation and instruction.

W-4.0202: Welcoming to the Table

In cases where baptized children **[have]** who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord's Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, the session should provide an occasion to welcome them to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord's Supper should include ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.

W-4.0203: Public Profession

When those who have been baptized as children are ready to make a public profession of faith and accept the responsibility of life in the church (sometimes called “confirmation”), the session shall provide an opportunity for them to do so. They are to be instructed in the faith, examined by the session, received as active members, and presented to the congregation in public worship. At this time, they reaffirm the vows of Baptism by renouncing evil and affirming their reliance on God’s grace, professing their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and declaring their intent to participate actively and responsibly in the worship, life, governance, and mission of the church. On such occasions, it is fitting for all worshipers to reaffirm the baptismal covenant.

W-4.0204: New Members

New members are received by public profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or certificate of transfer. The session should provide opportunity for those seeking membership to explore the faith they will (re)affirm. After they are examined and received by the session, new members are presented in worship. As part of their public welcome, it is appropriate for those previously baptized to reaffirm the commitments made in Baptism, profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and declare their intent to participate actively and responsibly in the worship, life, governance, and mission of the church. On such occasions, it is fitting for all worshipers to reaffirm the baptismal covenant.

W-4.0205: Renewal and Fresh Commitment

In the lives of believers and in congregational life there are special occasions of awakening, renewal, or commitment; these are appropriately celebrated through the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. People should be encouraged to share these decisive moments and stirrings of the Spirit with the session, so that they may be acknowledged and affirmed in public worship.

W-4.03: Commissioning for Service*W-4.0301: Acts of Christian Service*

In Baptism each Christian is called to discipleship and sent in service to the world. God also calls people to particular acts of service in the church and world: within the congregation, as teachers, trustees, musicians, or committee members; on behalf of the congregation, through its ministry in the local community; in the larger church, through service on denominational and ecumenical councils; and beyond the church, cooperating with others who work for evangelism, compassion, justice and peace, and care of creation. These kinds of vocation are appropriately confirmed in the Service for the Lord’s Day, either as a response to the proclamation of the Word or as an act of sending. They may also be recognized in other services of worship.

W-4.04: Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning*W-4.0401: Called to Ministry*

In Baptism each Christian is called to ministry in Christ’s name. God calls some persons from the midst of congregations to fulfill particular functions, so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. In ordination the church sets apart with prayer and the laying on of hands those who have been called by God through the voice of the church to serve as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders†. In installation the church sets in place with prayer those who have been (previously) ordained as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders†, and are now called anew to service in that ministry. In commissioning the church recognizes other forms of ministry in the church: ruling elders [~~called to pastoral service~~] [commissioned to limited pastoral service], certified Christian educators, and persons certified to other forms of service.

W-4.0402: Setting for the Service

Ordination, installation, and commissioning may take place during the Service for the Lord’s Day as a response to the proclamation of the Word. Ordination, installation, and commissioning may also take place in a special service that focuses on Jesus Christ, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the mission and ministry of the Church, and which includes the proclamation of the Word and may also include the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The ordination and/or installation of a teaching elder† shall take place at a time that enables substantial participation of the presbytery.

W-4.0403: Order of Worship

A service of ordination, installation, or commissioning focuses on Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church. Following the sermon, the moderator (or designee) of the appropriate council briefly states the nature of the ministry to which persons are being ordained, installed, or commissioned. Those who are being ordained, installed, or commissioned gather at the baptismal font. The moderator (or designee) asks

them the constitutional questions (see W-4.0404). A ruling elder asks the corresponding questions of the congregation. When all questions have been answered in the affirmative, those to be ordained will kneel, if able, for the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination. (The presbytery commission lays on hands at the ordination of teaching elders†; its moderator may invite other teaching elders† and ruling elders to participate. Members of the session lay on hands at the ordination of ruling elders and deacons; the session may invite other ruling elders and teaching elders† to participate. Because ordination only takes place once for each office, the laying on of hands is not repeated.) Those previously ordained will stand, if able, along with the congregation, for the prayer of installation. After this, the moderator makes the declaration of ordination, installation, or commissioning. Members of the session or presbytery welcome the newly ordained, installed, or commissioned person(s). In the case of the installation of a teaching elder†, persons may be invited to charge the teaching elder† and congregation to faithfulness in ministry and mutuality in relationship. When a teaching elder† is ordained or installed, it is appropriate for that person to preside at the Lord's Supper in the same service; she or he may also give the blessing at the conclusion of the service. When ruling elders or deacons are ordained or installed, it is appropriate for one or more of them to give the charge **[to the congregation at the conclusion of the service]**.

W-4.0404: Constitutional Questions

The moderator of the council of those to be ordained, installed, or commissioned shall ask them to face the body of membership and to answer the following questions:

- a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?
- c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- d. Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?
- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?
- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- i.
 - (1) (For ruling elder) Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
 - (2) (For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
 - (3) (For teaching elder†) Will you be a faithful teaching elder†, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith and caring for people? Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the councils of the church; and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
 - (4) (For ruling elder commissioned to particular pastoral service) Will you be a faithful ruling elder in this commission, serving the people by proclaiming the good news, teaching faith and caring for the people, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
 - (5) (For certified Christian educator) Will you be a faithful certified Christian educator, teaching faith and caring for people, and will you in your ministry try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

At the installation of ruling elders and/or deacons: Following the affirmative answers to the questions asked of the person(s) being installed, a ruling elder shall face the congregation along with the ruling elders- and/or deacons-elect and ask the congregation to answer the following questions:

- a. Do we, the members of the church, accept [names] as ruling elders or deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?

- b. Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?

At the installation to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament: Following the affirmative answers to the questions asked of the person(s) being installed, a ruling elder shall face the congregation along with the (associate) pastor-elect and ask the congregation to answer the following questions:

- a. Do we, the members of the church, accept [name] as our (associate) pastor, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to guide us in the way of Jesus Christ?
- b. Do we agree to pray for [her/him], to encourage [her/him], to respect [her/his] decisions, and to follow as [she/he] guides us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?
- c. Do we promise to pay [her/him] fairly and provide for [her/his] welfare as [she/he] works among us; to stand by [her/him] in trouble and share [her/his] joys? Will we listen to the Word [she/he] preaches, welcome [her/his] pastoral care, and honor [her/his] authority as [she/he] seeks to honor and obey Jesus Christ our Lord?

W-4.05: Marking Transitions

W-4.0501: God's Constant Grace

In Baptism each Christian is assured of God's constant grace and sustaining care through every transition, season, trial, and celebration of life. Services on occasions of transitions in ministry bear witness to this grace, and allow worshippers to express their thanksgiving, support, or concern.

W-4.0502: Departing Members

The recognition of departing members appropriately takes place in the context of the Service for the Lord's Day, either as a response to the proclamation of the Word or as an act of sending. The service may include prayers of thanksgiving and intercession for those members who are departing: that they may remain in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

W-4.0503: Conclusion of Service

It is appropriate to recognize the conclusion of a period of service, giving thanks for the gifts and calling of particular persons—whether through ordered ministry, as deacons, ruling elders, or teaching elders†; in specific acts of discipleship; or in other forms of service to the church, in the community, or in the world. This recognition may take place in the context of the Service for the Lord's Day, either as a response to the proclamation of the Word or as an act of sending, or in other services of worship. The service includes prayers of thanksgiving and intercession for those concluding their ministries. Other significant honors or accomplishments may also be celebrated in worship, always in the spirit of giving glory to God.

W-4.0504: Censure and Restoration

The church administers discipline as an expression of the authority of Christ, for the sake of the welfare of the church, and toward the goal of redemption and reconciliation, by God's grace. Forms for censure and restoration are provided in the Rules of Discipline of this *Book of Order*. These occasions are to be observed in the spirit of prayer and pastoral concern, and in the context of worship within the appropriate community or council of the church.

W-4.06: The Covenant of Marriage

The language in this section is that approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014), which has also received a majority of presbyteries' approval. A new introductory sentence ("In Baptism ...") has been added to make this section consistent with the others in Chapter Four of the proposed revision.

W-4.0601: Christian Marriage

In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God's faithful love. Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

W-4.0602: Preparing for Marriage

If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, a couple may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a teaching elder† in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the teaching elder†, who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgment of the teaching elder†, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the teaching elder† may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.

W-4.0603: Order of Worship

The marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the teaching elder† and the supervision of the session (W-2.03). In a service of marriage, the couple marry each other by exchanging mutual promises. The teaching elder† witnesses the couple's promises and pronounces God's blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises; prayers may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.

W-4.0604: Recognizing Civil Marriage

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the statements made shall reflect the fact that the couple is already married to one another according to the laws of the civil jurisdiction.

W-4.0605: Nothing Shall Compel

Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder† to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder† or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder's† or the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.

W-4.07: Death and Resurrection*W-4.0701: Witness to the Resurrection*

In Baptism each Christian shares in Christ's dying and rising, and receives the promise of eternal and abundant life in him. We understand the Christian funeral to be the completion of Baptism. In the face of death, we affirm with tears and joy the good news of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection. We do not grieve in isolation, but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith.

W-4.0702: Policies for Funerals

The session may establish general policies concerning services on the occasion of death, providing for funerals that are simple, dignified, expressive of good stewardship, bear witness to resurrection hope, and convey the centrality of Christian community.

W-4.0703: Setting for the Service

The service of witness to the resurrection is most appropriately held in the congregation's usual place of worship, demonstrating continuity with the community's faith, life, and hope. When there are important reasons not to hold the service in the usual place of worship, it may be held in another place, such as a home, funeral home, crematorium, or graveside. It may be observed on any day, and may, with the approval of the session, occur as a part of the Service for the Lord's Day. The service may take place before or after the committal of the body. The service is under the direction of the teaching elder† of the congregation in which it is held. Others may be invited to share in leadership at the discretion of the teaching elder†.

W-4.0704: Order of Worship

When a member of the community dies, the body of the deceased will be buried, cremated, donated for medical use, or otherwise disposed of in a responsible and reverent manner. Ordinarily the family of the deceased, members of the community, and the pastor(s) of the church will accompany the body of the deceased to the place of disposition, engaging in prayer, blessings, and other acts of worship.

As a part of accompanying the body to the place of disposition, or at another time before or after this takes place, a more full service of worship may be held. The service begins with sentences of Scripture, bearing witness to the resurrection and the living hope we have in Christ. Worshipers may sing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs that affirm our

faith in the resurrection, everlasting life, and the communion of saints. The act of confession and pardon may be included as an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. Scripture is read and the Word is proclaimed, expressing our trust in the risen Lord; an affirmation of faith may follow. Prayer is offered: giving thanks to God for life in Christ, the promise of the gospel, the life and witness of the one who has died, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of the community of faith; making intercessions for those who grieve, those who minister to the bereaved, and all who suffer loss; asking for faith and grace in this time of loss; and concluding with the Lord's Prayer (if not included in the eucharistic liturgy). The Lord's Supper may be celebrated, with the approval of the session. The service ends by commending the one who has died to the care of the eternal God, committing the body of the deceased to the place of disposition (unless this is performed at another time), and sending the people forth with God's blessing.

The casket or urn may be covered with a pall, a symbol of being clothed with Christ in Baptism. The service may begin at the baptismal font. If using a paschal candle is part of the practice of the congregation, it may be placed near the casket. Music directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Flowers and other decorations reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. The service may include other actions common to the community of faith and its cultural context, provided that these actions do not distract from the Christian understanding of death and resurrection. Fraternal, civic, or military rites are to be conducted separately.

Chapter Five: Worship and Christian Life

W-5.01: Worship and Personal Life

W-5.0101: Personal Life

We respond to God's grace both in public worship and service and in personal acts of devotion and discipleship. Personal life and public worship are deeply connected. Christian life springs from Christian worship, where we find our identity as believers and discover our calling as disciples. Christian life flows back into worship as we present to God the prayers of our hearts and the offering of our lives.

In personal life we seek to live out our faith through daily disciplines of prayer, other practices of discipleship, household worship, and Christian vocation and service. Our lives as Christians are shaped by the Word and empowered by the Spirit as we grow more and more each day into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

W-5.0102: Prayer in Daily Life

We respond to God's grace through the gift of prayer. The Christian life is one of constant prayer, as the challenge of everyday discipleship requires daily disciplines of faith. Prayer is a way of opening ourselves to God, who desires communication and communion with us. Prayer may take a variety of forms, such as: conscious conversation with God; attentive and expectant silence; meditation on Scripture; the use of service books, devotional aids, and visual arts; and singing, dancing, labor, or physical exercise. The Church's pattern of daily prayer (W-5.0202) may be adopted as an individual practice of faith. Prayer may also be expressed in action, through public witness and protest, deeds of compassion, and other forms of disciplined service.

Prayer is meant to be a gracious gift from God, not a task or obligation. It is an opportunity to draw inspiration and strength from one's relationship with God in Jesus Christ. It is a way of continually seeking the gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit for daily living. Prayer is a practice to cultivate throughout one's life, and one that will bear much fruit.

W-5.0103: Other Practices of Discipleship

We respond to God's grace through other practices of discipleship: keeping sabbath, studying Scripture, contemplation and action, fasting and feasting, stewardship and self-offering. All of these practices are meant to help us attend to the presence and action of God in our lives.

God commands us to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Sabbath is God's gift to us, a time for worship, rest, and renewal; keeping sabbath is a way of honoring the God who has created and redeemed us. Since the earliest days of the Church, Christians have observed God's commandment by gathering for public worship on the Lord's Day (or Sunday). As the first day of the week, this day shapes our lives of discipleship. Therefore the Lord's Day is a time for participation in public worship; engagement in ministries of service, witness, and compassion; and activities of rest and recreation. Those who must work on Sunday are encouraged to find other ways to keep sabbath in the course of the week.

Through the Scriptures we hear the voice of God and find meaning, direction, comfort, and challenge for our lives. Regular, disciplined engagement with the Bible may include: simply reading the Word, praying with Scripture, studying commentaries, memorizing key passages, and putting the Word into action in our lives. One should seek to read a wide range of Scripture, always relying on the illumination of the Spirit and the help of the community of faith in deepening our understanding.

The practices of fasting and feasting are ancient expressions of lament and celebration. The festivals and seasons of the Christian year provide rhythms of fasting and feasting centered on the life of Christ and the events of salvation history. Events in the life of the world, nation, community, or individuals may also call for acts of thanksgiving, sorrow, penitence, or protest.

The disciplines of stewardship and self-offering are a grateful response to God's love for the world and self-giving in Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are called to lives of simplicity, generosity, hospitality, compassion, and care for creation. Tithing is a primary practice of Christian stewardship and self-offering. We are accountable to God for how we use our material goods, spiritual gifts, and time in God's service.

W-5.0104: Household Worship

We respond to God's grace in the context of personal relationships, particularly when Christians who live together worship together. Opportunities for household or family worship include: sabbath-keeping and rhythms of daily prayer; Bible reading, study, or memorization; prayers before meals; singing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs; and expressions of giving, sharing, and service to others. Congregations are encouraged to nurture and equip households and families for these practices.

Household worship offers a valuable opportunity to remember and anticipate the Lord's Day, studying appointed Scriptures and reflecting on and preparing for the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The seasons of the Christian year, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, provide further shape and meaning for household worship. Worship in the household setting may include recognitions of birthdays, baptismal days, and other significant anniversaries, and may reflect the cycles of nature, civic observances, and events in the local, national, and global spheres.

Children come to know, trust, and worship God by worshiping and praying with their parents and others who care for them. Children may lead and participate in household worship by singing and praying, listening to and telling Bible stories, learning catechisms, and serving and sharing with others. Household worship provides an excellent opportunity to teach children the shape and elements of the Service for the Lord's Day, so that they may be full and active participants in the church's worship.

W-5.0105: Christian Vocation

We respond to God's grace through our Christian vocation. In Baptism we offer our whole lives in service to God, and are empowered by the Holy Spirit with gifts for ministry in Jesus' name. Therefore we are called to honor and serve God at all times and in all places: in our work and play, in our thought and action, and in our private and public engagements. Such service and love is an act of gratitude for God's grace. This has been a particularly important theme of the Reformed tradition: the life and work of every Christian can and should give glory to God. As we honor and serve God in our daily life and labor, we worship God. Whatever our situation, we have opportunities each day to bear witness to the power of God at work within us. Therefore, for Christians, worship, work, and witness cannot be separated.

W-5.02: Worship and the Church's Ministry within the Community of Faith

W-5.0201: The Church's Ministry within the Community of Faith

God calls the Church in the name of Jesus Christ to mutual love and service. Jesus' ministry and the church's worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is ministry. The church's ministry springs from its worship, where God builds up the body of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church's ministry flows back into worship as we bring to God the celebrations and concerns of the community of faith.

Within the church, we seek to love and serve one another through the rhythm of daily prayer, the ministries of Christian education and pastoral care, the activities of councils of the church, and other gatherings of believers. The church's ministries are shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and are to be carried out in the spirit of constant prayer.

W-5.0202: Services of Daily Prayer

God calls the Church to pray without ceasing in Jesus' name. Services of daily prayer offer us a way of joining Christ's ceaseless intercession for the Church and world. Such services typically include: the singing or praying of psalms; the reading of Scripture; and prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, concluding with the Lord's Prayer. Services of daily prayer may take place at appointed times throughout the day (such as morning, midday, evening, and close of day) or may follow other patterns according to the demands of daily life and the needs of the individual or community. Such services may occur in councils of the church, in the congregation, in small groups of believers, in households, or in private. In the congregational setting these services are to be authorized by the session, but they may be led by any member of the church.

W-5.0203: Christian Education

God calls the Church to continue the teaching ministry of Jesus Christ, guiding and nurturing one another through all the seasons and transitions of life. In particular, the church offers opportunities for education and formation as members enter the community of faith, discover Christian vocation, and assume responsibility in the world. The church's primary standard and resource for Christian nurture is the Word of God in Scripture, bearing witness to Christ's way of truth and life.

The central occasion for Christian nurture is the Service for the Lord's Day, where the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated. Beyond the process of Christian formation that takes place in public worship, the words and actions of the service can be a particularly fruitful source of study and reflection. Therefore all members should be encouraged to be present and participate in this assembly. Educational activities should not be scheduled so as to prevent or discourage participation in this service.

The educational ministries of the church are rooted in the promises of Baptism, in which the congregation pledges responsibility for Christian nurture. The session is responsible for the development and supervision of the church's educational programs, the instruction of ruling elders and deacons, and the discipleship of all members. The teaching elder† contributes to the nurture of the community through the ministries of Word and Sacrament, church school classes, the gift of prayer, and by example. Trained and certified Christian educators bring special skills and expertise in teaching to the church's ministries of nurture and formation. The session has a responsibility to identify, encourage, and equip others who have gifts for Christian education. The session also has a responsibility to support parents and others who seek to nurture the faith of children.

Church school gatherings offer opportunities for worship, including singing, praying, and hearing the Word. These gatherings may also include occasions for self-offering and service. However, worship in the church school is not a substitute for participation with the whole congregation in the Service for the Lord's Day.

The church provides other opportunities for Christian nurture, including: seminary instruction and continuing education; workshops on particular themes or topics; music programs and rehearsals; mission and program interpretation; meetings of committees, boards, and councils; and retreats, camps, and conferences.

W-5.0204: Pastoral Care

God calls the Church to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, caring for one another, sharing joys and sorrows, providing support in times of stress and need, and offering admonition, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Relying on Christ's grace and the Spirit's gifts, the church seeks to shepherd its members through times of danger and death, illness and loss, crisis and celebration, struggle and sin. In particular, these ministries flow from and are nourished by the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, signs and seals of our relationship in the body of Christ.

The worship of God in Christian community is the foundation and context for the ministry of pastoral care. Members draw on the resources of worship in their care for one another, sharing the grace and challenge of the Word, the gift and calling of the Sacraments, the presence and power of God's Spirit in prayer, and the fellowship and comfort of the community of faith. They take these resources with them, extending Christ's grace and peace in homes, hospitals, hospices, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces.

All members are called to take part in the ministry of pastoral care, visiting the sick, supporting the weak, and comforting those who mourn. Ruling elders, deacons, and teaching elders† have particular responsibility for the exercise of pastoral care within the community of faith. Those with special gifts and appropriate training may be called to the ministries of pastoral counseling or chaplaincy. In certain circumstances, persons may need to be referred to other qualified and credentialed professionals to receive appropriate counseling and care.

Services of wholeness and healing are one way of enacting the church's ministry of pastoral care. The central element in these services is prayer, calling upon God's saving grace or giving thanks for healing received. A service of wholeness includes the proclamation of the Word, focusing on the promise of abundant life in Christ. Prayer may be enacted through the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, provided that these actions are carefully introduced and interpreted: healing always comes as a gift from God, not as a product of human prayer. The Lord's Supper is a fitting way to seal the promise of wholeness proclaimed in the Word. Services of wholeness are to be authorized by the session and are under the direction of the teaching elder†, but may involve leadership from ruling elders, deacons, and others with gifts for prayer. They may take place on a regular basis, as an occasional event, or as a part of the Service for the Lord's Day.

Services of acceptance and reconciliation acknowledge the reality of sin and suffering and seek the redeeming grace of God. They provide an appropriate way to acknowledge our involvement and responsibility in broken relationships and sinful social structures. The central element in these services is confession and pardon, along with appropriate signs of peace and reconciliation. They include readings from Scripture that reveal the grace of God, and may involve elements of prayer, expressions of thanksgiving, and enactments of commitment.

W-5.0205: Councils of the Church

God calls the Church to seek the mind of Christ. Members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seek Christ's mind together in councils, through meetings of the session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. These councils worship regularly, in keeping with the teaching of Scripture, the witness of the Confessions, and the principles of this directory. Councils above the session make provision for the regular proclamation of the Word and celebration of the Lord's Supper. Meetings of councils open and close with prayer. Councils also provide other opportunities for praise, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, and supplication in the course of their discernment and deliberation.

W-5.0206: Other Gatherings

God calls the Church to gather as the body of Christ at other times and places to learn, pray, serve, and enjoy Christian fellowship. Bible studies, prayer circles, covenant groups, and other meetings may take place throughout the week and various times of day, whether on the church grounds, at members' homes, or elsewhere. These gatherings present valuable opportunities for: reading, studying, and discussing the Scriptures; Christian formation and nurture; praying for one another, the Church, and the world; sharing personal stories, celebrations, and concerns; common work, meals, fellowship, and recreation; and living out the gospel through acts of witness and service.

Christians also gather at retreats, camps, and conferences for learning, worship, service, and recreation. Services of worship in these places are to be authorized by an appropriate council, and are guided by the principles of Scripture, the Confessions, and this directory. Depending on the nature of the event, orders of worship may be adapted from the services for daily prayer, the Service for the Lord's Day, or other services described in this directory. Celebrations of the Lord's Supper are to be approved by the council overseeing the event or in whose bounds it takes place.

We bear witness to the unity of the body of Christ when we gather in ecumenical groups for the worship of the triune God. Such services are rooted, despite denominational differences, in the Baptism we share. Teaching elders† invited to participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in such gatherings may do so, provided that their participation is consistent with the Reformed understanding of the Sacrament.

We bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ when we pray in the presence of others, particularly at interfaith gatherings. Such gatherings are opportunities to live and share our faith, even as we listen to and learn from our neighbors. Participants in interfaith events are to reflect the Christian faith in their words and actions, while respecting the autonomy, integrity, and diversity of others' beliefs and practices.

W-5.03: Worship and the Church's Mission in the World*W-5.0301: The Church's Mission in the World*

God sends the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to join the mission of Jesus Christ in service to the world. Jesus' mission and the church's worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is mission. The church's mission springs from its worship, where we glimpse the reality and the promise of God's eternal realm. The church's mission flows back into worship as we bring to God the joy and suffering of the world.

Through its mission in the world, the church seeks to bear witness to God's reign through the proclamation of the gospel, acts of compassion, work for justice and peace, and the care of creation. The church's mission is shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and represents the living out of our prayer for the world.

W-5.0302: Evangelism

God sends the Church to proclaim the gospel in the world: announcing the good news of God's liberating love; calling all people to repent and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; baptizing, teaching, and making disciples in Jesus' name; and offering the promise of eternal and abundant life in Christ.

~~[The] [In the]~~ Service for the Lord's Day[.] ~~[is the primary context in which]~~ we ~~[regularly]~~ hear the proclamation of the gospel and have the opportunity to respond in faith, committing and recommitting our lives to Jesus Christ. Accordingly, an invitation to prepare for Baptism and live out baptismal discipleship is to be a regular part of Sunday worship. Christian worship also prepares believers to go forth, in the power of the Spirit, to share with others the good news they have received, inviting them to join in following Christ's way.

Special services for evangelism may be authorized by the session. The central element in these services is the proclamation of the Word with emphasis on the saving grace of God in Christ, Jesus' claim upon our lives, and his invitation to discipleship. This act of proclamation is surrounded by prayer. Those who respond to Christ's invitation are to receive nurture and support from the community of faith, equipping them for Christian discipleship. If they have not been baptized, they make a public profession of faith and receive the Sacrament of Baptism in the Service for the Lord's Day.

Those who were previously baptized are given the opportunity to express their renewed commitment to Christ through the reaffirmation of Baptism.

W-5.0303: Compassion

God sends the Church to show compassion in the world: feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, freeing captives, sheltering the homeless, welcoming strangers, comforting those who mourn, and being present with all who are in need. These acts of compassion, done corporately or individually, are the work of the Church as the body of Christ. We are called to minister directly to people's immediate hurts and needs. We are also called to confront and challenge systems that perpetuate human misery. We participate in Christ's compassionate ministry through local acts of witness and advocacy, through the programs of the larger church, and in cooperation with other agencies and organizations committed to human welfare.

In the Service for the Lord's Day, God's call to compassion is proclaimed in the Word and enacted through the Sacraments. We confess our complicity in oppressive structures, pray for those who are hurting, offer our resources to alleviate suffering, and commit our time and energy to care for those in need. Following the example of Jesus Christ, we pledge that we will respect the dignity of all, reach out to those judged undeserving, receive as well as give, and even risk our lives to show Christ's love.

W-5.0304: Justice and Peace

God sends the Church to work for justice in the world: exercising its power for the common good; dealing honestly in personal and public spheres; seeking dignity and freedom for all people; welcoming strangers in the land; promoting justice and fairness in the law; overcoming disparities between rich and poor; bearing witness against systems of violence and oppression; and redressing wrongs against individuals, groups, and peoples. God also sends the Church to seek peace: in the Church universal, within denominations, and at the congregational level; in the world, where nations and religious or ethnic groups make war against one another; and in local communities, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and homes. These acts of peacemaking and justice are established upon God's gracious act of reconciliation with us in Jesus Christ, and are a way of participating in Christ's priestly intercession or advocacy for the world.

In the Service for the Lord's Day we proclaim, receive, and enact reconciliation with God in Christ. Through the proclamation of the Word we are given the assurance of freedom and peace in Christ and are inspired to share these gifts with others. Through Baptism and the Lord's Supper we are united with Christ, made one in the Spirit, and empowered to break down the dividing walls of hostility that still separate us from one another. We confess our participation in unjust systems, pray for an end to violence and injustice, offer our gifts to support Christ's liberating work, and commit ourselves to pursue peace and justice in Jesus' name.

W-5.0305: Care of Creation

God sends the Church to share in the stewardship of creation, preserving the goodness and glory of the earth God has made. God cares for us through the gifts of creation, providing all that we need in abundance. As caretakers of God's creation, we are called to: tend the land, water, and air with awe and wonder at God's gifts; use the earth's resources wisely, without plundering, polluting, or destroying; use technology in ways that preserve and enhance life; measure our production and consumption in order to provide for the needs of all; foster responsible practices of procreation and reproduction; and seek beauty, order, health, harmony, and peace for all God's creatures.

In the Service for the Lord's Day we express our care for creation by: giving thanks for God's creative power and sustaining care; acknowledging God's call to stewardship of the earth and confessing our failure to care for creation; rejoicing in the promise of redemption and renewal in Jesus Christ proclaimed in the Word and Sacraments; offering our lives and resources in service to the creator of all; and committing ourselves to live as good stewards of creation until the day when God will make all things new. One way in which the church demonstrates integrity in caring for God's creation is through responsible choices about materials for worship, including the use of paper, sacramental elements, the construction of worship space, and other resources.

W-5.04: Worship and the Reign of God

W-5.0401: The Reign of God

The Church in its worship and service is a living sign of the reign of God, which is both a present reality and a future promise. The Church's activities do not bring about God's realm; they are our grateful response to the grace of God at work in the world. We seek to worship and serve God faithfully, with the confidence that God's reign has already been established and the hope that it will soon be revealed in fullness and glory.

We do all of this in the name of Jesus, looking for the day when “every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10–11).

Amen!
 Blessing and glory and wisdom
 and thanksgiving and honor
 and power and might
 be to our God forever and ever!
 Amen. (Rev. 7:12)

Rationale

This recommendation is in response to the following referrals:

Alternate Resolution to 2004 Referral: Item 04-12. Recommendation 2. That the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Mission Council Office of Theology and Worship Undertake an Analysis of the Directory of Worship with the Goal of Evaluating Its Influence and Effectiveness in Guiding Sessions, Pastors, and Higher Governing Bodies in Planning and Conducting Worship That Is Authentically Reformed and Culturally Appropriate—From the 216th General Assembly (2004) (Minutes, 2004, Part I, p. 86);

2014 Referral: Item 13-02. The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 221st General Assembly (2014) forward the draft of the proposed Directory for Worship to the church for study and comment in consideration of submitting it to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) for approval. All comments should be directed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly by July 1, 2015.

Background

In the context of revisions to the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the 216th General Assembly (2004) called the Office of the General Assembly and the Office of Theology and Worship to undertake a similar analysis of the Directory for Worship to evaluate its effectiveness with guidance in planning and conducting worship that is Reformed and culturally appropriate. A staff team from the Office of Constitutional Services and the Office of Theology and Worship, with assistance from the Office of Research Services, conducted a 2005 study to evaluate the effectiveness and use of the Directory for Worship. On the basis of these findings, the staff team recommended that the Directory for Worship would be more accessible and helpful if it were rewritten in a form that was somewhat shorter and better organized. This recommendation was approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006); however, the response was delayed due to ongoing consideration of a new Form of Government.

When the process of considering a new Form of Government was completed, the Office of Theology and Worship produced a revised draft of the Directory for Worship, fulfilling the recommendations given above: shorter, better organized, more accessible, and thoroughly Reformed. In the spirit of the new Form of Government, the revised Directory for Worship seeks to foster freedom and flexibility, with openness to a broader range of worship styles and cultural expressions. In the spirit of Calvin’s “third use of the law,” the revised Directory for Worship is intended to be more than a rule book or scolding finger; this revision emphasizes guidance for those who plan and lead worship, and teaching for the whole people of God.

The Office of Theology and Worship and the Office of the General Assembly organized a consultation on the revised Directory for Worship in September 2013. A diverse group of scholars, pastors, and mid council leaders provided feedback on the proposed revision, which was incorporated into a second draft. A final report, including this proposed revision of the Directory for Worship, was presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014). In the referral cited above, the 221st General Assembly (2014) commended the proposed revision of the Directory for Worship to the denomination for study and comment, with comments due by July 1, 2015. The revised text and study guide were made available at on the Presbyterian Mission Agency website (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/directory-for-worship/>) and publicized through news stories, electronic newsletters, webinars, workshops at national and regional events, and social media. Comments were received through emails to worship@pcusa.org; following the due date, the comments were compiled. The Office of Theology and Worship and the Office of the General Assembly organized a second consultation to consider and respond to the many comments into the proposed revision in October 2015. The resulting proposed revision of the Directory for Worship is presented above.

ACC ADVICE ON ITEM 14-04

Advice on Item 14-04—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Item 14-04 with amendments.

History

The process that has led to the proposed Directory for Worship began in 2004, with the action of the 216th General Assembly (2004) on Item 04-12. The following was assigned to the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council, Office of Theology and Worship:

- a. To undertake a similar analysis of the Directory of Worship with the goal of evaluating its influence and effectiveness in guiding sessions, pastors, and higher governing bodies in planning and conducting worship that is authentically Reformed and culturally appropriate.
- b. To bring recommendations to the 217th General Assembly (2006). (*Minutes*, 2004, Part I, p. 86)

At the same time, the process to revise the Form of Government was beginning. It was decided to hold the revision of the Directory for Worship until after the Form of Government revision was complete.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board reported the following to the 221st General Assembly (2014):

... the Office of Theology and Worship has produced a revised draft of the Directory for Worship, fulfilling the recommendations given above: shorter, better organized, more accessible, and thoroughly Reformed. In the spirit of the new Form of Government, the revised Directory for Worship seeks to foster freedom and flexibility, with openness to a broader range of worship styles and cultural expressions. In the spirit of Calvin's "third use of the law," the revised Directory for Worship is intended to be more than a rule book or scolding finger; this revision emphasizes guidance for those who plan and lead worship, and teaching for the whole people of God. (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 957)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the proposed Directory for Worship has met these objectives.

A draft of the proposed Directory for Worship was presented to the 221st General Assembly (2014), and was referred for churchwide study and comment. In December 2014, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution met and reviewed that draft. The ACC provided the task group working on the proposal with a list of comments, concerns, and suggestions.

Suggestions

As it considers Item 14-04, the General Assembly should be mindful of the following language specified in the Preface of the *Book of Order*:

In this *Book of Order*

- (1) SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE signify practice that is mandated,
- (2) SHOULD signifies practice that is strongly recommended,
- (3) IS APPROPRIATE signifies practice that is commended as suitable,
- (4) MAY signifies practice that is permissible but not required.
- (5) ADVISORY HANDBOOK signifies a handbook produced by agencies of the General Assembly to guide synods and presbyteries in procedures related to the oversight of ministry. Such handbooks suggest procedures that are commended, but not required.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution makes the following recommendations concerning Item 14-04.

1. *W-2.0303*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises changing the wording of the second sentence in the second paragraph substituting the words "*teaching elders*" for the word "pastors."

"In a particular congregation, ruling elders shall provide for the church's worship and encourage the people's participation. Specifically, when serving together on the session, ruling elders and ~~pastors~~ *teaching elders*: make provision for the regular preaching of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments, corporate prayer, and the offering of praise to God in song; oversee and approve all public worship in the congregation, with the exception of responsibilities reserved for the teaching elder†; determine occasions, days, times, and places for worship; and have responsibility for the arrangement of worship space, the use of special appointments (flowers, candles, banners, paraments, and other objects), and the ministries of music, drama, dance, and visual arts."

2. *W-2.0305*. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution points out that the use of the word "should" in the third and fourth paragraphs signifies that these practices are strongly recommended although not mandated. The assembly may wish to consider whether this level of obligation is desirable or if the words "*it is appropriate that the session*" replace the words "the session should" and the words "*it is appropriate that the presbytery*" replace the words "the presbytery should."

"The session is responsible for educating the congregation about the church's worship, in order to facilitate their full and active participation. *It is appropriate that* the session ~~should~~ provide for the regular study of this Directory for Worship, particularly in the training of ruling elders and deacons.

"In fulfilling their responsibilities for worship, sessions are accountable to presbytery. *It is appropriate that the* Presbyteries should discuss with sessions the character of their congregation's worship, the standards governing it, and the fruit that it bears in the mission and ministry of the church. *It is appropriate that the* Presbyteries should provide in-

struction in worship, making use of this Directory for Worship in the preparation of candidates for ordination, and in the ongoing nurture of teaching elders†.”

3. *W-3.0403.* In the last paragraph of W-3.0403, amend the final sentence to read, “In these cases, the teaching elder† is responsible for ensuring that the name of the newly baptized person is placed on the appropriate roll of a ~~congregation~~ *council* (G-3.02, G-3.03).”

Rationale: Rolls and registers are maintained by the session. In situations such as a new church development or new worshipping community, there may be no session. Baptisms in these ministry settings shall be recorded by the appropriate council.

4. *W-3.0405.* The Advisory Committee on the Constitution points out that the use of the word “join” in the last sentence may signify the candidates are joining membership of the congregation. The assembly may wish to consider whether this use of “join” is desirable or if the words “They join” should be omitted or be replaced by language such as “together with.”

5. *W-3.0413.* While the ACC is sensitive to the needs of those persons with food allergies, the requirement is overly specific. The assembly may consider replacing “persons with food allergies” with “*the full participation of the congregation.*”

“At the table, in full view of the people, the teaching elder† breaks the bread and pours the cup, or lifts a cup that has already been filled. These actions may be accompanied by sentences of Scripture or performed in silence. The use of one loaf and one cup expresses the unity of the body of Christ and the communal nature of the Sacrament. The bread used for the Lord’s Supper should be common to the culture of the congregation; those who prepare the bread shall make provision for ~~persons with food allergies~~ *the full participation of the congregation.* The session will determine whether wine is used; a non-alcoholic option shall be provided and clearly identified.”

6. *W-4.0202.* The first use of the word “have” should be deleted.

“In cases where baptized children ~~have~~ who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, the session should provide an occasion to welcome them to the table in public worship. Their introduction to the Lord’s Supper should include ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.”

7. *W-4.0401.* In the last sentence, if the intent of referring to “ruling elders called to pastoral service” is meant to refer to the actions of G-2.10, then the phrase should read “ruling elders commissioned to limited pastoral service...”

“In Baptism each Christian is called to ministry in Christ’s name. God calls some persons from the midst of congregations to fulfill particular functions, so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish. In ordination the church sets apart with prayer and the laying on of hands those who have been called by God through the voice of the church to serve as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders†. In installation the church sets in place with prayer those who have been (previously) ordained as deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders†, and are now called anew to service in that ministry. In commissioning the church recognizes other forms of ministry in the church: ruling elders ~~called to pastoral service~~ *commissioned to limited pastoral service*, certified Christian educators, and persons certified to other forms of service.”

8. *W-4.0403.* In the last sentence, it is unclear what type of charge is being given, who is giving the charge, and who is being charged.

9. The word “commission” (and its variants) is used in different ways in the Directory for Worship: in general terms, and for specific ministries. Care should be taken to avoid confusion.

10. If the proposed Directory for Worship is adopted, determination needs to be made regarding the continuation of any existing authoritative interpretations relating to the current Directory for Worship.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-04

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-04—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 14-04 with comment.

During its open comment periods (concluded on July 1, 2015) of this proposed draft, ACREC recommended to the Office of Theology and Worship that the term “Israel” be substituted by “ancient Israel” in order to differentiate the present political state of Israel with the “ancient Israel.” However, ACREC finds that there are still references of the term “Israel” in the proposed revised draft in the following places in the document: the second paragraph of W-1.0302, the second paragraph of W-3.0402 and the second paragraph of W-3.0409.

The ACREC advises approval of this Revised Directory for Worship pending the incorporation of the comments above.

Item 14-05

[The assembly approved Item 14-05. See pp. 14, 20.]

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the following nominee to the Mountain Retreat Association, Inc.'s Board of Directors:

Class of 2018: Dean Thompson—Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Item 14-06

[The assembly approved Item 14-06. See pp. 14, 20.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the new trustees elected by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological institutions in 2014–2016:

1. **Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary:** James Allison, Janice Bryant, Ann E. Herlin, Thomas Christian Currie, Beth Blanton Flowers, Jesus Juan Gonzalez, Steve LeBlanc, Sue McCoy, Matthew Miller, Conrad Rocha, Martha Tracey, Michael Wright.

2. **Columbia Theological Seminary:** Anthony Lewis Amos, Lee Willey Bowman, Joe Ella Darby, Richard DuBose, Louly Fowler Hay, Joseph Clay Meux Jr., Gordon D. Schreck, Bradley D. Smith, Searcy Allen “Buz” Wilcoxon.

3. **University of Dubuque Theological Seminary:** Bryan McKeag, Bruce A. Obbink, Robert D. Webb.

4. **Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary:** J. Mark Goodman-Morris, Betsy Otts, Donald J. Ridings Jr.

5. **McCormick Theological Seminary:** Robert Cathey, Addison Domske, Catherine Estes, Ronald Franks, Laurel Hamilton, Abigail Heimach-Snipes, Elliott Johnson Sr., Raja Kamal, Katie Snipes Lancaster, Je Myoung Lee, Joanne Lindstrom, Hankook Ryu, Sarah Tanzer, Robert Unglaub.

6. **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary:** Tyler J. Bayless, Angel L. De La Cruz, Mary Jo Dively, David Esterline, K. James Evans Jr., Lisa D. Franklin-Robinson, James Gockley, Larry P. Homitsky, Donald K. McKim, Kang-Yup Na, Joan Prentice, Susan E. Vande Kapelle.

7. **Princeton Theological Seminary:** Mark J. DeVries, Karen Jackson-Weaver, Dennis M. Kass, Hana Kim, Jonathan L. Walton.

8. **San Francisco Theological Seminary:** Bradley A. Berg, Ana Loyda nLugo Berrios, Margaret Boles, David F. Huting.

9. **Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary:** Brent Adam, Cecelia D. Armstrong, Cynthia Burse, Laura Kay Crawley, Sadie Hunter Goldsmith, Jerrod B. Lowry, Kenneth Whitehurst, Hodari S. Williams.

10. **Union Presbyterian Seminary:** Elizabeth Ayscue, Bruce Harvey, Matt Rich, Ted Feinour, Sarah Lindsay Balsley.

Rationale

“A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) requires COTE to present presidents and trustees of PC (USA)-related seminaries to the General Assembly for approval. A list of the entire board of trustees of each of the PC(USA)-related seminaries as well as biographical information about trustees to be approved will be made available by COTE for review by the appropriate committee during the 222nd General Assembly (2016). Similar information will also be made available about those currently serving on the boards of Auburn Theological Seminary and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, which are related to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through covenant agreements.

In addition, and as required by vote of the 209th General Assembly (1997), the following information is offered in regard to racial ethnic and gender representation on the various seminary boards.

PC(USA)–related Seminaries	Total on Board	Euro-Am.	Hispanic	African-Am.	Asian	Native American	R/E	Male	Female
Austin	33	25	3	4	0	0	0	19	14
Columbia	41	36	0	5	0	0	0	21	20
	32	29	0	3	0	0	0	24	8

Dubuque									
Louisville	31	27	0	3	0	0	1	21	10
McCormick	39	29	1	7	2	0	1	28	11
Pittsburgh	32	25	0	6	1	0	0	20	12
Princeton	37	29	1	4	3	0	0	26	11
SFTS	30	22	1	3	3	1	1	19	11
J.C. Smith	21	10	0	11	0	0	0	13	8
Union Presbyterian	33	28	0	5	2	0	5	19	14
TOTALS	329	260	6	73	9	1	7	210	119

Item 14-07

[The assembly approved Item 14-07. See pp. 14, 20.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

1. Approve Leanne Van Dyk as president of Columbia Theological Seminary and David Esterline as president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

2. Docket time in the plenary session for each president to make brief remarks.

Rationale

General Assembly approval of Leanne Van Dyk's and David Esterline's appointments as presidents of Columbia Theological Seminary and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, respectively, is required by "A Plan for the Governance and Funding of the Theological Institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" approved by the 198th General Assembly (1986) and by the seminaries' current bylaws.

Official news releases are included below:

DR. LEANNE VAN DYK NAMED TENTH PRESIDENT OF COLUMBIA SEMINARY 2015-04-14

The Board of Trustees for Columbia Theological Seminary voted unanimously today to appoint Dr. Leanne Van Dyk to be the school's tenth president. She is currently the Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Professor of Reformed Theology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI. Dr. Van Dyk's appointment is effective July 1, 2015.

After a nationwide search, Dr. Van Dyk succeeds Dr. Steve Hayner who began as president in July 2009, but had to step down after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer just one year ago. He died on January 31, 2015. Since that time, the seminary has been led by Dr. Deborah Flemister Mullen, the Executive Vice President and Dean of Faculty who served as Acting President from April till October, and by William E. Scheu who has served as Interim President since October.

"Dr. Van Dyk is deeply rooted in the Reformed tradition," stated Rev. Dr. Tom Walker, Chair of Columbia's Board of Trustees and pastor at the Palms Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville Beach, FL. "From that rootedness comes her commitment to cultural diversity and a proven track record for speaking theologically across cultural and religious boundaries. As evidenced by her significant connections within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and with other denominations as well, she is known for her ability to create close ties with students, faculty, staff, and members of the community."

"It was hard to imagine whom this community guided by the Holy Spirit would call to be our next president," said Deborah Flemister Mullen, Dean of Faculty and Executive Vice President for Columbia Theological Seminary. "Now we can rejoice! After years of watching Rev. Dr. Leanne Van Dyk from a distance and respecting her considerable gifts, I believe that our prayers have been answered. We can rely on Leanne to be an experienced administrator, visionary leader, prolific scholar, and passionate teacher of theology rooted in the Reformed tradition, to faithfully lead the seminary into the future embracing our diversity as a gift from God."

"Leanne Van Dyk is a thoughtful and gifted theological educator, who understands both how to do theological education and why it is crucial to communities of faith," said Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS). "In addition to her years of service at Western Seminary, Leanne Van Dyk has been an active contributor to ATS accreditation and currently serves on the Board of Commissioners. She is a perceptive observer of the theological education and deeply understands its complexities and possibilities."

"Columbia Theological Seminary sings a loud hallelujah to welcome Dr. Leanne Van Dyke as its new President!" proclaimed Billy Michael Honor, a member of the presidential search committee and pastor at New Life Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. "Without

a doubt, her administrative credentials, strong faith and commitment to educating Christian leaders for the Church and the world make her especially qualified to lead Columbia into its next chapter.”

“Leanne has long been a role model and mentor for me. Her essays have been read by our students for many years,” said Martha Moore-Keish, Associate Professor of Theology. “I had the pleasure of working with Leanne on *A More Profound Alleluia*, a volume which she edited and to which I contributed. She was a consummate editor, nurturing the writers with calm attention to detail as well as clear vision for the book as a whole. These gifts, which she has developed through her years of leadership at Western Seminary, will also make her a great president for Columbia Seminary—as role model, visionary, administrator, and friend.”

“Columbia is fortunate to have Leanne as its next president!” said Joseph Small, former Director of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Theology and Worship. “She has proven administrative experience, but I always think of her as a fine theologian who has always done her scholarly work in the service of the church. The combination of theological faithfulness, love of the church, and administrative excellence makes her a great fit for Columbia, which has a reputation for quality academic service, done for the church.”

Dr. Leanne Van Dyk holds degrees from Calvin College (B.A.), Western Michigan University (M.A.), Calvin Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Princeton Theological Seminary where she earned her Ph.D. in Systematic Theology, magna cum laude. Before teaching at Western Theological Seminary, she previously taught at San Francisco Theological Seminary and Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.

Dr. Van Dyk’s other professional experience includes serving as a member of the Board of Commissioners of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS); as a member of the advisory committee for a \$6 million Lilly Grant on new models in theological education; as a member of the Wabash Center’s Consultation on Theological Education; and on various projects with the Office of Theology and Worship for the Presbyterian Church (USA). One of her efforts remembered by many in the PC(USA) was as a member of the Catechism Committee which completed its work in 1998. She also participated in the Re-Forming Ministry project with the Office of Theology and Worship.

She has served on the editorial boards of *Perspectives*, *the Journal of Reformed Thought*, and the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. Dr. Van Dyk has published several books, including *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony* for which she was also editor (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005); *Believing in Jesus Christ*, part of the “Foundations” series sponsored by the Office of Theology and Worship of the PC(USA) (Geneva Press, 2002); and *The Desire of Divine Love: The Atonement Theology of John McLeod Campbell* (Peter Lang Publishers, 1995).

DR. DAVID V. ESTERLINE

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary’s Board of Directors has named the Rev. Dr. David V. Esterline as president and professor of cross-cultural theological education. Esterline currently serves as the director of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Education at McCormick Theological Seminary and was the dean of faculty and vice president for academic affairs at McCormick from 1999-2009.

“The search attracted a wonderful array of candidates. We are excited to have a person with David’s breadth of experience in global seminary education, ecumenical initiatives, and pastoral care as our next president,” said Board member Paul Dimmick, who chaired the Presidential Search Committee. Board Chair Sandy Lamb adds: “Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, reflecting the challenges in the mainline churches, is in the process of reexamining how it prepares women and men in a multicultural church and society consistent with our mission. We are confident that Dr. Esterline brings experience, wisdom, integrity, and energy to lead Pittsburgh Seminary in these emerging strategies.”

Esterline is a graduate of the University of California, Santa Cruz (A.B., religious studies), Oxford University, Trinity College (M.A., theology), and Graduate Theological Union (Ph.D., religion and education). He was ordained by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in 1987 and is currently a teaching elder in Blackhawk Presbytery (Illinois) of The Presbyterian Church (USA).

Joining the faculty of McCormick in 1997, he previously served as the director of the Doctoral Program and Continuing Education before becoming associate professor of cross-cultural education and ministry and later the James G. K. McClure Professor of Theological Education.

Esterline started his ministry as a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission co-worker in Cameroon and the Fiji Islands. In that capacity he has served as a lecturer at Theological College, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, and as academic dean, lecturer, and chair of the Biblical Studies department at Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji Islands.

He researches, writes, and lectures internationally about Christian theological education worldwide. Esterline is co-chair of the recently formed Global Forum of Theological Educators, an initiative designed to provide a common table for mutual sharing among Evangelical, Pentecostal, Historical Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Independent educators. Additionally, Esterline has worked extensively with the Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting body for more than 270 institutions in the United States and Canada that is headquartered in Pittsburgh. He was a member of the Board of Commission on Accrediting (chair, 2010-2012), chaired numerous comprehensive evaluations, and presented various workshops on topics including diversity. He has also served with the World Council of Churches focusing on ecumenical theological education.

His church service has primarily been in Illinois as well as California and Fiji. He currently serves as parish associate at Park Presbyterian Church in Streator, Ill. In the past, he served on a number of denominational committees.

Esterline will succeed the Rev. Dr. William J. Carl III, who is retiring from the Seminary in June after nearly 10 years of service. During his tenure, Carl led the Seminary into a successful capital campaign and reaccreditation, positioning PTS to thrive in a volatile economic environment.

Dr. Esterline is married to the Rev. Jane Esterline, pastor of Park Presbyterian Church in Streator, Ill. They served together as mission co-workers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and have three children.

Item 14-08

[The assembly approved Item 14-08. See pp. 14, 20.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) grant permission to the following theological institutions to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in 2016–2017: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, San Francisco Theological Seminary, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, and Auburn Theological Seminary.

Rationale

Beginning in 1989, the General Assembly became the governing body that grants permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Presbyterian theological institutions. Each seminary is entrusted with identifying a governing group on campus to discern appropriate occasions and leaders to celebrate on each campus. The 221st General Assembly (2014) granted permission for celebrations in 2014–2015.

Item 14-09

[The assembly approved Item 14-09 with amendment. See pp. 15, 20.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve the revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico below.

A COVENANT BETWEEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) AND EL SEMINARIO EVANGÉLICO DE PUERTO RICO

2010–2016

I. Purpose

The purpose of this covenant is to define the nature and scope of the relationship mutually agreed to by El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico) and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

II. History of the Relationship

In 1919, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America closed Seminario Teológico Portoricense in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and joined with four other Protestant mission boards to found the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. This action was taken under the guidance of the Board of National Missions. In 1918, the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church of the United States proposed this action as follows:

The Board is in receipt of a communication from Rev. J. A. McAllister, an accredited missionary in Porto [sic] Rico under our Board of Home Missions, in which it is stated that the evangelical denominations at work in Porto [sic] Rico have joined together in an effort to organize a union Theological Seminary for the purposes of training a native ministry.

The Board of National Missions and its successor (The Program Agency) continued to appoint trustees and provide funding for the school. File documents indicate that the Board/Agency annual grant was from \$20,000 to \$25,000 until the early seventies. Restructuring in the UPCUSA in the early seventies resulted in inadvertent dropping of the budget line for the school, although funds were subsequently found, and annual funding continued at approximately \$30,000 per year.

By 1977, discussion about the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico joining the Council of Theological Seminaries arose. The council adopted as policy the task “to keep under review the issues and options related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico” (quoted by John H. Galbreath in correspondence to the Reverend Jaime O. Quinones, November 12, 1984).

In 1982, the seminary received accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools. This was renewed for ten years in 1987, in 1997, and again in 2008. In the same manner, the seminary retains its State license by the Council of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as well as its accreditation by the Middle States Council of Higher Education. The 1997 visiting team of the ATS wrote:

14 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUES & INSTITUTIONS

Few theological seminaries have better reasons for their existence than does the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. The only accredited theological school on the island, SEPR stands within the Reformed tradition and serves the growing ecumenical constituency of six sponsoring Protestant denominations while training leaders for several other Protestant and Catholic groups as well. Moreover, ESCR increasingly provides training for Hispanic churches in the Middle Atlantic States and other locations where large numbers of Puerto Ricans live.¹

As reunion was implemented at the national level in the Presbyterian Church, responsibility for the seminary was lodged with the office of Global Education and Leadership Development of the Committee on Higher Education. Funding continued at the level of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year. The “Articles of Agreement” governing reunion made no mention of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. The General Assembly appointed a special Committee on Theological Institutions (CTI) to recommend new reporting and funding systems for the ten Presbyterian seminaries and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Their report to the 1986 General Assembly dealt directly with the funding and reporting issues, but went on to note that the relationship of the church to the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico remained unfinished business, and that a special study committee should explore the matter, along with other issues.

The Committee on Theological Education agreed that this question needed examination. In 1988, the General Assembly accepted the recommendation of the Committee on Theological Education and appointed the Special Committee to Study Theological Institutions. The Committee on Theological Education’s assignment to the special committee included the following question:

What should be the status of institutions such as the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and Auburn Seminary that have Presbyterian Church ties?²

After considerable study the special committee has recommended that the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico relate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor). The special committee judged that existing categories of membership on the Committee on Theological Education do not adequately serve to respect the historic and continuous relationship between the PC(USA) and the singular ecumenical venture that is the seminary.

The Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico has strong historical ties with the PC(USA) and serves both Presbyterian students and Presbyterian congregations as it relates to the larger denominational body in representational character and collaborative projects. The seminary acknowledges its roots in the Reformed tradition and the place of the PC(USA) in its institutional identity. For almost a century, the Seminario Evangélico has been a constitutive part of the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in its theological, missionary, and ecumenical ventures.

The special committee recommended the adoption of a special agreement between the General Assembly and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (ESPR). The Committee on Theological Education concurred with that judgment. This covenant constitutes that most recent agreement as developed by the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and the Committee on Theological Education for consideration by the General Assembly, and by the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

Following up on the recommendation of the special committee to review the scope of the relationship and considering the time for a covenant renewal, the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) appointed a visit team to discuss the covenant and explore new levels of partnership with the seminary. The visiting team was convened by the Reverend Dr. Kenneth Kovacs and included other COTE members; the Reverend Dr. Iain Torrance, and Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri. COTE staff, the Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty and Robert Fohr, also participated. The narrative that follows summarizes the visiting team recommendations for the renewal of the PC(USA)-ESPR covenant agreement.

III. Members of the Covenant

The members of this covenant, El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico), operating under its governing board, the board of directors, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) operating as a governing body, are independent, self-governing bodies neither being controlled by the other. Together, they share a common vision to serve the church of Jesus Christ and, in an act of solidarity, will partner together to fulfill their mission.

IV. Expectations Under the Covenant

A. El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (hereinafter referred to as “the Seminary”) affirms its commitment in the following areas:

1. Academic Matters

The Seminary shall maintain its accreditation from an internationally recognized accrediting agency such as the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the Middle States Association, the Latin American Association of Theological Education (ALIET), or the Commission of Theological Education in Latin America (CETELA), for the duration of this covenant.

The Seminary will meet the needs of its Presbyterian students and the Presbyterian leadership seeking continuing formation and development. To this end, courses in Hebrew and Greek will continue to be provided minimally on alternate years, and courses will be offered in Reformed history, Reformed theology, and Presbyterian polity, as mandated by the action of the Seminary's Board of Directors. The seminary will also continue to respond to the request for leadership formation from Presbyterian middle governing bodies both in the island and those presbyteries in the U.S. with sizable Hispanic/Latino populations.

The Seminary will continue to be responsive to the academic needs of its Presbyterian students as these needs are expressed by the Synod of Puerto Rico and the presbyteries comprising that synod.

The Seminary will administer the Presbyterian Ordination examinations (including the designation of a proctor), and will provide reviews and learning experiences to help students achieve maximum results.

The Seminary will work closely with the Synod of Puerto Rico and the three presbyteries on the island to provide the necessary resources and educational experiences for their candidates for ministry and their pastoral and lay leadership. The Seminary will secure a suitable adjunct faculty member to teach the course entitled, "EMI-9, Denominational Principles," or its successor. The Seminary will continue to grant the synod the authority to nominate the adjunct faculty member, and shall require that the person nominated meets the Seminary's qualifications as an adjunct faculty member. If the Seminary declines to hire the synod's nominee, the synod will submit another nominee. The Seminary shall hire only a person nominated by the synod.

As stipulated by the Board of Directors of the Seminary in their action of September 26, 1992, the professor named to the Presbyterian-Reformed chair will be a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Searches for other faculty appointments will consider Presbyterians as well as other qualified persons. Although Presbyterians will be considered, the Seminary is not obligated to appoint Presbyterians to a faculty post except to the Presbyterian-Reformed chair.

2. Cooperation

The Seminary will participate in cooperative ventures undertaken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological institutions. As is the case with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) schools, cooperation with the other institutions is voluntary, depending on how a proposal or program is related to the institution's mission and the availability of resources.

The Seminary shall submit annually the same or equivalent reports to the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor), as are required of all Presbyterian theological institutions. Such reports may include, but are not be limited to:

- a. finances;
- b. enrollment and graduates;
- c. changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws;
- d. appointments to the faculty;
- e. appointments to the board of directors;
- f. a brief narrative report of activities of the school to be shared with the General Assembly;
- g. appointment of a new president.

3. Collaboration

The Seminary will serve as a resource for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) whenever such service can be appropriately and feasibly provided from the Seminary's resources, programs, and personnel. The Seminary will participate in collaborative ventures undertaken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Seminary welcomes the partnership of other Presbyterian seminaries in projects where the institutional resources and expertise of its faculty can be supportive of current or new theological education ventures. The growing importance of Hispanic ministries in the United States and in other countries makes ESPR a very significant institution for the denomination in carrying out its mission.

4. Board of Directors of the Seminary

The seminary will invite and expect the representation of Presbyterian leadership in its board of directors as stated in its bylaws. The Seminary shall have two directors nominated by the Synod of Puerto Rico and one director nominated by the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as provided in the Seminary's bylaws upon the request of the seminary.³ The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nominees from the Synod of Puerto

Rico and from COTE may be submitted to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for review and approval. The Seminary will maintain the same number of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) directors (3) on the board of the Seminary as presently is mandated by the Seminary's bylaws.

Nomination by the Synod of Puerto Rico or by COTE does not constitute election to the Board of Directors of the Seminary. The power to elect directors rests exclusively with the board of the Seminary. If the board of directors chooses to not elect one of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nominees, it will ask for another nominee from the appropriate governing body.

5. Development Activity

The Seminary agrees that, as a beneficiary of the Theological Education Fund, it will adopt the fund-raising policies agreed to by COTE as outlined in the Manual of Operations of COTE.

As of February 1997, the policy provides that, normally, the Seminary may solicit PC(USA) congregations for current operating funds for support of the annual budget if those congregations have an alumnus/a on the staff, a student in the institution, a trustee or former trustee as pastor, a geographic relationship, or are congregations which have given to the Seminary before. In soliciting Presbyterian congregations for operating budgets all communications will make first and foremost an appeal for support of the Theological Education Fund, i.e. the 1 % Plan.

It is expected that all fund-raising activity among Presbyterians and Presbyterian churches in Puerto Rico will take place in close, cordial, and cooperative relationship with the Synod of Puerto Rico. The Seminary will continue to raise funds toward the full endowment of the Presbyterian-Reformed chair.

B. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirms its commitment in the following areas:

1. The Committee on Theological Education (or Its Successor)

This covenant relationship with the Seminary shall give to that institution voice and vote, with full participation on the Committee on Theological Education or its successor. Every effort must be made by the Seminary to ensure that the institutional representative to COTE is Presbyterian. Travel and lodging expenses associated with attendance of the Seminary's representative to meetings of the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor) shall be reimbursed by the PC(USA) in accordance with its reimbursement policies.

The Committee on Theological Education will provide assistance as appropriate to the Seminary and the Synod of Puerto Rico for interpreting the Theological Education Fund to congregations in the synod, as well as the Seminary's faculty and staff.

The Committee on Theological Education will provide the Seminary ongoing guidance with respect to any fund-raising efforts the Seminary undertakes in the United States or elsewhere where there is expertise.

2. Financial Support

The Committee on Theological Education (or its successor) shall include the Seminary in the annual allocation of the funds it administers, such funds including the Theological Education Fund. The Seminary shall be allocated funds according to the same formula as the other Presbyterian theological institutions, with the exception that the Seminary shall receive one-fifth of one share of that portion of the Theological Education Fund and other moneys that are divided in shares among the institutions without reference to numbers of graduates.

As of 1997, 46.5 percent of the administered funds are distributed on the basis of the number of graduates in all degree programs with 2.5 percent left to the discretion of the Committee on Theological Education. The Seminary will receive funds distributed on the number of graduates on the same basis and in the same manner as the other theological institutions.

The Seminary may seek moneys from the discretionary fund portion of the Theological Education Fund and other administered funds on the same basis and in the same manner as the other theological institutions.

Income from funds that are held in trust by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation and that are restricted by their original donor specifically to a particular Seminary shall not be included in the computed allocation of the Theological Education Fund and other funds allocated by the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor).

3. Disclosure

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agrees to disclose and describe this new arrangement to the other supporting denominations of the Seminary.

V. Indemnity

The Seminary agrees to hold the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) harmless for any acts, omissions, or failures to fulfill the terms of this covenant. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agrees to hold the Seminary harmless for any acts, omissions, or failures to fulfill the terms of this covenant.

VI. Amendments

Changes in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or in the circumstance of the Seminary may affect portions of this covenant. Either party to this covenant—the Seminary and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as represented by the Committee on Theological Education (or its successor)—may request revision of parts or this entire covenant during the term of this agreement. Amendments to this covenant may be executed by mutual agreement of the Board of Directors of the Seminary and the General Assembly.

VII. Term

The term of this covenant shall commence when formally approved and signed by the designated parties and shall expire in June/July [~~2016 (222nd General Assembly [2016])~~] **[2026 (227th General Assembly (2026))]**.

The covenant may be renewed by mutual consent.

VIII. Formal Approval

This covenant shall be effective upon formal approval by the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and when signed by the Moderator and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and by the Seminary’s president and the chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.

Financial support under this covenant shall continue for the duration of the covenant.

This covenant recognizes that the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico may develop other covenant relationship with other denominations who support the Seminary.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, acting by and through the signatories below, do so covenant and agree:

<p>REPRESENTING EL SEMINARIO EVANGÉLICO DE PUERTO RICO</p> <p>Doris Garcia-Rivera, President 2016</p> <p>Carlos Gomez-Menendez Chair, Board of Directors 2016</p>	<p>REPRESENTING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)</p> <p>[Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston] [Co-]Moderator[s] June 2016</p> <p>[Gradye Parsons] [The Reverend J. Herbert Nelson II] Stated Clerk June 2016</p>
---	--

Endnotes

1. As quoted by Luis Fidel Mercado in correspondence to Robert T. Douglass, October 9, 1987.
2. *Minutes*, 1988, Part I, p. 415, paragraph 33.026.
3. The bylaws of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico stipulate in Article I.A.1. on the composition of the board of directors the following: “One person representing each of the founding and cooperating mission boards in the United States of America.” This agreement proposes that the Presbyterian representative be nominated by the Committee on Theological Education or its successor.

Rationale

Most of the proposed covenant remains the same as the covenant approved in 2003 by the General Assembly and reaffirmed by the General Assembly Mission Council in 2009 and the second time the General Assembly is considering a renewal of a covenant agreement with El Seminario Evangélico De Puerto Rico (ESPR). There are several changes to the covenant worth highlighting. While the covenant is between ESPR and the PC(USA) (not with COTE), some of the changes in the proposed covenant have a direct bearing upon ESPR’s relationship to COTE. Those changes have been approved by COTE as it forwards this revised covenant to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that:

1. Broadens accreditation possibilities for ESPR, beyond the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). This could include accreditation through the Latin American Association of Theological Education (ALIET) or the Commission of Theo-

logical Education in Latin America (CETELA). This recognizes the fact that ESPR operates in a Hispanic world and permits access to broader accreditation authorities. The task force believes this would be an anti-colonial move and asset to the PC(USA) as a whole. [Proposed Covenant IV.A.1.]

2. Invited reconsideration of ESPR's membership status in COTE. The ESPR is really something other than a "Corresponding Member" of COTE. The nature of its mission and its relationship to the PC(USA) requires a kind of hybrid membership, a different form of membership that will allow it to participate more fully in COTE. The ESPR has been given both voice and vote on COTE. Giving vote will enable an ESPR institutional representative to participate in the leadership of COTE (executive committee membership, chair, vice-chair, etc). [Proposed Covenant IV.B.1.]

3. Highlights COTE's responsibility for nominating a PC(USA) representative to the ESPR Board of Directors. We have not fulfilled our promise in this effort. As a result, COTE will establish a process of nomination and that this be done in collaboration with ESPR. In conjunction with ESPR, COTE ascertain the terms of service for the board member, the characteristics and skills set needed that reflects the "season" in the life of the school. The nominee need not be a COTE member. [Proposed Covenant IV.A.4.]

Also worth noting, COTE will discuss the theological rationale for the allocation formula as it relates to ESPR and consider reevaluating the 1/5 portion of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) that ESPR receives [Proposed Covenant IV.B.2.]. To facilitate this process, ESPR will be asked to share the funding commitments of the other four denominations that relate to the ESPR.

COTE elected a task force to review the former covenants with the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico (ESPR): Kenneth Kovacs (convener), Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, and Iain Torrance. The task force worked closely with leaders at ESPR: Sergio Ojeda Cárcamo, president; José Irizarry, decano académico & acting president; Myrna Pérez, seminary administrator; and was staffed by the Office of Theological Education: Lee Hinson-Hasty and Robert Fohr.

The Committee on Theological Education's ESPR-PC(USA) Covenant Renewal Task Force met with leaders of ESPR in San Juan, Puerto Rico, 10th–12th September 2009. Our time together was the culmination of several months planning for the renewal of the covenant relationship between ESPR and the PC(USA), which expired in December 2008 and was renewed by the General Assembly Mission Council through December 2009.

Early in the process we determined that our first priority was to make this a collaborative experience, as well as "An Act of Solidarity." We reviewed and discussed the covenant as it currently stands. From our conversations, guiding questions emerged that we then shared with ESPR. We invited representatives from ESPR to share their expectations for our visit, to state their priorities; we asked them to reflect upon our guiding questions, and to then raise questions regarding the covenant from their perspective. Our time together was guided by these four goals. We would worship together, listen to each other, affirm each other, and look for ways to enable each other.

We are grateful for the warm welcome and generous hospitality we received from ESPR. They were particularly happy to greet us, the first delegation from COTE to visit ESPR, and grateful for the conversation. We prayed together; worshipped with the seminary community; shared meals; learned a lot about Spanish colonial history, as well as the political, cultural, and ecclesial history of Puerto Rico; engaged in lively conversation (both formally and informally); went on a campus tour; met with synod representatives; met with Presbyterian pastors and graduates of ESPR; and we reviewed a long-rang vision presentation that included plans for future development and expansion.

From the start, there was a high level of trust and transparency that allowed for honest and open discussions. We reviewed the current covenant and together identified changes that should be made. We agreed that the language needed to be updated (removing terms such as "native ministry"), language that better reflects contemporary realities; the covenant needed a new history of the covenant relationship written by ESPR.

We revised the section now entitled "Expectations" (formerly termed, "Responsibilities") and added a new section called, "Collaboration." Our aim was to craft a document that removed any language that implied "compliance" or "obedience," in order to mutually affirm a covenant that reflected a spirit of partnership, collaboration, and solidarity. Our hope was to present a covenant that breathes new life into the relationship, that envisions a way forward, something that speaks to a covenant agreement in a post-colonial situation.

Item 14-10

[The assembly approved Item 14-10. See pp. 15, 20.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) docket up to four minutes in a plenary session, adjacent to the Awards for Excellence in Theological Education, for a brief meditation in

memory of Steven Hayner, late president of Columbia Theological Seminary, with brief remarks to be made by Craig Barnes, president of Princeton Theological Seminary.

Rationale

COTE's charges to support theological education and to support seminaries overlap, and are charges with denominational, administrative, and Christian spiritual import. Steve Hayner had a huge impact on ministerial formation and mentoring and theological education.

Item 14-11

[The assembly approved Item 14-11. See pp. 15, 20.]

The Committee on Theological Education recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

1. Recognize the Reverend Craig Dykstra, Ph.D., Research Professor of Practical Theology and Senior Fellow of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School, and the Reverend Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Ph.D., William Albright Eisenberger Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis, Emerita, for outstanding lifetime contributions to theological education in and for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and present them with the Award for Excellence in Theological Education.

2. Schedule docket time in plenary session to celebrate with each awardee.

Rationale

The Award for Excellence in Theological Education was established by the Committee on Theological Education in 1996 to "honor a person biennially who has made an outstanding lifetime contribution to theological education in and for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." The award is normally presented during a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. COTE selected two nominees in October 2015 for this biennium: The Reverend Craig Dykstra, Ph.D., and the Reverend Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Ph.D.

Craig Dykstra

From his teaching and research while on the faculties of two of our Presbyterian seminaries (Louisville and Princeton) to his extraordinary leadership as senior vice president of the religion division of the Lilly Endowment, Dr. Dykstra has shaped the very terms of the conversation about how best to prepare men and women for ministry and leadership for the church. He continues this work after retirement from the Lilly Endowment by conducting research into leadership from his teaching position as research professor of practical theology and senior fellow at leadership education at Duke Divinity School.

Dr. Dykstra defined for a generation our understanding of "practices of faith" and reminded us all of the proper ends of our life together as Christians. He has given us phrases, like "the pastoral imagination" and "the ecclesial imagination," to make sense of the vital, yet difficult to describe, qualities that lie at the heart of the pastoral arts and the fundamental communal aspects of our faith. And he has inspired scores of young ministers and professors to invest their lives in the church.

Because of his influence, educational and formational programs were developed in seminaries small and large from coast to coast. Today, sabbatical and study leave programs we consider essential for pastoral renewal exist because he championed them. And programs that promote the vocation of ministry among youth and young adults, programs that seek to sustain pastoral excellence, and programs that nurture church leadership can be found in virtually every corner of this country because of Craig's visionary efforts.

Dr. Dykstra currently serves as research professor of practical theology and senior fellow of leadership education at Duke Divinity School. He is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), having received his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary, specializing in moral theology and Christian education. In addition to teaching at Princeton, he has served as editor of *Theology Today*, associate professor of Christian education at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and assistant minister of Westminster Church in Detroit, Michigan. After retiring from service beginning in 1989 as senior vice president for religion at the Lilly Endowment, Dr. Dykstra now works at Duke Divinity School.

Katharine Sakenfeld

Dr. Sakenfeld has an almost iconic status on the Presbyterian Theological Seminary campus as a scholar, minister of the Word and Sacrament, caregiving pastor to generations of students, beloved administrator, and extraordinary classroom teacher. She has provided distinguished lifetime service in Presbyterian and Reformed theological education.

Professor Sakenfeld joined the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) in 1970 as an instructor in Old Testament, rising through every rank of the faculty to become a full professor in 1987. During the course of her academic career at

Princeton she also served four years as adjunct faculty for the D.Min. program of San Francisco Theological Seminary, and as guest professor of Union Theological Seminary, Dasmannas, Philippines, in the fall of 1996. Sakenfeld is the author of five books, the co-editor of one, the co-editor of the *Oxford Study Bible*, and the general editor of the *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. She has authored more than forty articles and nearly thirty book reviews. Several thousand students have sat under her teaching for more than four decades at Princeton in introductory courses, doctoral seminars, Hebrew exegesis courses in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and in courses on the Bible and women.

Dr. Sakenfeld has also been active in PC(USA) theological education leadership for several decades. For a quarter of a century, 1984–2009, Professor Sakenfeld served as director of Ph.D. studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. Her duties included recruitment of students, guiding admissions, program oversight, placement, program review and development, service with the faculty Ph.D. Studies Committee, and annual catalogue preparation. At the end of her tenure, some 364 students had successfully passed through the PTS Ph.D. program.

Her forays into theological education have included lay education in New Brunswick Presbytery, serving as theologian-in-residence at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, lecturing in congregations such as Independent Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and leading various women's retreats.

Between doing a B.D. and Ph.D at Harvard Divinity School, Professor Sakenfeld completed an MA at the University of Rhode Island. Her research focused primarily on biblical narratives concerning the pre-monarchical period and on feminist biblical hermeneutics. In addition to the works mentioned above, she has published commentaries Numbers (1995) and Ruth (Interpretation, 1999), as well as many articles on feminist interpretation with a special focus on voices from diverse cultural contexts. In 2007, Sakenfeld was president of the Society of Biblical Literature. A Presbyterian clergywoman, Sakenfeld has served as moderator of her presbytery and as a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches since 1999.

Item 14-12

[The assembly approved Item 14-12 with comment. See pp. 14, 20–21.]

[Comment: The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the special committee be in consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Department of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism, and its covenant partners.]

Recommendation to Create a Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) create a Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The COGA recommends that the work of this committee include

- a. assessing the historic roles Christian education and certified Christian educators have played in the formation of faithful followers of Jesus Christ in the Presbyterian church and determine how our common history informs the future of educational ministry in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
- b. examining the current state of Christian education not only in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but also ecumenically, while exploring means by which to lift up and strengthen the educational ministries of congregations and councils of the church;
- c. investigating how persons engaged in educational ministry, paid and volunteer, can offer themselves as resources to the denomination;
- d. studying current trends in employment of Christian educators within the congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including consulting with the Board of Pensions about educator participation in benefit programs through the Board of Pensions, to determine whether there needs to be any changes in the present certification process, so as to make the certification process more accessible to persons, paid and volunteer, serving in educational ministry in congregations and councils of the church;
- e. partnering with racial ethnic caucuses and gatherings of small membership congregations to explore how resources and certification in the PC(USA) can be reflective of the diversity in the church; and
- f. exploring means of creating awareness and increasing value in the field of Christian education while helping the entire church think critically and faithfully about the necessity for Christian education in our ever-evolving reality.

[Per Capita: \$10,234 (2017); 10,234 (2018)]

Item 14-13

[The assembly approved Item 14-13 with amendment. See pp. 16, 21.]

On Approving an “Affirmation of Creation—From the Presbytery of Boston.

The Presbytery of Boston overtures the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to

1. approve the following “Affirmation of Creation,” and
2. distribute it electronically to all councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (synods, presbyteries, sessions) for their study, reflection, and, where possible, their approval.

Affirmation of Creation

From early in its life the Christian church has affirmed metaphorically that God is the author of two books of revelation: the Book of Scripture (the Old and New Testaments) and the Book of Nature. Because God is the author of both and God neither deceives nor is incoherent, these books cannot in principle be in conflict even though they are expressed through fallible creatures.

However, over the centuries some Christians have sought to deny observations of Nature by reference to Scripture. In the 5th century CE Augustine warned that claims about Nature, contrary to human reason and experience but supposedly derived from Scripture, should be avoided, lest they make Christians seem ignorant and the objects of scornful laughter. Yet we recognize that God has called forth in *Homo sapiens* an exploratory curiosity and a critical intellect. A fruit of these gifts is our capacity for scientific inquiry.

The results of this inquiry are provisional because they are open to new discoveries and revision. Yet these results are also highly reliable because the Creation itself, through observation and experimentation, attests to them. Scientific inquiry to date has provided descriptions and ever more profound understandings of the scope of God’s creation in space and time, of the myriad of creatures that inhabit and have inhabited this Earth, and of the means by which the Creation itself has shared in the work of creation.

In light of these discoveries, today with confidence we can affirm:

- That God has been calling this universe into being for at least 13.8 billion years and continues calling upon the Creation to bring forth new creatures;
- That God’s creative call has resulted in virtually countless stars and planetary systems, and new stars and planetary systems are continuing to be created;
- That, in response to God’s creative call, the Earth took form at least 4.6 billion years ago;
- That, in response to God’s call, living creatures emerged on the Earth at least 3.6 billion years ago;
- That God has connected all life on Earth in a network of kinship by virtue of ~~[descent with modification]~~ [biological evolution] from common ancestors;
- That, in response to God’s call, we *Homo sapiens* [(modern humans)] emerged [in our wide diversity and different cultures,] as a species over more than 6 million years of hominin development;
- That, since our line of descent split from the line that resulted in our contemporaries, the chimpanzees and bonobos, we *Homo sapiens* were preceded by at least eighteen already identified hominin species, all of which are now extinct;*
- That, in the providence of God, we *Homo sapiens* have come to exercise extraordinary power over other creatures and their habitats, the Earth’s geological structures, and the meteorological systems of the Earth;
- That, by virtue of the powers of intellect and creativity called forth in us by God, we bear exceptional responsibility for the future of the Earth and all its constitutive creatures.

This affirmation provides a framework in which we are called to worship God, are called to proclaim the Gospel of Grace, and are called to live as faithful expressions of God’s love for the whole Creation.

*The eighteen identified species are: *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, *Orrorin tugenensis*, *Ardipithecus kadabba*, *Ardipithecus ramidus*, *Australopithecus anamensis*, *Australopithecus afarensis*, *Australopithecus garhi*, *Australopithecus sediba*, *Australopithecus africanus*, *Paranthropus aethiopicus*, *Paranthropus boisei*, *Paranthropus robustus*, *Homo habilis*, *Homo rudolfensis*, *Homo erectus*, *Homo heidelbergensis*, *Homo neanderthalensis*, *Homo floresiensis*. See <http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-evolution-timeline-interactive>.

Rationale

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims [God’s] handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;
 their voice is not heard;
 yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
 and their words to the end of the world. (Ps. 19:1–4)

With these words the Psalmist declares that the Creation gives witness to its Creator. This theological sense of nature spurred Christians to study nature as a way of honoring God.

At the beginning of the western scientific revolution in the 16th century Nicolas Copernicus captured this sense when he wrote,

To know the mighty works of God, comprehend His wisdom and majesty and power, to appreciate in degree the wonderful working of His laws, surely all this must be a pleasing and acceptable mode of worship to the Most High to whom ignorance can not be more grateful than knowledge.¹

In the 20th century Albert Einstein expressed the mutuality between inquiries about nature and religious life when he wrote: “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”²

This is not to say that religion is obligated to tie its theological cart irrevocably to any particular scientific horse. As Presbyterian teaching elder, ethicist, and philosopher Holmes Rolston III notes, “The religion that is married to science today will be a widow tomorrow.”³ Yet he goes on to add this caution, “But the religion that is divorced from science today will leave no offspring tomorrow.”⁴

Evidence for this latter effect can be found in the results of the 2011 Barna Group Study that reported that among the reasons given by teens and young adults for their disassociation from churches were that “churches are out of step with the scientific world we live in” (29 percent) and “Christianity is anti-science” (25 percent).⁵

Yet the idea is not new that a Christian faith, uninformed by a credible understanding of nature, is compromised in its ability to faithfully proclaim the Gospel. Augustine of Hippo perhaps most eloquently expressed this concern in the 5th century when he wrote,

Often a non-Christian knows something about the earth, the heavens, and the other parts of the world, about the motions and orbits of the stars and even their sizes and distances, ... and this knowledge he holds with certainty from reason and experience. It is thus offensive and disgraceful for an unbeliever to hear a Christian talk nonsense about such things, claiming that what he is saying is based in Scripture. We should do all that we can to avoid such an embarrassing situation, [which people] see [as] ignorance in the Christian and laugh to scorn....⁶

All Christians affirm that God is Creator. Many, perhaps most Presbyterians, value science as a means to gain appreciation of God’s creation. Scientific inquiry also makes possible insights into nature that enable more effective service to God through service to neighbor. Yet these same scientific discoveries also challenge traditional ways of thinking about God, God’s creation, and God’s creative activity. In 1947 the Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin described this challenge.

When we speak of a ‘theology of modern science,’ it obviously does not mean that by itself science can determine an image of God and a religion. But what it does mean, if I am not mistaken, is that, given a certain development of science, certain representations of God and certain forms of worship are ruled out, as *not being homogeneous* with the dimensions of the universe known to our experience. [Emphasis in the original.]⁷

He went on to expand on the importance of homogeneity for the relationship of science and the Christian faith.

This notion of homogeneity is without doubt of central importance in intellectual, moral and mystical life. Even though the various stages of our interior life cannot be expressed strictly in terms of one another, on the other hand they must agree in scale, in nature and tonality. Otherwise it would be impossible to develop a true spiritual unity in ourselves – and that is perhaps the most legitimate, the most imperative and most definitive of the demands made by man of today and man of tomorrow.⁸

Yet the Christian churches, and specifically Presbyterians, virtually never publicly acknowledge the significance of even the most basic discoveries that humanity has made through science about the history, structure, and processes of creation for Christian faith and life, and often speak theologically as though they lived in a pre-Copernican cosmos.

Over the past 500 years humankind has gained more depth and breadth of understanding of creation than in all the preceding millennia of human history. Even within those five centuries there have been several revolutions in our understanding of creation. Though the findings of the sciences do not determine the Gospel message, as Augustine noted they do influence how that message can be credibly declared and persuasively received. The first task of an effective contemporary evangelism must begin with an assent to the Creation that God has indeed been calling and is calling into existence. It is for this purpose that the affirmation above has been developed.

Endnotes

1. Louis E. Van Norman, *Poland: The Knight Among Nations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908) 290.
2. Albert Einstein, “Religion and Science” *New York Times Magazine* (9 Nov. 1930).
3. Holmes Rolston III, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987) vi (Preface).

4. Rolston, ix (Preface).
5. Barna Group, “Six Reasons Young Christians Leave Church.” Web. 28 Sep. 2011.
6. Augustine of Hippo. *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim (The Literal Meaning of Genesis)*, I, xix, 39.
7. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Science and Christ* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 221.
8. *Science and Christ*, 221.

Concurrence to Item 14-13 from the Presbyteries of Cascades, Denver, Milwaukee, and Wabash.

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-13

Advice and Counsel on Item 14-13—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

Item 14-13 from the Presbytery of Boston requests that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve, and distribute for study to all councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) an “Affirmation of Creation,” which outlines current findings of cosmic and biological evolution as the framework within which we are to understand God’s work, respect God’s creation, and worship God.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 14-13 should be answered by Item 14-02 “Regarding Endorsing the Clergy Letter Project” and by earlier affirmations such as that at the 214th General Assembly (2002) “that there is no contradiction between an evolutionary theory of human origins and the doctrine of God as Creator” (*Minutes*, 2002, Part I, p. 495).

Item 14-13 presents key items of scientific knowledge of cosmic and biological evolution, and stresses that they are fully compatible with Christian theology, worship, and care for the earth. While supporting the general intent of this item, ACSWP is concerned that the level of technical detail which Item 14-13 presents could fall into the trap that its own rationale mentions, that (per Holmes Rolston III) “religion that is married to science today will be a widow tomorrow.” More general statements of compatibility between evolutionary theory and Christian doctrine already exist from earlier General Assemblies, and would be reinforced if this General Assembly decides to approve Item 14-02 and thus sign on to the Clergy Letter Project that affirms “that the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist.”

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-13

Comment on Item 14-13—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Item 14-13 asks for the assembly to approve an “Affirmation of Creation” that calls the church to a “credible understanding of nature” without which its ability to “faithfully proclaim the gospel” is compromised.

In 1969, the Presbyterian Church in the United States affirmed “Evolution and the Bible,” the statement on evolution that continues to guide the PC(USA) to this day, “Neither Scripture, our Confession of Faith, nor our Catechisms, teach the Creation of man [sic] by the direct and immediate acts of God so as to exclude the possibility of evolution as a scientific theory” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1969, Part I, p. 59). Approval of “An Affirmation of Creation” would change the assembly’s stance on evolution from one of openness and non-contradiction of Christian faith and evolution without favoring any particular account to an affirmation of the current scientific consensus.

Further information on two elements of this overture may be of help: first, the record of affirmation of scientific insights extending back to the PC(USA)’s predecessor denominations; second, an affirmation from our *Book of Confessions* regarding revelation in nature and in Scripture.

1. *Record of Affirmation of Scientific Insights*

The Presbyterian church has a long history of affirmation of scientific insights, particularly in “Evolution and the Bible” (PCUS 1969) and “The Dialogue Between Theology and Science” (*Minutes*, PCUS, 1982, Part I, pp. 233–61) and in the Study Catechism (PCUSA 1998).

From “The Dialogue Between Theology and Science”: “Thus, from the very beginning, theology, which speaks of God and creation, and science, which knows the creation and must know it if humankind is to ‘have dominion over it,’ would seem necessary if not indispensable to one another. Such being the case, we might expect that the theological side of us, which understands God’s command, and the scientific side of us, which knows something about birds and fishes and living things and the kind of earth that keeps them alive and keeps us alive by keeping them alive, would have the greatest interest in one another.”

From “The Study Catechism—Full Version”:

Question 27. Does your confession of God as Creator contradict the findings of modern science?

No. My confession of God as Creator answers three questions: Who? How? and Why? It affirms that (a) the triune God, who is self-sufficient, (b) called the world into being out of nothing by the creative power of God's Word (c) for the sake of sharing love and freedom. Natural science has much to teach us about the particular mechanisms and processes of nature, but it is not in a position to answer these questions about ultimate reality, which point to mysteries that science as such is not equipped to explore. Nothing basic to the Christian faith contradicts the findings of modern science, nor does anything essential to modern science contradict the Christian faith. John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

2. *Revelation in Nature and in Scripture*

The “Affirmation of Creation” reads that “God is the author of two books of revelation: the Book of Scripture (the Old and New Testaments) and the Book of Nature.” The Westminster Confession opens with these words,

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased. (*Book of Confessions*, 6.001)

Item 14-14

[The assembly approved Item 14-14 with amendment. See pp. 14, 21–22.]

Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy recommends that 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following:

1. Approve the pastoral guidebook, “Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End-of-Life Decisions,” as a theologically and ethically grounded resource for pastoral care in light of new medical and legal choices involving the prolongation or cessation of life, to be made available through appropriate electronic and print means.
2. Approve the affirmation and recommendations following for Christian public witness in support of the advance care planning, healthcare access, and respect for personal conscience described in the guidebook.
3. Encourage Presbyterian medical personnel, caregivers, pastors, deacons, and other providers of end-of-life treatment, care, and support to lead studies and discussions of these resources on a regular basis within their congregations and communities to strengthen the understanding and use of advance directives.

Affirmation: Faithful Living at the End-of-Life

God's good gift of life does not come without God's guidance, guidance carried in the Scriptures of Old and New Testaments and interpreted in our confessions of faith. As medical science has reduced pain and permitted longer life through the discovery of countless new therapies and treatments, the duration and enjoyment of human life have been extended for literally billions of people. Our conviction of God's abiding presence has accompanied this process, deepened by our Reformed Christian appreciation for the role of science in healing, and our pastoral sense that our wholeness in Christ coexists within the—sometimes tragic—range of human limitations. The sacredness of life reflects its cosmic Giver; as part of the web of creation, we accept the goodness of our in-spirited bodies alongside their fragility, aging, and inevitable death. We cherish the conviction of God's embrace in life, through and beyond death—vividly expressed in St. Paul's understanding of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15—but we also recognize that death is a mystery, and often still a time of pain and suffering.

The Reformed tradition as we understand it sees death as part of a purposeful journey that is undertaken by each of us in community, such that our baptisms are recalled and completed at our deaths, whether they be sudden and untimely, prolonged and painful, or long-expected and peaceful. The meaningfulness of our lives is not determined by their duration but by their connection to the One who loves us and rejoices and suffers with us. Our lives are not our own to dispose of; even pain-wracked and frail bodies are basic to who we are as God's children and deserve respect in all stages of life and in all funeral arrangements. Death is not to be denied, hidden, or feared, as we believe its power to separate us from the love of God has been ended. Thus through grace we die “in the Lord,” and by faith in God's cosmic purpose, we look toward the redemption of all things and the “wiping away of every tear.”

This theological/spiritual/ethical context must be considered in advance care planning. All of the stakeholders in end-of-life planning and care bring their spiritual and moral convictions to the challenges explored in *Abiding Presence*. All of the community members who should or could take responsibility for the care of the dying bring values, principles, beliefs, and virtues to advance care planning. Not only do doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, hospice staff members, therapists, pastors, Stephen Ministers, family members, and patients have spiritual convictions, conscientious concerns, and ethical standards, they function in hospitals, hospices, religious and professional communities, and other institutions that at best will foster cultures of compassion and commitments to caring. Clinical ethicists in hospitals, hospital ethics committees, and chaplains can play a role facilitating conversations about shared and possibly competing values, principles, and laws.

[It is important to note the progression of care as illness progresses. Critical care (full life-saving care toward health restoration), may then include palliative care (a multidisciplinary approach to supporting the personhood of the patient) that can co-exist with critical care, and continue if the decision to discontinue critical care is made. Finally, hospice care discontinues dimensions of critical care, while enhancing care of mind, body, and soul, through the end-of-life journey.]

Decisions to hasten death may be understandable as a last resort when all connection to one's community has been or will be lost and medical pain management is no longer effective. Both medically and spiritually, it is always crucial that the Church and individual Christians address the reasons why people choose to end their lives, listening and drawing on God's love as best we can, and avoiding condemnation. While sharing in the historic Christian opposition to suicide, we do not find it condemned in Scripture nor see ourselves called to judge others, particularly those facing irreversible deterioration of awareness and bodily function. A separate issue is the use of deep sedation at the end of a person's life to control severe pain. ~~[Palliative (or terminal)]~~ [Such] sedation [invokes a law of double effect: pain control may increasingly suppress bodily function. The ethical concern here is the intent of the medication, either to assist with pain control, or to hasten death. Pain management] may in some cases be chosen prayerfully and within one's fully informed circle of care, knowing that death is typically a byproduct at some point.

Death for us is not simply an individual event in a natural process, but a communal leave-taking still connected to God that involves our family, friends, and congregation. We grieve, but not as those without hope. Through God's redemptive love in Christ, seen and heard and felt in our traditions of worship and prayer, we know this: "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom. 6:5). This theological framework prompts us to put end-of-life planning alongside planning for funerals, wills, and final communications to our loved ones of our gratitude, blessings, learnings, and prayers for the future.

The church has provided resources on medical efforts to manage the uncertainty and pain of death since 1974, addressing first the "artificial prolongation" of human life, and then addressing efforts at shortening or ending lives seen to have grown unbearable or unresponsive. The current handbook for approaching the newest array of end-of-life treatments builds upon the church's earlier efforts (outlined in the background section to this resolution). The recommendations below are designed to help ensure a proper context for wise end-of-life decision making.

4. In order to support persons facing end-of-life decisions, the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

a. Encourages all members and friends active in the denomination to develop their own end-of-life directives, [surrogate decision-makers] "living wills," durable powers of attorney for health care, Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLSTs), or other vehicles recognized by their states, to guide their treatment in the case of incapacity and/or irreversible medical decline. Copies of these documents should be shared with both primary and secondary (fallback) persons selected to carry the power of making health-care decisions when one is unable to do so oneself. Furthermore, it is very illuminating to discuss one's end of life values and preferences with the range of family members, physicians, nurses, and congregational care providers.

b. Affirms the value of discussions between patients and their physicians, family members, ministers/chaplains/other pastoral care givers, social workers, and hospice personnel, and affirms the inclusion of appropriate reimbursement by private and public healthcare insurers, such as state and national networks developed under the Affordable Care Act. Such advocacy—which "Abiding Presence" may directly assist—is part of "the distribution of the best health care for all people regardless of race, gender, or economic standing." This confirms the goal of the 1983 General Assembly in the "Covenant of Life and the Caring Community," in light of advances in pain management and palliative care through both hospital and hospice programs.

c. Affirms the judicial and legislative precedents of the U.S. Supreme Court's Cruzan decision and the Patient Self-Determination Act (both in 1990) that protect the rights of competent individuals (or their designated repre-

sentatives) to refuse all life-prolonging medication, hydration, and/or nutrition, and enjoins healthcare facilities to provide guidance for each patient to have advance directives for medical treatment.

d. Recognizes the diversity of theological and ethical positions among Presbyterians regarding legalization of PAD (physician aid-in-dying), and calls upon those states legalizing PAD to research and carefully regulate the law's effects upon persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and those who are socially, economically, emotionally and psychologically vulnerable. Also, all states should enhance the scope of end-of-life choices by enacting public policies that will increase and sustain the quality and availability of palliative care, hospice care, and long-term care. It is affirmed that the patient is the moral agent in these circumstances with appropriate safeguards to insure that the patient is not mentally ill or coerced. This position is based on the Reformed affirmation of the "freedom of Christian conscience" and caution against implicit assumptions that death is always preferable to extreme suffering.¹

e. Supports careful studies of the range of impacts of PAS or aid-in-dying laws, funded by appropriate federal and state authorities, and including perspectives of nurses, religious caregivers, and family members (frequently female) who may be present at death.² Any in-depth theological and ecumenical study of PAS would be wise to consider enduring medical-ethical traditions,³ including those of nursing; disparities among state and federal laws/regulations and health insurance provisions; and the impact of PAS on palliative care, which is not limited to terminal and/or hospice situations.

f. Encourages organ donation as a way to share a very gracious gift and as a commitment that can be part of one's advance directives.

g. Encourages the careful planning of funerals, burials, and cremation, in ways that celebrate the resurrection and presence of God, honor the bodies we have been given, and remember the individual in community. Congregations are encouraged to provide worship resources for advance planning in this area, particularly if they also maintain columbaria or cemeteries on their properties.

Rationale

These recommendations and affirmation are in response to the following referral: *2014 Referral: Item 09-10. On a Study of End-of-Life Issues—From the Synod of the Covenant (Minutes, 2014, Part I, pp. 15, 37, 647ff.)*.

This rationale is in the form of a handbook for caregivers: *Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions*.

Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End of Life Decisions

Table of Contents

Introduction

- A. Contexts for Advance Care Planning and End-of-Life Care
 - The Clinical Context
 - The Historical/Legal Context
 - The Theological/Ethical Context
- B. Pastoral Support for End-of-life Care and Choices
 - Clinical Ethics Service/Healthcare Ethics Committees
 - Chaplains
 - Social Workers
 - Ombudsman/Patient Advocate
 - Nurses
 - Physicians
 - The Pastor's Role
 - The Clash of Cultures
- C. Considerations for the Community of Faith
 - Hospice and Palliative Care
 - Advance Directives for Health Care
- D. Special Concerns or Circumstances in End-of-life Planning
 - End-of-Life Planning and Care for Chronically or Severely Disabled Persons
 - End-of-Life Decisions for Terminally Ill or Severely Impaired Children and Pregnant Women
 - Withholding/Withdrawing Nutrition and Hydration in End-of-Life Care
 - The Roles of Palliative and Terminal Sedation in End-of-Life Care
 - The Determination of Death and Considerations About Organ Donation
 - Pastoral Care of Persons Seeking Physician Aid in Dying

APPENDIX A: Background: Previous Presbyterian Studies Regarding End-of-Life Care and Decisions

APPENDIX B: Background: Historical Ethical and Legal Context for End-of-Life Decision Making in American Culture

APPENDIX C: Suggested Reading

Endnotes

[NOTE: The information in this booklet is not intended to constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon in lieu of consultation with appropriate legal advisors in your own state and jurisdiction.]

Introduction

“I’m convinced that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.”⁴

How do I want the end of my life to be? As Christians we know that our dying, just as our living, is within the providence and care of God.⁵ We do not have a choice in the God-given certainty of our deaths, but we do have choices about how we face that reality and plan for that transition. How do we best claim and practice the presence of Christ and the hope of resurrection at the end of life? There will be many different answers to that question, as we are called to many different roles and responsibilities in life and therefore hold many different aspirations and expectations for our lives. In turn, at the end of our lives, we have many different aspirations and expectations for our dying. If we are to be responsible to our beliefs, our hopes, and our aspirations, we must think about our goals for medical care and treatment as our lives draw to a close. This is not simply a matter of expressing our freedom as Christians before God. Advance care planning is also a gift we can give to our families and others entrusted with our care who need to know what kinds of care will be meaningful and fulfilling to us.

Advance care planning involves conversations that are not always simple or comfortable. After all, those conversations force us to confront our own mortality, something that for different people can range from difficult to deeply existentially disturbing. Such end-of-life conversations therefore require an environment of trust, support, and careful listening. Pastoral care offers an environment that can and should invite and affirm conversations about end-of-life care and its goals and limits. Similarly, congregational life can provide an environment where education and conversation about end-of-life goals and concerns can help provide greater clarity about both personal values and shared faith commitments.

In the context of a community of faith shaped by the Reformed tradition, these conversations will be influenced by a distinctive set of “lenses” or ways of seeing and understanding both life and death. Some of our central convictions include: (1) that all life is a gift of God, (2) that life is best lived as a covenantal relationship between God, ourselves, and others, (3) that life is lived most fully in response to a sense of divine calling, and (4) that God’s presence and power are not limited by the boundaries between life and death. These significantly affect how we talk about the end of life in at least two ways. First, these convictions provide a context of faith and hope in which we can begin to understand our own mortality neither as a defeat nor as a meaningless event, but instead as surrounded and inhabited by the loving presence of God. In this way, we can avoid despair and be empowered toward honesty and clarity. Second, these convictions can guide us through the increasingly complex choices our medical technologies now allow us to make. Seen in relation to God, our deaths are neither an end to be embraced nor a crushing enemy to be resisted at all costs. Instead, they are a part of the ordering of God’s good world to which we are called and enabled to respond with imagination, love, and openness to God’s grace.

Conversations about advance care planning should never be forced. However, sometimes care-recipients, their families, and caregivers all need encouragement and assistance as they give voice to their convictions and concerns and gain clarity about the variety of choices they face. It is important to recognize that each partner in the conversation brings values, principles, beliefs, and virtues to the challenge of advance care planning. Healthcare professionals, spiritual care providers, family members, and patients all have spiritual convictions, conscientious concerns, and ethical standards. Each of these participants also function within institutions and professional communities that seek to foster cultures of compassion, commitments to caring, and the development of professionalism. At its best, advance care planning enables these interested parties to give voice to their religious and moral concerns so that they can be heard and understood.

A. *Contexts for Advance Care Planning and End-of-Life Care*

When advance care planning is done well, it is a tremendous benefit to patients, families, and healthcare professionals. It allows people approaching the end of life to shape the care they will receive by making their wishes and needs known. It also provides family and friends entrusted with decision-making responsibilities the comfort of knowing the wishes of their loved one. Finally, it ensures that healthcare professionals are well-informed about their patients’ choices. While these conversations are difficult, it appears that a large majority of Americans want to have discussions about end-of-life options with their doctors. What is troubling, however, is that few seriously ill patients get to have these conversations. The desire to correct this disparity is largely responsible for the growing attention to advance care planning. But initiating end-of-life conversations is only a beginning. The quality of advance care planning depends on having conversations that explore preferences and values in-depth and that occur not just once, but numerous times throughout the progression of a person’s health care. Not only are such conversations too rare, they also often occur too late to have optimal benefit. What is more, health professionals themselves express reservations about how well prepared they are to initiate and facilitate these crucial conversations. This concern suggests the need for better training in medical and allied health education, and highlights the importance of empowering patients to participate meaningfully in end-of-life conversations.

The idiosyncratic and variable nature of advance care conversations are a central concern for a church that espouses a continuum of compassionate, covenantal care, as reflected in actions by several past Presbyterian General Assemblies (see Appendix A). To reckon with the barriers and gaps that are detrimental to compassionate end-of-life care, the church needs to understand several overlapping and interrelated contexts that affect and surround advance care planning. This understanding requires consideration of a number of contexts in which advance care planning unfolds. The clinical/medical context is the setting in which advance care planning would be expected to take place, but often does not. The theological/ethical context is the constellation of beliefs, convictions, principles, and virtues that care recipients, care providers, and their supporting communities bring to advance care planning. These contexts set the stage for advance care planning as a challenge and a possibility, as do the historical/legal context and such social and cultural factors as economic class, ethnicity, and gender. After elaborating this multidimensional background, the role of pastoral and congregational life can be clearly articulated.

The Clinical Context

In the context of clinical medicine, we are faced with fragmentation and lack of integration. In the words of Dr. Philip A. Pizzo, co-chair of the Institute of Medicine Committee on Approaching Death, “Unfortunately, as a nation we do a disappointingly poor job of delivering seamless, compassionate care that honors the individual preferences of those nearing the end of life. This happens mainly because we do not know or uphold what our patients want or desire and neglect to listen or take the time to convey information completely and accurately.”⁶ The Institute of Medicine recommends that care of those with advanced serious illness “should be seamless, high-quality, integrated, patient- and family-centric, and consistently available.”⁷ This excellent summary describes what advance care planning should seek to achieve and highlights areas in which the church can contribute to the improvement of end-of-life conversations.

Consider these consequences of today’s complex and often-fragmented clinical setting. Several specialists may see a hospital patient and the admitting physician may have little contact with the patient. Managing a patient’s care in the hospital is often the responsibility of a hospitalist—a physician employed by a hospital to provide care for patients during their hospital admission. This physician may be on a twelve-hour shift, with the care then assumed by another hospitalist. Further fragmentation occurs because of discontinuity between specialties such as oncology, infectious disease, pulmonology, cardiology, and others. The primary care physician who treated the patient outside the hospital often has no contact with him or her until after they are discharged. Given the way in which various physicians each see the patient for different issues at different times, who decides that a conversation about advance care planning involving end-of-life issues is needed? The result is that often no single physician is responsible for end-of-life choices. Exacerbating the problem is the pace of life in hospitals that allows little or no time for heart-to-heart conversations, making it an easy task to delay or ignore for any given individual provider.

Healthcare professionals complain that medical and nursing education traditionally has given inadequate attention to the care of the dying, and to palliative care in particular. This leaves care providers unprepared to facilitate conversations about advance care planning. It is encouraging that the last decade has seen palliative care emerge as a new professional specialty that includes board-certified physicians and nurses as well as social workers, clergy, and other professionals. In addition, medical schools are now including these topics in the education and training of their students. However, Katy Butler has called palliative care “medicine’s tin-cup specialty.”⁸ Inadequate numbers of palliative care specialists coupled with inadequate insurance reimbursement, result in underutilization of the specialists best prepared to engage in advance care planning and, later, may also result in the under-treatment of pain and suffering at the end of life.

Hospice care faces its own institutional hazards when it is forced to function as the advance care plan option of last resort. Even in the medical community, there are misconceptions about whether hospice patients can continue to receive treatment for certain conditions (which they can if the goal is to improve or sustain quality of life). Some patients, for example, value in-home hospice care as a way to stay out of the hospital but are denied that comfort when conversations about their end of life are delayed. Insurance carriers and HMOs may value hospice services mainly as a way to keep patients out of hospitals, and for those not covered by Medicare there is insufficient funding for universal access to the most comprehensive forms of hospice care. Disparities in access to hospice also emerge as a function of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement structures. These have remained the same since the mid-80s, resulting in few hospice programs that are directed toward indigent patients, particularly those with AIDS and others who require more complex and costly care.

The failure of clinical providers to initiate conversations, or problematic delays in doing so, sometimes occur because of reluctance to broach the possibility of hospice. This may be because they continue to think they can beat the odds with yet another experimental treatment. Other times, providers avoid or soften a dire prognosis out of a fear that the patient will give up hope (an issue for some, but certainly not the majority of patients). For example, one study of cancer patients found that “physicians favored providing an apparently knowingly inaccurate survival estimate for 40.3% of patients and favored providing no survival estimate for 22.7% of patients.”⁹ Even when disclosed, the hesitancy of providers may result in disclosure of diagnosis that is not straightforward and therefore not fully understood. As a result, multiple studies have found that significant proportions of patients with incurable cancer do not understand the terminal nature of their condition. Furthermore, oncologists may disclose that a possible treatment is unlikely to be curative, but they often do not attend to the patient’s understanding of this communication. They also present alternatives to aggressive treatment in fewer than half of their encounters with patients. Despite reported concerns about patient reactions, where open and sensitive conversations do occur,

studies show that the incidence of depression is not increased. Furthermore, offering choices for palliative care can lead to an improved quality of life and greater longevity.

If the hectic pace and the plurality of caregivers hinder in-depth discussions about end-of-life issues within hospitals, what of office visits with one's physician? In the outpatient setting, physicians feel pressed to see more patients because of the lower reimbursement levels of Medicaid, Medicare, and private health insurance companies. In the face of increasing demands by insurers to document greater amounts of information in an electronic medical record, many physicians report having less time to engage in probing conversations with patients than before. For their part, patients may feel vulnerable or intimidated by fears of a possible dire prognosis and therefore may not ask for more information about a serious diagnosis or assert their desires to engage in advance care planning. They also may not be accompanied by a loved one or other advocate who will raise such questions or insist on direct answers. Where the clinical context makes it easier to focus on an immediate symptom or ailment, both the doctor and the patient may fail to probe more deeply about long-term prospects and options.

Technological innovation has recently been making possible the virtual office visit and even the virtual hospital visit. The office visit by electronic device removes distance and long waits as deterrents to doctor-patient contact, and the digitally empowered patient can even gain access to blood tests, medical scans, and parts of physical examinations from afar instead of in a hospital. Such emerging innovations may make for easier access to healthcare providers and information for the technologically adept; however, many persons will require opportunities for in-depth conversation face-to-face with their doctors to address the range of end-of-life options and care.

Lack of reimbursement for having advance planning conversations also has been cited as a significant deterrent. Initially proposed features of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) sought to address this problem, only to trigger outcries that so-called "death panels" would become a means of rationing expensive health care and "getting rid of Granny." As a result, the final version of the Affordable Care Act carried no such provision for reimbursement. This is particularly unfortunate since studies have shown that such sessions lower stress in patients and families and affect treatment choices, such as limiting hospitalizations. Even without financial incentives, some doctors have faithfully continued to initiate such conversations without charge or squeezed them into regular office visits; but reimbursements would increase the ability of providers to work these conversations into their tight schedules.

Despite the attacks that plagued the debates about the ACA, the desire to implement reimbursement for advance care planning conversations has persisted. The American Medical Association endorsed such reimbursements, and some states, including Colorado and Oregon, began covering sessions for Medicaid recipients. In July of 2015, Medicare announced plans to reimburse doctors for conversations with patients about whether and how they would want to be kept alive if they become unable to speak for themselves. This took effect in January of 2016. The plan allows doctors, as well as qualified professionals such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants, to be reimbursed for advance care planning in face-to-face meetings with patients and any family member or caregiver that the patient wants to include. It is noteworthy that the plan sets no limit on the number of these conversations that can be reimbursed, which should encourage providers to revisit those conversations periodically. Because Medicare often sets standards for private insurers, some have already begun covering advance planning discussions, and more will likely do so with the adoption of the new Medicare rules.

While reimbursement for end-of-life discussions represents one important step in improving advance care planning, allegations that these conversations will be used to nudge people toward foregoing treatment and hastening death are likely to persist. Further, it will not guarantee participation by people who are uninsured or by patients in poverty or from racial ethnic groups with higher levels of distrust in the medical establishment because of historical events (such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study) or their personal experiences of unequal access and discriminatory treatment within the healthcare system. It also does not assure that healthcare professionals will be well prepared to hold these discussions or that patients and families will be prepared to make the most of them. A recent effort to address the readiness of healthcare professionals for this challenge involves the creation of variety of "decision aids" now being publicized and analyzed in professional journals. These aids aim to provide health professionals with a structured approach to informing patients about care options and prompting them to document and communicate their preferences. However, some fear that such aids could amount to no more than a checklist to be filled out and submitted for reimbursement rather than tools that assist a robust conversation. So far these aids have remained proprietary and not publicly available. They also tend to be disease specific. As they develop and proliferate, it will be important to evaluate the ways in which these clinical tools affect end-of-life conversations, including theological and spiritual concerns.

Advance directives, which until recently included only Living Wills and the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, have been perhaps the most important effort in past years at furthering advance care planning. In addition to those two foundational documents, more recent legal documents have emerged including, Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST), Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment (MOST), and Clinical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (COLST). Exploring the nature of these directives and the ways they have emerged from and shaped end-of-life planning requires understanding of the historical and legal context of advance care planning.

The Historical/Legal Context

Beginning in the late sixties, the popular "patients' rights" movement emerged on the heels of major medical advances in organ transplant, dialysis, resuscitation modalities, and other life-prolonging technologies. This movement elevated the no-

tion of patient autonomy or self-determination in contrast to the traditional deference paid to the authority and judgment of medical professionals. Court decisions in so-called “right to die” cases such as those involving Karen Ann Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan (see Appendix B) established a right to refuse treatment by persons in a persistent vegetative state or their surrogates. Additionally, a pivotal consideration in the Cruzan case centered on the need for “clear and convincing evidence” that the patient would not want to remain on life support under such circumstances. Either written statements or oral statements made to family members, friends, or co-workers while the patient was still conscious and competent were considered essential by some state courts.

The Supreme Court’s Cruzan decision of 1990 affirmed the freedom of all persons to judge for themselves the benefits and burdens of accepting further life-prolonging treatments, or even the perceived burden of medical extension of life itself. In turn, the Court affirmed the right of patients to accept or reject medical interventions on that basis. For persons no longer capable of forming these judgments, the Court also allowed the states to require significant levels of evidence regarding the judgments those persons had made while competent. Recognizing both of these aspects of the High Court’s ruling, the U.S. Congress acted within months to encourage and enable competent adults to express prospectively their treatment decision preferences before the onset of terminal illness or incompetence. That legislation, known as the Patient Self-Determination Act or PSDA (1990), created a legal obligation for healthcare institutions receiving federal funding to educate and assist their patients, clients, residents, staff, and communities regarding the creation of advance directives for health care (e.g., Living Wills and Durable Powers of Attorney for Health Care) in accordance with each state’s laws. These documents not only allow individuals to express their own considered preferences regarding treatment options or proxy decision-makers, but they also provide the equivalent of “clear and convincing evidence” of the individuals’ wishes if and when they become incapable of expressing them.

In contemporary U.S. culture, public policy and majority public opinion are essentially in agreement with respect to the freedom of individuals to refuse medical treatment, even when it is life-prolonging. However, there is still significant disagreement about whether artificial feeding and hydration constitute “treatment,” and thus, whether they legitimately can be refused. Additionally, while the Supreme Court has clearly affirmed one’s right to refuse life-prolonging treatment, it has not ruled in favor of any right to *assistance* in bringing about one’s death. The Court did, however, allow states the freedom to permit and regulate such assistance. As of 2015, five states currently allow “physician aid in dying” (PAD), with more than half of other state legislatures considering bills that would permit it. These typically allow for physicians, under certain stringent conditions, to prescribe lethal doses of medications that can be taken by patients, if the patients so choose. In contrast, “active euthanasia,” refers to a situation in which a physician or other person acts directly to cause the death of a suffering person, for example by directly administering a lethal dose of medication. This remains illegal throughout the United States, though it has been legalized in several European countries, in some instances even for persons who are not terminally ill. Our American societal context at present is one in which a growing percentage of Americans support “physician aid in dying,” but currently one must move to one of the five permitting states to receive such assistance legally.

The implementation of the Patient Self-Determination Act (1990) has involved a concerted effort by many hospitals to get all patients to complete advance directives. Despite these efforts, it is estimated that only about 20 percent of the populace has done so. In fact, fewer than 50 percent of severely or terminally ill patients have an advance directive in their medical records.¹⁰ Among patients who did have advance directives, their physicians were unaware of it at least 65 percent of the time and very few patients with advance directives had received input from their physicians before writing their advance directives, highlighting the dearth of end-of-life conversations in the clinical context. Lack of explicit end-of-life planning leaves surrogate decision makers in a difficult position and, as a result, it is estimated that surrogate decision makers are accurate only about 68 percent of the time when they try to predict patient preferences for end-of-life care.¹¹ These problems are compounded for persons who have been marginalized by lack of access to the healthcare system or by discriminatory treatment within it, who are less likely to have advance directives and more likely to insist on all-out efforts to lengthen their lives when they are terminally ill. Even for those who have advance directives, there is no guarantee these will be discovered and honored in critical situations. All of these problems highlight the importance of the church’s role in promoting advance care planning, which, in order to be successful, needs to be a community effort undertaken among patients, providers, congregants, and others.

The latest development in advance directives is the state-legislated Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST). Like living wills these documents allow patients to express their choices about various types of life-sustaining treatment. Unlike Living Wills, however, POLST forms are also signed by the patient’s physician and constitute validated physician orders. (See a state-by-state review of these variously named orders in the appendix.) These forms contain a detailed checklist of conditions requiring a decision about oral antibiotics, intravenous feeding, feeding tubes, etc. If a section is not filled out, full treatment is to be administered. Moreover, these forms are made part of a patient’s medical record and are to be reviewed at least annually. POLST forms, if used in the context of well-conducted in-depth conversations, can offer a promising opportunity for better advance care planning. However there are many considerations and conversations that need to occur before the specific issues outlined on POLST forms are decided.

Still another setting where meaningful conversations about end-of-life choices might occur is in nursing homes and other long-term care settings. The residents of these facilities tend to be at stages of the life course or in a particular disease pro-

gression that warrant advance care planning. However, there are barriers to effective discussions in these contexts. Many nursing homes are understaffed, and poorly paid aides with minimal training and rapid turnover render most of the care. Complicating the situation, a majority of residents suffer from dementia, seldom receive visits, and commonly experience a regimen that is short on attention to individual needs and preferences and long on impersonal management. Some doctors report that nursing home residents who are wards of the state seldom get Do Not Resuscitate orders. State-appointed guardians are loath to reject treatment, so their wards sometimes receive rather aggressive treatment (e.g. the surgical insertion of feeding and/or breathing tubes), even when it is not medically beneficial or is overly burdensome. Stronger advocacy for palliative care could be helpful in such circumstances.

Examination of the clinical context of advance care planning reveals that clinical encounters, particularly those involving end-of-life planning or care, do not involve doctors and patients alone. Rather, they are variously embedded within family systems, teams of other healthcare professionals, hospital and governmental regulations, insurance company rules, quality control mechanisms, ethics committees, and many other components of the modern medical enterprise. Treatment decisions also may be complicated by differences in culture, minority status, limited or absent financial resources, or the perception of discrimination.

The Theological/Ethical Context

Advanced care planning is contextualized by a number of theological, spiritual, and ethical issues. Each participant brings his or her spiritual and moral convictions to the challenges of end-of-life planning and care. This planning process includes members of a patient's broader congregation and community that could and should assist with the responsibilities of caring for the dying. Not only do doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, hospice staff members, therapists, pastors, Stephen Ministers, family members, and patients have spiritual convictions, conscientious concerns, and ethical standards, but they all live and act from within various institutions, communities, and professional roles. In the context of the hospital, clinical ethicists, ethics committees, and chaplains all facilitate conversations about values and principles that are shared as well as those that may be in conflict. These professionals, in particular, will engage with a patient's religious and spiritual values. For its part, the Church needs to facilitate clarity, among congregants, about their personal values, beliefs, and expectations of dying. The preparation of advance care planning, including assistance within the Church, will represent an indispensable resource to congregants as they encounter the milieu of healthcare providers to whom they need to articulate their end-of-life wishes. The question becomes: In what ways should the Church facilitate advance care planning for persons of faith?

Christian faith and practice should not be regarded as a compendium of religious beliefs and principles to be imposed from above onto end-of-life care. Instead, the Christian faith represents a set of spiritual and moral resources that exert a discernible influence in the societal, institutional, and clinical settings in which decisions are made and care is given and received. That is, the spiritual and moral perspectives of Christianity should offer something distinct to the end-of-life conversations between a person of faith, their families, physicians, and others. As such, churches have a great opportunity and responsibility in their pastoral and educational ministries to equip both patients and healthcare providers and recipients for their roles in advance care planning.

The resources of the Reformed tradition for equipping these various participants are quite rich. For example, our tradition places a great deal of emphasis on the human capacity to make choices, which has obvious accord with the emphasis upon patient autonomy in end-of-life decision making that governs so much of medical practice today. But there also is something distinct offered by the Reformed theological perspective, particularly where it conceives of human decision making as always taking place within the larger context of perceptions, beliefs, and feelings about what is ultimately true and good—about what, or who, should be worshiped. All decisions are made, however implicitly, with reference to God. What we believe about God has a profound impact on how we understand our own life and death and on how we should navigate them. Although the Reformed tradition does not always speak with one voice on these questions, there are key affirmations that should be taken as “points to consider” when we have conversations about these topics.

First, God is “sovereign.” This means that God is a power and presence that is not diminished by any event in life or in death. In life and death we belong to God! “Sovereignty” need not mean control, but it does mean *persistence*: God is always at work in everything that happens, imposing limits on us, but also creating possibilities for us. Thus, while the Reformed tradition has an affinity with contemporary notions of patient autonomy, it distinctly adds the perspective that when we decide what to do, we are not acting on our own in a universe without meaning. Rather, we decide what we believe God is “enabling and requiring” us to do and to be.¹²

Second, God both blesses and orders (or “governs”). The first creation story in Genesis 1 is punctuated by the theme of “blessing.” God sees that the creation is good and then pronounces a blessing on all creatures, effectively empowering them to continue the creative work that God has begun. The power of God's blessing is seen in the resilience of life and in its persistent capacity to renew itself, to heal, and to transform. Life goes on in the power of this blessing and to participate in it is joy.

But the blessing is not given without limits. God also orders—or, in older language, “governs.” God places creatures in larger contexts in which we have to contend with powers that are greater than ourselves. Death is one feature of this context. In death, it is not so much that we experience the natural destiny of our bodies, nor that we undergo a curse as the penalty for our sin. The Reformed perspective supports neither a moralistic nor a vitalistic view of life.¹³ Rather, death entails being sub-

ject to powers that are beyond us. In the world that God orders, each of us has his or her ultimate limit. Although we often experience frustration, pain, and grief when we encounter it—in part because we are reluctant to accept our limits and in part because we find the permanent loss of relationships that death entails to be nearly intolerable—there is nothing wrong or broken about this ultimate boundary.

Third, God orders or governs life in part by means of “covenantal” relationships. From the beginning, God is seen in Scripture as a God of love, a God of relationships. God established and sustains a relationship with human beings as “covenant-partners,”¹⁴ granting us the capacity to make choices in response to the grace that always precedes, follows, and surrounds all of life. Human response to grace is shaped by senses of gratitude and responsibility. It is in this context that we discover the joy of what our tradition calls “vocation.” We are thankful for the gifts that are given to us, and we seek to show our gratitude by responsibly caring for them and using them for the benefit of God’s wider purposes in the world.

Part of what it means to live in covenant is to be responsive not only to God, but also to others who may be affected by our actions. Because life is fulfilled in relationship with others, judgments about the present “quality of life” can be seen as assessments of the capacity for sustaining and enjoying relationships. Notions of quality of life are central to end-of-life planning and at the heart of contemporary bioethics. What a Reformed perspective distinctly adds is the perspective that our lives are never only in our own hands, but their meaning is shared in communities; and so in extreme circumstances we can ask, “What are the enduring possibilities for meaningful relationship left to my life?” “How does my life benefit, support, and bless others who may in some way depend on me?” We might even ask questions that have not so much to do with the quality of one’s own life but with the effects that the continuation or ending of one’s life might have on others. When our lives are seen as part of a wider fabric of relationships before God, such questions multiply and decision making can become even more complex. Nonetheless, these kinds of questions can help orient end-of-life decisions in terms of vocation. We can come to see the end of life as a calling to which we must respond faithfully and can even find some measure of fulfillment in doing so.

These convictions in general support many of the norms implicit in medical practice, such as the duty not to harm and the duty to do what benefits the patient and advances his or her good, and gives those norms a particular emphasis.¹⁵ Good, for example, is understood relationally, in terms of our created capacity for relationships and of our vocational responsibility for them. These same norms also guide patient decision making. For example, we have an obligation to avoid harm (to ourselves and our loved ones). In the Reformed tradition, suffering has no value in itself. It may be accepted when inevitable, and it may be endured with faithfulness, but suffering itself does not confer merit or uniquely carry any spiritual benefits. We can ask ourselves, therefore, whether enduring pointless suffering does not amount to the infliction of unnecessary harm on ourselves.

Of course, this principle also applies to the sustenance of life. The obligation to do no harm should give us serious pause when contemplating ending medical treatments or requesting treatments that would hasten our deaths. In both cases, however, the obligation to do no harm must be balanced against the obligation to promote the good. Again, where good is defined relationally, as in the context of the Reformed tradition, decision making becomes less focused on narrow considerations about the morality of specific acts or interventions, expanding instead to include a broader set of people and circumstances. Sharing a vision of God’s ordering of human life in relation to others, we may view death as being subject to forces in God’s world that we do not control. These forces are not limited to injury and disease but also include pain and suffering. When these are overwhelming, and when they destroy the capacity for human relationships and steal the joy from living, we may reasonably conclude that God is calling us to face our limitations and to accept the inevitability of death. However, it is also true that individuals with very limited capacity to respond to others may still possess sufficient capacity to be in relationship with those they love and trust. Ultimately these decisions rest with particular individuals and emerge from their various conversations, but the theological context offered by the Reformed tradition provides a distinct and important frame for persons of faith who are struggling with these issues.

B. *Pastoral Support for End-of-Life Care and Choices*

Pastors and others taking pastoral leadership in a congregation (e.g., commissioned ruling elders) know that they have an important role to play in helping their parishioners with end-of-life decisions. However, they are often uncertain how to engage persons in these discussions and feel ill-suited to engage other professionals in the healthcare environment. These issues will be explored around two key questions: (1) *What can I do to help persons in my congregation with end-of-life issues?* And (2) *How can I, in my pastoral role, fit into the healthcare setting?*

The first question takes on greater urgency with the proliferation of life-sustaining medical technologies. Most patients can justify even substantial amounts of pain and suffering if a cure is a potential outcome. But many times the burden of a disease or its treatment exceeds the potential benefit to the patient. This can be true of certain cancers, for example, as well as progressive diseases such as advanced dementia, chronic heart failure, and progressive lung disease. In light of these challenges, the first important question delineated above can be elaborated to ask: *What does it mean to live faithfully and die well, and how can I contribute to this task as a spiritual leader?* There are several critical considerations:

1. All persons are beloved by God, and wholeness is found in our relationship with both God and the communities around us. A person is more than a body, and diseases, therefore, should not eclipse one’s broader identity as nested in one’s

relationships with others and with God. Disease and disability may reduce our capacity to function in certain ways, but they should not be allowed to define us. In fact, even our mortality itself does not define us.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that God's strength is displayed in and through our weakness.

Pastoral leaders should advocate for equal treatment of persons without discrimination based on limitations or disabilities because we become whole by God's grace in spite of whatever diseases or disabilities we have.

2. So if God's grace sustains us, why think about death at all? Forethought is needed because in our technologically advanced society dying well typically requires advance care planning. We affirm that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. At the same time, we are faced with options for treatment at the end of life that can needlessly increase our pain and suffering without providing any discernible, offsetting benefit. And while we should try to be brave in the face of pain and suffering, we should not idolize it. We can, therefore, choose to refuse interventions that do nothing to sustain our relationship with God or with other persons. As such, engaging a congregation in advance care planning represents an important task of pastoral leadership and there are ways in which it can be folded into regular pastoral activities. For example, challenging church members to write an Advance Directive consistent with their values could be part of a Lenten observance. These directives also could be kept in a confidential file in the pastor's office, easily retrieved by the pastor in the event of a health crisis.

3. While it is true that many people are reluctant to discuss death and dying, a pastoral leader should be someone who gives permission and encouragement to express feelings about these difficult topics. Persons facing death typically want to talk about their fears and concerns, but are reluctant to burden loved ones or friends. Having another person with whom to confidentially share strong feelings can bring release and healing. In addition, a pastoral leader can facilitate such conversations with family members in order to reduce the isolation experienced by someone with a terminal illness.

Not talking about death has consequences, both for those who are dying and for those who love and care for them. Consider the following case study:

Mr. Paul¹⁶ was an elderly gentleman, long retired, who lived with his elderly wife. Fortunately for them, their daughter Patty, a relatively young widow, and her three brothers lived in the same small town. Patty lived about a mile away, and as her parents grew more frail, they would ask her to drop off a loaf of bread or a quart of milk on her way home from work. Thus, she saw them briefly almost every day. Her dad would always call her by her childhood nickname and ask her how her day had been. Since his days were spent at home, he rarely had any news to impart. So Patty's reports became essentially monologues about her own life and daily activities.

One day, Patty's father announced that he and his wife were planning to drive from Ohio to Florida to see his older brother. Patty decided she should accompany her parents because of their advanced ages, and it was on this trip that she first became aware of his advanced dementia. The trip started with her dad driving, and Patty quickly discovered that his wife had to tell him when to go, when to stop, what lane to be in, and when to turn. Patty quickly took over as driver against her dad's protests. In Florida, his brother asked him to make his famous red pasta sauce for dinner one night and, to Patty's horror, her dad could not do it, even with her help.

When they got home from this trip, she made him go to his doctor for an evaluation, and his physician diagnosed him with advanced Alzheimer's. Her mother, however, refused to accept the diagnosis and insisted that her husband just needed to eat better and move about more. She believed that her husband would become well again.

Within a few months, he became totally confined to his bed, but Patty's mother continued to refuse any outside help caring for him and repeatedly rejected the idea of hospice. Eventually Patty was forced to quit her job to provide him in-home care for the remaining months of his life. Until the day of his death, her mother continued to insist that if he just ate more he would become well again.

Because we live in a death-denying society, many people find it extremely uncomfortable to talk frankly about death and with the dying. While it is always wise to let them lead the conversation, most dying people want to review their lives, to remember important life events, and to measure their lives against the standards and values that they espoused throughout their years. This revisiting and recollecting can be an important source of strength and solace to them. It affirms the impact their life has had on loved ones and friends and reassures them of their value to others. However, being surrounded by people who tend to avoid such conversations creates a sense of isolation for the patient. In the story above, not only was Patty's dad isolated, particularly once he was homebound, but Patty also became isolated by the duties of caring for him. Her mother's rejection of support mechanisms such as hospice exacerbated this problem. Support from her three brothers and their wives was minimal, which essentially left Patty to carry this burden alone.

The old adage, "Where's there's life, there's hope" highlights another reason that conversations about death or even with the dying are so uncomfortable. Many people fear that to admit or even hint that someone is dying will destroy hope, which is necessary for life. Even physicians cite fear of destroying hope as one reason to be less than forthcoming with patients who are terminally ill.

The notion of hope can have many dimensions. Often when we speak of hope we mean that an ailing person will become well again. Similarly, physicians are trained to "fight" disease and so when they speak of "hope," often they mean, "hope for a cure." But the term *hope* can have meanings beyond this. Patients considered terminal may hope for a more promising second opinion. They may hope that their therapy will give them added months to complete a project or to see a child or grand-

child graduate or to make peace with a friend or relative. They may hope for healing in their relationships and in their emotions even if their illness will not be cured. They may hope for a peaceful death with the support of loved ones and of palliative and hospice care.

For Christians, however, “hope” has an even a richer meaning still. We proclaim hope in the faithfulness of our God who created us and will never desert us, even as we are dying. As the 23rd Psalm affirms, “Thou art with me,” even in “the valley of the shadow of death.” Paul reminds us that “[we] may not grieve as others do who have no hope” because we have Jesus’ assurance that, while death changes our existence, it does not end it.¹⁷ Therefore, although it is painful and ruptures our most profound *human* relationships, death does not have the final word. Instead, our God—Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer—holds the final word, and that word is eternal life in God’s presence.

4. Hospice and palliative care are often misunderstood, conflated with the management or even the promotion of death. However, in the context of seeking wholeness, pastoral leaders may in fact explore these options as an opportunity for the promotion of life. It is important that palliative care should not be understood inherently as hastening death. Rather, palliative care helps manage various symptoms and can be used in conjunction with potentially curative treatment. In the same way, hospice care should not be viewed as “giving up.” Instead, it is one among several options that may actually provide the best opportunity for living in the face of certain death from a terminal illness. It is noteworthy that a multidimensional approach to the management of both physical pain and existential suffering has been shown, in some circumstances, to actually extend life even beyond that achieved through aggressive treatment with chemotherapy and/or radiation.

5. Perhaps most importantly, pastoral leaders can seek to practice the presence of Christ with dying persons. Walking into a hospital room to read scripture and say a prayer without taking the time to sit and listen to the patient results in a very limited pastoral experience for the patient. Instead, one should listen for expressions of pain, worry, anxiety, and suffering. Reflecting the patient’s emotions and concerns back to the patient demonstrates compassion and reassures the person that the pastor has heard what he or she is experiencing. Consider the following conversations between a pastor and a patient in the hospital:

Pastor: Good morning, Ms. Smith! How are you feeling today?

Patient: I’m still in pain. I could barely sleep last night.

Pastor: I’m sorry to hear that. Let me read this psalm to give you some comfort. (She reads the Twenty-third Psalm.)

Patient: Thank you, pastor.

Pastor: Let me pray with you. (She holds the patient’s hands and speaks a brief prayer requesting God’s comfort and healing.)

Patient: Amen.

Pastor: I need to be going. I have some other patients to see in the hospital. Good-bye and God bless you.

The following is an alternative and more compassionate conversation:

Pastor: Good morning, Ms. Smith. (The pastor pauses, carefully observing the patient’s facial expression.) You appear to be in pain.

Patient: I had a terrible night. The pain never goes away completely.

Pastor (taking a seat and looking directly at the patient): Tell me about what brought you into the hospital.

Patient: I was perfectly well until about two weeks ago ... (The patient describes her illness and the treatment she has received.) I don’t know how much longer I can bear this.

Pastor: It sounds like you feel pretty desperate.

Patient: I do. I’m so afraid of what this could be.

Pastor: What do you think might be the matter?

Patient: My father died from cancer and had terrible pain in his bones, just like the pain I have.

Pastor: I can see why you are worried. (Pause. The two sit in silence for a long minute.) What might I do to help?

Patient: Would you say a prayer with me?

Pastor: What shall I say in our prayer?

Patient: That I want to get better and go home.

Pastor: (The pastor says a prayer that communicates the patient’s fears and desperation. It also speaks of God’s presence and abiding love even in the midst of her pain and suffering.)

Pastor: You know that you can talk to me about anything that worries you. (The pastor pauses a minute to give the patient an opportunity to express other concerns.)

Pastor: I'll be back to see you in a few days. If you've been discharged, I'll call you at home.

Patient: Thank you, pastor.

The difference in pastoral presence in the two encounters is evident. Both convey pastoral concern, but the second demonstrates compassionate concern about the patient's individual experience. Only when there is some understanding of the patient's emotions and goals does the pastor say a prayer—a prayer that incorporates the patient's feelings while affirming God's presence and abiding love. This sort of engaged and caring presence carried out with the patient (and family when appropriate) communicates Christ's presence in ways that are beyond words.

As noted above, a second question of great import to pastoral leaders is: *How can I as a pastor fit in to the healthcare setting?*

To answer this question, we first need to clarify the roles of key players in that setting. What follows are descriptions of various roles played by members of the healthcare team, including clinical ethics consultants, chaplains, social workers, patient advocates, nurses, and physicians. Once clarity is established about the functions of each of these, the role of pastoral leaders and the ways they fit into the healthcare team can be elaborated.

Clinical Ethics Service/Healthcare Ethics Committee

In 1992 the Joint Commission¹⁸ mandated that all of its accredited hospitals have in place a means for addressing ethical concerns. Depending upon the institution, this may include an ethics committee, individual ethics consultants, a formalized clinical ethics consultation service, or an ethics forum. This was an important moment in promoting ethical, patient-centered care because healthcare ethics committees or consultants serve as a valuable resource for those working through difficult healthcare situations and decisions. They serve an advisory role to those involved in decision-making processes where ethical/moral issues are not yet clearly resolved. This includes not only healthcare providers, but also families and patients themselves.

Ethics committees often include persons from a variety of professions, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, chaplaincy, law, social work, academic philosophy and theology, healthcare administration, and community members. Such committees may be standing (functioning on an ongoing basis) or ad hoc (brought together for a specific task and dissolved at the completion of that task). Each institution has a process for requesting a consult. In most cases a formal request for consultation may be initiated by the patient, patient's family, or members of the healthcare team. In some cases, however, patients or their families may need to route the request through their physician or another healthcare provider.

With so many players involved in a patient's care, conflicts of values can arise within and among the cadre of caregivers, as well as among families and the healthcare team. One role of an ethics committee is to remind all those involved in a conflict that they share an important piece of common ground: a desire to do what is "best" for a particular patient. Focusing on this commonality rather than their differing versions of what is "best" will often allow the conflict to de-escalate and those involved to hear the views of others more clearly. However, ethics consultants also can play the role of arbiter not only by listening to and building collaboration between various, sometimes opposing positions, but also by informing patients, families, and healthcare providers about important ethical considerations of which they might not be aware.

Chaplains

Healthcare chaplains are clergy employed by or otherwise in a formal relationship with hospitals, hospices, and other healthcare settings. Chaplaincy may be their exclusive ministry, or they may also serve in traditional parishes or other settings. In their role as chaplains they care for patients, family members, and staff within a healthcare institution. That is, their responsibility is defined by the healthcare institution rather than for a group of parishioners with a particular religious affiliation. While most Presbyterian ministers have received at least three months of clinical pastoral education in a hospital setting as part of their required seminary curriculum, hospital chaplains typically have received at least one year of supervised clinical pastoral education and also participate in continuing education.

Abigail Rian Evans writes that the clergyperson in healthcare settings, "conveys the symbols of health and healing, relating to people as persons, not as patients. ... As people face sickness and struggle to regain some wholeness, they are challenged to accept and overcome the undeniable fact of their fragility. Symbols of healing may involve sustenance in the face of pain and suffering—assisting people to live in the midst of their brokenness."¹⁹

The progression of illness and the dying process often bring with them concerns beyond physical deterioration and death. Among these are questions of meaning, purpose, leave-taking, afterlife, and legacy. Some of these concerns might be stated in more traditional religious language as "getting right with God" or "preparing to meet one's Maker." Chaplains assist those working through these deep questions that go to the core of who we are as persons.

Chaplains collaborate with and care for persons fundamentally by being present with them as they journey through illness and end-of-life struggles. Chaplains offer an ear tuned to the spiritual and serve as a reminder of, and connection to, the community of faith. This presence is especially important when there is a great physical distance between the person at the end of life and her or his home community of faith. Whatever the distance, a chaplain provides spiritual support that should

add to, though not replace, a home community of faith. Chaplains should encourage the maintenance of the relationship between the dying person and his or her home pastor and congregation.

The time a chaplain spends with a person at the end of life should focus on presence rather than preaching. Often that means more listening than speaking. That listening should also be active rather than passive, open to a person's feelings and acknowledging them as they emerge in conversation. Persons at the end of life may have intense emotions and profoundly difficult questions. Chaplains provide care by being a sounding board, a conversation partner, a confidant, and a messenger of God's love and grace.

Chaplains carry out their roles in many ways, recognizing that each individual and each situation is unique. Moreover, in keeping with the notion of life as relational, chaplains engage both patients and their families. Spiritual practices, such as reading scripture, prayer, anointing, and administration of sacraments, may be accompanied by exercises in life review or visualization of the future.

Social Workers

Social workers are licensed or certified individuals with a degree in social work, who assist persons in need by performing a variety of assessments (e.g., impact of health status, housing, financial, psychosocial, availability of and access to community resources) and by developing a plan of treatment and intervention based on those assessments. Social workers in healthcare institutions are expected to have specialized knowledge about the implications of illness and injury on a person and his or her significant others. Often the task of a social worker is to make connections between a person with needs and the resources appropriate to meet those needs including civil and community programs that offer benefits to which a particular patient may be entitled. Social workers are employed by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, hospice teams, and also often serve on palliative care teams.

Perhaps the International Federation of Social Workers summarizes it best:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.²⁰

Ombudsman/Patient Advocate

Many healthcare institutions have a designated person or persons who help patients and families navigate the complex health system and mediate conflicts that may arise. An ombudsman or patient advocate often is not a healthcare professional but can help by listening to patient's or family's concerns and then voicing, or assisting the patient or family in voicing, those concerns to the appropriate medical team or hospital administration members. They may assist with a wide range of issues, including access to care, the amount and kind of communication a patient receives from the medical team, understanding movement between levels and types of care, and billing issues. When communication between the patient/family and an institution or healthcare team is strained, an ombudsman or patient advocate is often helpful.

Nurses

The nursing staff of a hospital, long-term care institution, or hospice facility usually includes both licensed (RN, LPN/LVN) and unlicensed (CNA, NA) personnel. Nurse practitioners have advanced degrees and advanced clinical training that affords them diagnostic and prescribing privileges. They are therefore classified as medical personnel. Other licensed nurses, such as RNs, have more limited, but nonetheless important responsibilities. They develop plans of care and provide the broader range of needed care for a patient (administering medicine, drawing blood, wound care, assisting with various daily functions, recording data, etc.). Unlicensed nursing personnel, such as nursing assistants, also provide direct, hands-on patient care including assistance with activities of daily living, e.g., bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, but are restricted from some other nursing duties (e.g. medication may be administered only by licensed personnel).

Given a societal context in which body image is often distorted, many patients are uncomfortable not only with physical death, but with their physical bodies, in general. They may worry that others are repulsed by their appearance, particularly as they start to experience more severe physical declines. Members of a nursing staff are particularly well-positioned to demonstrate respect and comfort in caring for the body. As decreased physical and mental capacity accompany the approach of death, patients become increasingly reliant on others for tasks that they have previously performed for themselves. Nursing personnel often take over these tasks. When working in a manner that demonstrates competence, kindness, and respect, nursing personnel acknowledge the humanity of those who are dying and may be able to lessen a patient's feelings of powerlessness, worthlessness, and the emotional discomfort that attends bodily decline.

Pain control is often an important issue for those near the end of life. Nurses assess patients for pain, administer pain medications ordered by medical providers, and use non-pharmaceutical techniques (e.g., re-positioning, application of warmth/cold) to reduce or relieve pain. For some who are dying, there is the desire to have all pain relieved, even if that means loss of alertness or decreased mental capacity. For others mental acuity is more important than physical comfort, and

some find pain to be an indicator that one is still alive. For these individuals, complete relief of pain may not be the goal, particularly if it cannot be accomplished without sacrificing other things of greater worth to the patient. Nurses care for patients in pain by listening to their concerns and by educating them on available palliative options and their side effects.

Education is a major component of nursing care. Nursing personnel trained in end-of-life care are able to provide information regarding the dying process, including particular physical changes that most people experience as they near death. Personal and cultural discomfort with death itself, and with the bodily changes that often accompany it, can be strong. Many persons have not encountered those who are dying and are not familiar with the attendant changes in appetite, sleep patterns, energy levels, bodily functions, and the like. Nursing personnel can ease concerns of patients and their families by discussing changes that are happening or will likely happen as disease progresses or death nears.

The primary nurse caring for a patient in the hospital often is the most knowledgeable about the patient's concerns and condition, as well as the family dynamics. Although nurses (and other healthcare providers) are limited by law regarding what information they may share about a patient and with whom,²¹ a brief conversation with the primary nurse before the pastor enters the patient's room may lead to valuable insights into how the patient is feeling that day and any particular joys or struggles he or she might be having.

Physicians

Depending upon the complexity of a patient's problem and the level of care required, from the general medical floor up to more intensive, critical care units, there may be many different kinds of physicians involved in a patient's care. Furthermore, it is becoming more common for hospitalized patients to have a hospitalist, not their own personal physician, coordinating their care within the hospital. Hospitalists are typically employed by a hospital to be the physician of record for inpatient care. Most patients meet their hospitalist for the first time when they get admitted to hospital. Because of this, and the numbers of different specialists and other healthcare providers that come and go during their treatment, many patients can't remember the name of this physician who is ordering the tests and the treatments they receive.

While the physician of record is the "quarterback" of the healthcare team looking after the patient, it is truly a team enterprise. Patients and their families may often be confused when different sub-specialists render different opinions about how the patient is doing. Their opinions and perspectives often emerge from their particular clinical expertise, often focused on a specific organ system. For example, the cardiologist may comment on a heart problem he can fix with medication, but the pulmonologist reports that the lungs will never regain normal function. It is the primary attending physician's responsibility to help the patient and family understand the overall prognosis and plan. However, because of the complexity of healthcare today, communication may be of variable quality and misunderstandings can occur.

The Pastor's Role

As mentioned, because of the protections for patient privacy (i.e. HIPAA), the pastor usually relies primarily on the patient or family for information. Sometimes this information may be incorrect or inaccurate, however, because the complexity of health information and the often-chaotic hospital environment can easily result in confusion. The pastor must therefore be cautious about drawing conclusions about the patient's prognosis. However, although the pastor does not have access to the patient's medical record, he or she does have a critical role to play in helping individuals in their congregations to cope with illness. In fact, often the pastor's presence itself in the hospital environment reminds patients of their connection to the larger faith community that sustains us all. Above all, the pastor should make the effort to be present with the patient, whether this is in the patient's room, in a preoperative area, or in the infusion center for chemotherapy. Beyond presence, however, there are things a pastor can do that can be of great help to a patient.

First, the pastor can be sensitive to bias when it appears to result in misunderstanding or discrimination. For example, does the pastor detect that the healthcare team is making assumptions about the patient's values? This mistake may occur particularly where healthcare teams have a poor understanding of particular faith-based perspectives held by the patient. In such cases, pastoral leaders may have opportunities to facilitate understanding between the healthcare team and the patient.

Second, the pastor can offer to participate in ethics committee deliberations, if these arise, provided the patient or the patient's advocate gives permission. Patients will often appreciate the pastor's willingness to be part of these discussions. In these meetings the pastor can moderate any evidence of intimidation, demonstrate appreciation of different perspectives, and facilitate positive interactions among those present. He or she may ask questions that the patient or family wished to ask but were hesitant to do so. Pastoral leaders also can provide support for patient and family perspectives, as well as clarity regarding positions taken by the church, which can provide clarity not only to the healthcare team, but also for the patient and family as they wrestle with difficult issues at the end of life.

Third, the pastor must understand the power of words and avoid making statements that seem to claim a special or full knowledge of God's purposes. Pastoral leaders should not say something, for example, that suggests the patient's illness is "God's will." Similarly, he or she should not tell the patient that his or her suffering will "build character." Such claims not only can be psychologically harmful, but may also fail to recognize the genuine mystery of God's providence. Additionally,

clergy persons should not say they “understand” what a patient is experiencing and should avoid giving personal advice or comparing their own experience to that of the patient. The struggles and challenges at the end of life belong to the existential terrain of the patients themselves, and when someone else claims to understand or share those particular experiences it robs the patient of his or her particular experience, moving it instead onto the terrain of the pastor. Above all, the pastor is called to listen to the patient’s experience without judgment and to accompany the patient in that experience, providing companionship and attentive care. Pastoral presence should offer a safe place for the patient to express feelings and concerns.

The Clash of Cultures

The sensitive pastor quickly will be aware of a tension between the culture of a hospital and the culture of the patient’s faith community. The hospital culture is characterized by a focus on the individual patient, a desire to either cure disease or transfer the patient to a long-term care facility, and a general uniformity in the way the right course of action is determined for patients. It can therefore be difficult to reconcile this healthcare culture with situations where broader faith communities are involved, disease is incurable, or when the patient has unique needs, perspectives, or beliefs that require deviating in some way from the well-established habits of the healthcare team.

When healthcare professionals discuss medical ethics, it is typically in the context of four principles:

1. Autonomy—Respect for patient self-determination regarding the treatment received by the patient.
2. Beneficence—Doing what the physician believes will benefit the patient.
3. Non-maleficence—Not doing anything that harms the patient.
4. Justice—Providing non-discriminatory treatment to all patients through a fair distribution of available medical resources.

While these principles provide a relatively comprehensive, secular context for considering ethical questions and dilemmas, they can at times conflict with each other (autonomy with beneficence, for instance, in surrogate decision making), and they may not always fully accord with faith-based perspectives. The principle of autonomy, for example, can make sense of a patient decision that emerges from a particular spiritual conviction because it can be understood as a basic right of patients to exercise their own beliefs. It is important to recognize, however, that respect for autonomy does not require that healthcare workers actively understand the patient’s beliefs and perspectives, only that they acquiesce to them. Pastors, therefore, can push the collaboration of patients and the healthcare team further, going beyond the basic agreements elaborated by these four principles and towards a more genuine, more robust understanding of each other.

It is also important to recognize that other ethical theories are often more illuminating and helpful in end-of-life circumstances than are consequentialist and rule-based theories. Ethics of care and other virtue-based philosophies focus on the qualities of character needed by decision-makers in end-of-life cases. Emphasis is placed on the embodiment of particular virtues and less on particular actions per se. The language in past Presbyterian statements about covenants of care clearly has an affinity with this paradigm of ethics.

Healthcare institutions also can be intolerant of ambiguity and organized around a “chain of command” for decision making. This rigidity creates a potential for conflict on two accounts. First, a person’s religious beliefs introduce an ambiguity for healthcare providers who may then have to reflect on and reconsider various practices to which they are accustomed. Second, while it is more acceptable today to question a physician’s decision than it was in the past, there remains an assumption that the physician has the patient’s best interests at heart unless proven otherwise. Of course, the degree to which this is true depends on the physician’s attitudes, approach to end-of-life care, and knowledge of the patient and the patient’s values/goals of care.

Insofar as they are not subject to the hospital chain of command, pastoral leaders may be more willing to question whether the patient’s values are being honored than members of the hospital staff. More importantly, the pastor brings to the patient a connection to the faith community, which can alleviate the isolation a patient may experience in the hospital setting. The patient is not simply another individual in the hospital. Rather, he or she is part of a community that, at its best, provides hope, comfort, and a sense of belonging. This fellowship has a healing effect of its own. Furthermore, the pastor can affirm the value of wholeness as something more meaningful and lasting than cure. Representing this holistic vision in the midst of the sometimes countervailing habits and practices of healthcare providers is important in promoting the best possible end-of-life experience for patients who might otherwise be swept up in healthcare decisions that do not accord with their beliefs and perspectives.

C. Considerations for the Community of Faith

We live in a 21st century American society that often glamorizes youth and denies the reality of death. Most people avoid thinking about death until they or a loved one receives a potentially fatal diagnosis or dies suddenly. The social landscape whereby family members now spread themselves across larger distances exacerbates growing feelings of disconnect- edness and complicates decision making at the end of life. Decision making in the midst of a crisis, without intentional fore- thought and planning, too many times leaves people wondering later, “Why did we ever make those decisions?” or “Why did

we insist on subjecting our loved one to painful, invasive and ultimately futile procedures?” This sort of second-guessing highlights another reason that thinking about end-of-life issues *before* we are faced with them is so important. Not doing so can result in choices that leave family members feeling guilty and remorseful.

Much of the thinking about end of life that needs to be done is spiritual in nature and properly belongs within the framework of a person’s religious tradition. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate for pastors to raise end-of-life issues with their congregation and encourage them to engage in advance preparation rather than leaving decision making to the bedside in an ICU. Death is not optional, but part of God’s ordering of creation. Our Reformed theology teaches that one form of human sinfulness is “our inability to live in a relation of trust and obedience to God, seeking instead to take charge of our own destiny and guarantee our own life.” This form of sin is “a mistrust of God’s intention and/or ability to nurture and sustain us, and one of its chief results is the fear of and denial of death.”²² Ultimately, victory over death is necessarily divine, not technological or scientific.

Many who face death are geographically separated from their closest family members. This distance in its own way contributes to the denial of or refusal to come to terms with death. Many family members (and others who live at a distance) are often not fully aware of a person’s physical and mental declines and find it difficult to accept that death is nearing. It is not uncommon for an individual to face the approach of death with little family presence or other support.

In the midst of this situation, the community of faith tells us we are not alone. As the scriptures and confessions remind us, in life *and in death* we belong to God, and “even in the valley of the shadow of death, we need not fear. God is with us.” Members of the faith community in the love and care they provide represent a gracious reminder of this. As Amy Plantinga Pauw has noted, “Those who face death experience the living presence of God through the living presence of the community that cherishes and mourns them. And the community members who cherish and mourn these deaths are at the same time preparing themselves for the deaths that will surely come to them someday.”²³

So what kinds of questions should faithful Christians think about before they face a life-threatening illness? One important issue concerns the intersection of the widely held belief in the sacredness of human life with the application of life-prolonging medical technology. Some faithful people say that our lives are sacred because they are “a gift from God.” In our faith tradition, the sacred nature of human life emerges from the claim that humans are created in the image of God.²⁴ In the medical community in the U.S., the notion of life’s sacredness has been translated into the widely held view that doctors should not act deliberately to end a human life.

However, does our belief that God is the giver of life mean that under all circumstances we are morally obligated to postpone death as long as possible? Confusion about the particular moral requirements engendered by the sacred nature of human life sometimes play out in family conflicts in the ICU. Some family members opt to follow the patient’s wishes as stipulated in their advance directive, which may include limits on the extent to which they wish their physical life to be prolonged by aggressive medical interventions. At the same time, others may stand across the bed from those same family members, often with their pastor, and point out that only God should decide when a particular life should end. For them, actions to end unwanted medical treatment, like turning off a ventilator, are “trying to play God.” Congregations will benefit from pastoral guidance in thinking through such conflicts.

It is important to understand that medical professionals, especially physicians and surgeons, historically have been trained in a system where medicine is explicitly and implicitly conceived as a “war on death.” This “war on death” metaphor arose as medicine was beginning to have unprecedented success in treating infectious disease. But it gained a great deal of additional momentum throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, with an explosion of medical technologies like antibiotics, ventilators, dialysis machines, and new imaging technology that give physicians even more powerful new tools. Early successes treating infectious diseases led medicine to act as if, by declaring “war” on each disease one by one, death itself could be eliminated from human life. This foundational metaphor persists in various formulations, often leading doctors to view the death of a patient, no matter how old or sick, as a “defeat” at the hands of an implacable “enemy.” Thus, some doctors will go to great lengths to postpone death even when it becomes clear that, for an individual patient, there is no credible hope for survival, let alone a return to health. A family panicked by an unexpected medical crisis encountering a medical system whose ethos is “keep fighting at all costs” with constantly expanding technologies, creates a “perfect storm” whereby dying is turned into a prolonged and painful process. Ethical and spiritual reflection has not kept pace with the burgeoning of technology, which means there often is little discussion about the goals of care. This lack of preparation and discussion results in the application of treatments that may not align with the patient’s true values and desires.

Death ruptures the most profound human relationships, and certainly no one welcomes the loss that accompanies a loved one’s death. But since God’s ordering of creation includes the death of living things, we all face death at some point. So the challenge for Christians concerns *how* to approach the inevitability of death faithfully, and that approach includes planning for how we wish to die.

Hospice and Palliative Care

Part of thinking about the end of our lives includes becoming knowledgeable about hospice and palliative care, two evolving options for medical care at the end of life. At one time death was a fairly discrete event. Most life-threatening accidents and illnesses were fatal within a few days. Modern technology has now turned dying into an often months-long process.

This intensive use of technology also means the dying person must be in a medical facility where skilled professionals apply and monitor these machines. But while the reality is that the vast majority of people, particularly those who are older, die in a hospital or nursing home, about 80 percent of people, when asked, report that they would prefer to die at home, in familiar surroundings and with family in attendance. Hospice is one alternative that can make this possible.

The usual goal of medical care is to cure illness or extend life. This effort often means sacrificing the quality of a person's life in the immediate in an effort to gain more time later on. Hospice helps people with a terminal illness have the fullest possible lives in the present by focusing on the relief of pain, maintaining awareness as long as feasible, and supporting the patient and family in meeting the patient's goals of care.

Hospice is a program, not a place. Hospice care may be provided in any setting: in the patient's home, assisted living facility, nursing home, or in some cases the hospital. Residential hospice houses, where available, offer hospice care that is covered by Medicare and most insurance plans. These plans also cover medications, equipment, and supplies related to the terminal condition, but require additional payment for room and board expenses. Importantly, the hospice benefit does not cover treatment primarily aimed at curing the underlying terminal illness (like chemotherapy). Hospice provides care through an interdisciplinary team consisting of registered nurses, nurses' aides, hospice physicians, social workers, spiritual care professionals, and volunteers. Patients may choose to continue to collaborate with their personal physicians, or may choose to have the hospice physician manage their medical needs. Although hospice is available 24/7 to address patient needs, it does not provide around the clock care. Rather, the various members of the care team usually visit at regular intervals as determined by the patient's needs. Patients can receive continuous care or be admitted to the hospital for inpatient care in the event that symptoms cannot be managed at home. If sitter services are needed, hospice usually can provide a list of sitter services for hire.

Patients can be referred to hospice from another physician, but may also self-refer for an evaluation to determine eligibility and gain information related to their particular situation. A hospice agency will assess patients and admit them only if it is determined that the patient's prognosis suggests they will live only six months or less. The hospice team will follow the patients until they die, providing coaching, emotional support, education about physical and mental declines, and assisting with paperwork, funeral planning, and notifications after death. Bereavement support also is available to loved ones for one year after the patient's death.

A patient may receive hospice services as long as the hospice physician continues to certify that the patient's life expectancy is six months or less. This is determined by a set of specific medical criteria in concert with the hospice physician's clinical judgment. If a patient lives longer than six months, the hospice benefit may be extended, provided the hospice physician feels that the future prognosis continues to be less than six months. However, if the patient's condition improves or becomes chronic, and it appears that the patient will live longer than six months, the patient must be discharged from hospice. That patient can, however, be readmitted when medical decline recurs.

A persistent myth about hospice programs is that people should wait until just days before death to start hospice care. Unfortunately, the median length of stay in hospice in the U.S. currently is less than one month. This is not long enough for hospice to offer the range and depth of support and education that it is capable of providing. Hospice teams are particularly well-versed in dealing with pain and other symptoms that occur at the end of life, and they can provide relief from suffering that may be neglected or overlooked with conventional care. Patients often improve for a time when pain and other symptoms are well controlled. This respite allows for more quality time with families and loved ones. Much to their amazement, friends and families sometimes find that the dying process, when well-managed and with excellent pain control, actually can be a time of personal and family growth as people act out the virtues of compassion, faithfulness, and mutual support for their dying loved one.

While hospice includes palliative care, not all types of palliative care constitute hospice. Palliative care is a relatively new medical specialty aimed at managing symptoms associated with chronic or terminal illnesses that are troubling to patients, but often ignored or undertreated by other medical specialties. Unlike hospice, a determination that an illness is terminal is not required before receiving palliative care, so it can be provided even while a person is receiving other therapies such as chemotherapy or radiation. Many hospitals have palliative care teams that can provide consultation when a patient is hospitalized and, in some communities, outpatient consultations and home visits are offered as well. Like hospice, palliative care is focused on improving symptom management and the quality of patients' lives as much as possible, given their medical condition. This amelioration includes attention to the emotional aspects of serious illness and offers support to patients and their families. However, outpatient palliative care is a medical consultative service and does not provide nursing, nursing aids, spiritual care support, medications, supplies, bereavement support and other services offered under the hospice benefit.

Advance Directives for Health Care

As discussed earlier, people now have the ability to create advance directives—legal documents that outline the types of medical care and procedures they want or do not want at the end of their lives, or *whom* they wish to entrust with those decisions—based on their personal values and religious traditions. Each state has its own statutes authorizing these documents, so the exact document titles, their terminologies, and the range of documents constituting legal advance directives vary by state.

The bar association websites in each state usually are a good place to find the necessary documents to create an advance directive that meets state requirements.

One kind of advance directive available in many jurisdictions is called a “living will,” sometimes also called a “health care directive.” This document allows an individual to specify desired and undesired forms of end-of-life care, including resuscitation instructions, desired medications for pain, and the individual’s preferences regarding life support devices if they become unable to communicate. Its originator can revoke a living will at any time.

Another type of advance directive document is called a “durable power of attorney for health care” or DPAHC. This is not to be confused with a general durable power of attorney, which authorizes a named person to act on behalf of the signer in conducting business affairs, managing or selling property, and the like. A DPAHC appoints another person, called a proxy, to make health-care decisions for the individual who created the DPAHC when (*and only when*) that individual becomes incapable of making or expressing decisions about treatment. Designated proxies can authorize or reject specific treatments (whether or not these are specified in a living will or other written instruction) based on their knowledge of what the person who appointed them would have wanted. DPAHC statutes and documents also encourage the appointment of a secondary proxy, to be consulted in case the first-named proxy cannot serve when needed.

There are a number of ways that states vary from one another in their requirements for advance directives. Some states allow persons to make either a living will or a durable power of attorney for health care; either document is referred to as an advance directive. Other states combine living wills and durable powers of attorney into a single document. Further, some states require formal notarization of these documents, while others require only that the signature be witnessed when the document is signed. Finally, some states also require that the person named as healthcare proxy or secondary proxy also sign the document, indicating his or her willingness to accept that responsibility.

Before filling out an advance-directive document, however, it is important to think about one’s personal values and wishes regarding one’s end-of-life care. One way to do this is to imagine you are facing an incurable illness and a significantly shortened lifespan. How would you want to spend your remaining time? What important life projects are you working on that you really want to complete? What things are on your “bucket list”? Are there important upcoming family events—graduations, weddings, births, anniversaries, or the like—that you especially want to attend? These personally important goals are good stopping places on the journey of thinking through the many choices about medical care that will confront you now when and if you have an actual terminal diagnosis. They help guide whether you would want to prioritize quality of life or quantity of life or some place on the continuum between those two considerations. The choices you make about these goals will help you sort out how much weight you will want to give to the various treatments available for prolonging your life.

For example, if *quantity* of life is most important to you, then you might be willing to go to a distant cancer center for treatment even though that means time away from family and friends. If quantity of life is your primary goal, then the benefits of life-prolonging treatment will count more than burdens. Similarly, if prolonging the quantity of life you have is most important, you might want to choose to authorize long-term life-support on a respirator in a nursing home. If, however, you favor *quality* of life so you can enjoy as much as possible time spent with family and friends and the ability to function such that you can pursue your bucket list, then you might, based on those personal goals, say that the potential burdens of some forms of treatment will be too intrusive to be worthwhile. There are many, many variations on these themes that you might choose, so it is a tremendous help to have thought, even if hypothetically, about these choices before you actually have to make them. Of course, your age and general state of health at the time of your diagnosis also plays a vital role in the choices you make, so as people age and their health changes over time, it is important to revisit these considerations.

One of the most important decisions you make in executing a DPAHC advance directive concerns the person that you choose to be your healthcare proxy. Since it is impossible to know in advance the circumstances of an individual’s final illness, it is imperative that your proxy knows you and your wishes well enough to determine what you most likely would have wanted in your circumstances. Therefore, you and your proxy should spend some time in conversation about your wishes in as much detail as you can imagine, given that your final illness is only hypothetical at this point. Moreover, although your DPAHC is a legally and morally binding document, your proxy must be prepared to hold your medical team accountable for honoring your wishes for and against treatment. Some people find it hard to disagree with what physicians recommend. Such a person may not make a good proxy. In short, a good proxy would ideally make the same decisions you would have made yourself and have the tenacity to advocate for those decisions in the face of opposition.

Often family members are chosen as the proxy because they tend to know us best. However, with families now often scattered around the globe, the person who knows you best *might* not be your son who works in Singapore or a daughter who lives on the other side of the continent, but instead your next door neighbor who takes you to doctor’s appointments and picks up your medications at the pharmacy. Additionally, family members sometimes disapprove of the choices a person wants for him or herself. This can make it too emotionally difficult for them to insist with any tenacity that doctors honor the patient’s particular choices when they themselves do not condone them. In this case, you might want to think about asking another person to be your proxy. If you think that a close family member is seriously conflicted by your choices, it is best to work through that with them while you are still healthy. It is wise to have a frank discussion with this family member about what you want or don’t want in terms of treatment at the end of your life. Your goal should not be to get them to change their posi-

tion. Rather you should seek their agreement to honor your choices because they are yours and out of their love for you. It is important to note that this does not require they would make the same decisions for themselves, and your choices should not be read as a judgment about theirs.

Coming to these agreements often prevents the desperately sad scene described above in which some children want to follow the advance directive and others argue passionately against those choices because they see them as immoral or an “attempt to play God.” In the event that you decide that a non-family member is the best choice for your proxy, it is also wise to let your family know this in advance so they are not blindsided by that information in the midst of a crisis situation. You will also need to recruit at least one successor proxy in case for some reason your first choice is unable to serve when needed. Sitting down with a trusted clergy person to map out what is important to you may also be helpful.

Your proxy needs to have a copy of your advance directive, as does your primary physician and your local hospital, which usually will scan it into your medical record so it is readily available. The proxy also needs to be able to locate your document at a moment’s notice, so it is not appropriate, for example, to keep it in a safe deposit box that is inaccessible to the proxy. If your church has confidential files, it may be willing to keep a copy of your advance directive locked up in the church. Since pastors are among the first to be notified when a crisis arises, they can be helpful in providing this critical document if they have a copy. If you have a personal attorney, giving him or her a copy is also a wise idea.

As has been noted previously, most of us live in a death-denying and mobile society. The community of believers gives itself a great gift, and gives society a needed example, by acknowledging death and lovingly accompanying those approaching the end of life. The community blesses individuals when it is unafraid to face and speak of death. It offers the opportunity to express deep emotions related to death and loss and a safe environment in which to do so. It also encourages thoughtful planning, helping to initiate important end-of-life conversations among family members and between individuals and their healthcare providers. In all of this the community of faith lives out the Good News of love, care, and hope that we have been given in Christ Jesus.

D. *Special Concerns or Circumstances in End-of-Life Planning*

End-of-Life Planning and Care for Chronically or Severely Disabled Persons

One of the great concerns of those who are chronically ill or severely disabled, and especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), is that their lives are viewed by others as less valuable than the lives of persons without evident disabilities. People living with significant disability are not different in the most important ways from those living without those challenges. They live their lives fully, adapting in often-remarkable ways to a society that is designed around ability and independence. They sometimes depend on others to help them compensate for lack of capacity to accomplish certain tasks independently, as we all depend on others for help under various circumstances. Thus, those with disabilities teach us all about the interdependence of Christian community. One’s own spirituality cannot help but be affected by the unpretentious and innocent way that individuals with IDD approach other people and life in general. Pastoral leaders must mindfully include such persons in their pastoral care and help insure inclusion of all persons in the wider church community. With this in mind, end-of-life issues involving persons with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities must be discussed with sensitivity toward their experiences.

Discussion about ethical decision making for persons with severe and chronic disability may tend to invoke the circumstances of their disability in addressing questions about whether a medical or surgical intervention is truly indicated. However, the decision to provide an intervention should have nothing to do with the assessment by outside observers of the value or worth of the person’s life, something which is often significantly confounded by a propensity to overestimate the negative impact of the disability and its challenges. The only person who can determine the quality of a life is the person who is living it or the surrogate who knows the individual well enough to make that determination, if the person can’t speak for himself (including the parent or guardian, if the person is a child). Often, medical decision making is dominated by consequentialist ways of thinking. This paradigm has tended to focus on determinations of risk, benefit, and burden. To use terminology from the work of Paul Lehmann, it is more important for the Christian to consider how any interventions employed contribute to “making and keeping human life human.”²⁵ Every person, no matter what her intellectual and/or physical limitations might be, should be conceived as part of God’s activity in the world to make and keep human life human. The aim is the creation of communities of persons who affirm each other and the experience of a profound existential and spiritual joy that arises from that activity. This type of joy is distinct from, and more important than, more mundane notions of happiness and pleasure that often find their way into ethical decisions about the costs and benefits of treatment.

The pastor plays an important role in the hospital or nursing facility, particularly in situations involving patients with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, by introducing the paradigm of “making and keeping human life human” as a balance to strictly consequentialist ways of thinking. Still more important, knowing that supporting human relationships makes and keeps us human means that decisions about interventions can be framed in such a way that promoting the individual’s ability to be in relationship with others is explored as a critical consideration. There also are specific additional ways that the pastor can minister to the patient and family/caregivers:

1. The pastor should be aware that past predictions about the limited life expectancy of infants and children with IDD have been set aside as medical science has developed effective interventions to correct or ameliorate many congenital anomalies. As the life expectancy of persons with IDD has increased to near-parity with that of the general population, end-of-life issues have become more similar for all persons. Hospice and palliative care choices, for example, are just as pertinent for the IDD population as for the general population. Perhaps most important, since we may have a greater propensity to be dismissive of their beliefs and values, it is utterly critical to remember that patients with IDD have the same right as others to make end-of-life choices and have those choices respected.

2. The pastor should ensure that the care of individuals with IDD is respectful and reassure these persons, as well as their families and caregivers, that the church is committed to providing them the same degree of pastoral care provided to any other member of the church community.

3. The pastor should support the task of the patient, parents, and caregivers in making medical decisions together. In other words, shared decision making helps ensure that the values and preferences of the patient are respected even when medical facts and recommendations may be set forth by the healthcare team as the dominant considerations. The desire to understand and work with these values and preferences, in addition to the medical facts, promotes the humanity of all involved.

4. When a patient's family makes a decision to prolong the life of the patient, and this appears only to prolong the person's suffering with very little chance of any future relational experience, the pastor can help the family to explore what love and the desire to promote the human element in the person's life suggests is the best course of action. Stated another way, pastoral leaders can encourage a discourse surrounding the best response to Christ's command to love each other, recognizing that death is inevitable for all of us, that we belong to Christ in this life and beyond death, and that a disability does not devalue the worth of a person's life.

5. As noted, it is very helpful to a family/surrogate when they can refer to an advance directive that expresses the individual's values and preferences for end-of-life care. People with a severe disability have the same desire to live as anyone else, though this may not always be appreciated by some healthcare providers. Early formulation of an advance directive may be especially important for individuals whose bodies are vulnerable to serious disease, particularly those with a severe disability who wish their lives to be prolonged by any beneficial means possible.

End-of-Life Decisions for Terminally Ill or Severely Impaired Children and Pregnant Women

Children who are suffering with an illness or condition that will lead to death within weeks to months, presents a significant challenge for end-of-life care. The death of a child is a wrenching loss for any parent and for all involved in the care of the child. It also raises difficult theological questions. On the one hand, we can try to recognize God's presence in the suffering and try to affirm Christ's promise never to abandon us in life or in death. On the other hand, parents of dying children typically feel abandoned by God. The belief that God is omnipotent conflicts with the narrative of a suffering God who allows God's self (Son) to be placed on a cross for a terrible death. Children, depending on their age, may blame themselves for their condition. Children's concerns usually are immediate, including things such as pain relief, opportunities for play, visits from family, friends, and pets.

The pastor has the opportunity to minister to the child and parents, as well as the medical team caring for a child in the hospital, in some very important ways:

1. Rituals important to the child and parents, e.g. prayer and communion, should be explored and made a part of advance care planning.

2. Parents often express feeling powerless in the hospital setting. Pastors can explore these feelings and facilitate discussions with the medical team and hospital chaplains, who have training in clinical pastoral support, in order to give parents a greater sense of control, or help them find peace where they lack it, as end-of-life decisions are being made.

3. Pastors should specifically address the concern by many parents that faith in God requires that "everything be done" to keep their child alive. It is theologically justified to consider the benefits and burdens of any treatment. The concept of "caring for the child" is easily conflated with a commitment to aggressive treatment options. These options could include dialysis (to remove toxins from the body if the kidneys are failing), intubation of the trachea and use of a ventilator (if the child is in respiratory failure), and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if the child stops breathing or the heart stops beating. These options may be reasonable if they can reasonably culminate in the return of function. However, using any of these options to prolong the process of dying presents burdens with no demonstrable benefit. In turn, limiting those types of interventions may represent a preferable way to care for the child. For example, a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order may be appropriate to ease the passing of a child whose death is imminent or for whom a return to meaningful functioning is not a reasonable expectation.

3. Pastors should be aware of the availability of a clinical ethics consultation service or healthcare ethics committee, if an irresolvable values conflict emerges between a family and members of the child's medical team. Such a service or committee can help provide clarity in situations where there is miscommunication and conflict. The pastor can and should, if invited by the family, participate in any meetings held to contribute to resolution of a conflict. Parents who have a close con-

nection to a church often want to know the church's position on various end-of-life issues, and the pastor can address this in meetings called by the ethics committee.

4. If a child's life expectancy is less than six months, parents should be made aware of the availability of pediatric specialists in hospice and palliative care. These specialists can ensure that the comfort of the child is a primary focus and help with the determination of whether an intervention such as artificial nutrition and hydration produces any benefits that outweigh the burdens and discomforts of the intervention. This determination is typically a concern when the child becomes unresponsive a short time before natural death occurs. It is a normal human response to want to provide nutrition and hydration artificially (see discussion below), especially when a child is no longer eating or drinking. But this form of feeding may or may not be in the child's best interest. The body is shutting down during the process of dying, and feeding can produce discomfort. Another frequent concern is the use of opioids, such as morphine, for pain control. Parents worry that opioids may hasten death by depressing respiratory drive. When pain control is used appropriately, this is not a significant issue, and these medications can ensure that the child lives with minimal or no pain.

The circumstances of dying pregnant women present another theological challenge. There have been occasions when a woman dying with metastatic cancer or a devastating neurological condition has been placed on life support when death was imminent, sometimes by court order. The hope has been that the infant she is carrying might survive if gestation is prolonged for as much time as possible. Our Reformed theology does not require a specific course of action when making a decision about whether to keep a pregnant woman on life support when death is imminent or when she has already met the criteria for brain death (discussed below). The specific circumstances must be examined, and individual moral commitments and beliefs of the pregnant woman and her partner should govern whatever decision is made, in light of respecting the woman's right to govern what is done to her body.

Several specific considerations should be kept in mind:

1. Infants supported under these conditions, if they survive at all, generally have poor outcomes.
2. If maintaining the pregnant woman on life support violates her own wishes, it is not ethically defensible to impose that upon her.
3. The pastor can play an important role in having discussions with the woman and her partner to determine what is in the best interests of all concerned parties. No matter what the decision made, maintaining a pastoral presence is critical.

Withholding/Withdrawing Nutrition and Hydration in End-of-Life Care

Normally, eating gives us fuel for life and keeps us healthy. It is also an important part of our family life and social interactions. We gather around the table not just to eat, but also to pray and to enjoy fellowship and conversation. Food is often a gift for those we care about and is a primary way in which we nurture each other.

The final days or weeks of a terminal illness normally include a decrease in the intake of food and fluid. Artificial hydration and nutrition from intravenous lines, a feeding tube surgically implanted into the stomach (called a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy [PEG] tube), or from forced oral intake of food and water can cause discomfort and harm. During this time, the human body is preparing itself for death and has gradually decreased its need for nutrition and fluid as bodily systems and organs begin to shut down. This decline can be a difficult time of transition for family members and loved ones who are involved in caring for the dying person. Caregivers often feel that, even when they are no longer able to offer any type of treatments, they can at least offer food. "We can't just let him starve!" is a common sentiment.

The expected and natural declines in eating and drinking in the final days or weeks of a terminal illness do not constitute starvation. At end of life, the internal organ systems are no longer able to process food and fluid, and most patients do not feel hungry during this time. Unlike a healthy person, very sick and dying persons do not experience feelings of hunger and thirst. When a person with a terminal illness is not eating, this is usually a sign that he or she is beginning the dying process. Providing fluids through an IV or PEG tube or forcing the patient to eat and drink can cause discomfort, nausea, and anxiety. It can also lead to physical harm, such as increased fluid in the lungs and extremities, diarrhea, bloating, and shortness of breath.

Somewhat paradoxically, dehydration actually often affords some pain relief and can also relieve nausea, congestion, and coughing that can occur at end of life. It is recommended that caregivers allow patients to be the "guide" with respect to the amount of food and fluid they receive. As stated above, most people, when nearing end of life, don't feel like eating. Teeth clenching may be the only way a person who is nonverbal can express that he or she does not want to eat. In response, feeding should not be forced. If the patient is hungry or thirsty, offer favorite foods or drink in small sips or tastes until satisfied. The focus should be on pleasure rather than quantity or nutritional value. Keeping lips and mouth moist and clean with oral swabs will give comfort as the dying process unfolds.

Some patients near end of life begin to have difficulty swallowing. This is especially prevalent in patients with dementia. Called dysphagia, this condition can cause food or fluid to be aspirated into the lungs, causing breathing difficulty or pneumonia. Dysphagia is an expected progression of the disease process in end-stage dementia and other terminal illnesses.

Healthcare providers may recommend soft or pureed foods in these situations. Unfortunately, the texture of soft or pureed food is often unappealing. Patients therefore may not enjoy it and often refuse to eat. If regular food is preferred, this should be discussed with the physician. The physician can write an order to allow comfort foods for pleasure, provided the patient and family understand that there is a risk of aspiration that could cause pneumonia. Still, the benefits of enjoying food near end of life may outweigh the risk of aspiration. Pneumonia is generally a painless way to die, while restricting a person's diet at the end of life can be associated with frustration and loss of pleasure in those final days.

A PEG tube may be recommended for patients who are having difficulty swallowing. PEG tubes are excellent "bridges" back to normal eating in patients who have a potentially reversible condition, like trauma or acute stroke. However, in persons who are actively dying and no longer able to consume food orally, the placement of a PEG tube should not be considered without serious discussion about goals of care. If it is possible, these discussions should include a palliative care team. In these situations, a PEG tube can artificially prolong the disease process and lead to a protracted death with poor quality of life. Hospice teams can provide support to family members and caregivers of patients who are no longer eating and drinking due to terminal decline, as well as to families who choose at some point in the process to discontinue artificial nutrition and hydration for their loved one.

People who have ceased eating and drinking due to their illness will gradually lose consciousness and will usually die within two to three weeks. Medical evidence very clearly indicates that this is a painless, compassionate way to die. Nonetheless, of course, a family will need a great deal of support during this time. Hospice providers are especially skilled in providing support in these situations, and a pastoral leader's involvement will be critical.

The Roles of Palliative and Terminal Sedation in End-of-Life Care

It is not uncommon for dying persons, especially those in severe physical or emotional pain, to ask their physician to help hasten their death. For many dying patients, the fear of suffering is more significant than death itself. Many requests for assisted dying actually are calls for help—either for relief of physical pain or relief of profound spiritual and emotional suffering. While pain control is sometimes neglected during the treatment of disease, it should be aggressively pursued at end of life. A palliative care or hospice physician is particularly skilled in managing these symptoms and should be consulted if available. The risk of depression and anxiety is also significant in the end stages of disease. It is important not to overlook the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions. Spiritual and existential distress is prevalent in the terminally ill, but often not recognized by clinicians. Involvement of a minister or chaplain can be invaluable in helping patients come to terms with this suffering. When pain and symptoms are adequately controlled, the dying patient will often withdraw a request for hastened death.

In rare cases, however, aggressive treatment of pain or other end-of-life symptoms does not bring adequate relief. In these cases, and as a last resort, palliative sedation can be considered. Palliative sedation, sometimes also called terminal sedation, is the use of progressively higher levels of sedation to help relieve otherwise intractable and distressing pain at the very end of a patient's life.²⁶ Importantly, the purpose of palliative sedation is to relieve uncontrolled pain and suffering, not to hasten a person's death. The aim of the treatment is to achieve the lowest level of sedation that adequately relieves a patient's symptoms. Examples of conditions that could merit palliative sedation include agitated terminal delirium, intractable nausea and vomiting, uncontrollable pain, or unrelenting shortness of breath in actively dying patients who have not responded to the usual palliative treatments.

When someone is considering palliative sedation, consultation with a palliative care specialist is strongly recommended, both for guidance in the process and to ensure that all other palliative options have been fully exhausted. Full involvement of the family is encouraged unless this is contrary to the patient's wishes. The family will need continued support through the process, so the involvement of hospice and chaplaincy is also strongly recommended. If artificial nutrition and hydration are stopped at the start of palliative sedation, death will usually occur within two weeks.

The Determination of Death and Considerations About Organ Donation

People of faith who are committed to living out Christ's command to love and serve others may also feel that donating their organs represents a concrete way to fulfill that command. Belief in the resurrection does not require that our organs disintegrate with our bodies after death. Indeed, the apostle Paul reminds us that we receive a "spiritual body," not a physical body, at the time of our resurrection.²⁷ So, it is a compassionate act to donate one's organs as long as doing so does not cause one's own death.

The question of when death occurs is therefore of great importance. In this regard, the "Dead Donor Rule" has been the foundation of organ donation policy and practice. This rule essentially states that organs on which a person depends for survival, such as the heart and both lungs, cannot be taken for transplantation into another person until the donor is irreversibly dead.²⁸ In order to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest and that a donor patient is not sacrificed for the benefit of the organ recipient, the medical team caring for the donor is always kept completely separate from the transplant team. In fact, the medical care team for a potential donor will not normally even broach the subject of organ donation with the patient. Instead, a special team not involved in care will initiate those discussions with the family so as not to create even the appearance of compromised care.

Organ donation often becomes a consideration when an individual is critically injured in an accident and will not survive, is determined to have no brain activity following a severe head injury or intracranial hemorrhage, or will soon expire from a terminal condition that has not caused damage to the person's organs. If people have agreed to donate organs (often noted on their driver's license) and are determined to be dead based on neurological criteria (i.e. "brain dead"), they will be pronounced dead by a physician and then taken to an operating room while remaining on a ventilator for removal of viable, healthy organs for transplantation.²⁹

Organ donation after brain death became the primary approach for organ transplantation beginning in the late 1960s. However, since the late 1990s, organ donation after the cessation of blood circulation by a non-beating heart has become the more common standard. The typical circumstance concerns a patient who is unresponsive, dependent on a ventilator for breathing, who has no hope of recovery, and is expected soon to die. If the patient, or the patient's surrogate decision-maker, has expressed the desire to donate organs and death is believed to be imminent, the individual is taken to an operating room where the ventilator is removed. The team caring for the person then waits a certain amount of time, typically no more than thirty minutes, to see if the heart stops. If the heart stops, with complete cessation of blood circulation, the physician waits another period of time (typically five minutes) to make sure that the heart does not start beating again. If the heart does not restart, the physician attending to the patient will pronounce him or her dead. The body then will be moved directly into another operating room where the person's viable organs are removed for transplant.

Death by neurological criteria ("brain death") and death by cardiovascular criteria ("donation after cardiac death") are both recognized as legal determinations of death under the Uniform Determination of Death Act, which reads, "An individual who has sustained either (1) irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or (2) irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, is dead. A determination of death must be made in accordance with accepted medical standards."

However, these criteria for the determination of death have not been without controversy. Persons declared dead by neurological criteria ("brain death") usually appear to have normal skin tone while on a ventilator. Their heart will continue to beat and they often appear peaceful, even though they are completely unresponsive. Thus, many family members have difficulty believing that a loved one in such a condition actually is dead. With regard to determinations made based on cardiac death, some worry that their loved one could experience a spontaneous restart of the heart, even though this has not been observed when more than one minute has passed after cessation of blood circulation without cardiac activity (which is why various protocols for controlled cardiac donation recommend a waiting period of between two and five minutes). In some institutions, the waiting time has been shortened from five minutes in the interest of retrieving viable organs, since the longer the waiting period, the more likely an organ will degrade and lose viability for a transplant recipient.

The authors of this document encourage consideration of organ donation by all Presbyterians. It is truly a gift of life to those awaiting an organ. If death is expected and organ donation desired, it is reasonable to allow medical professionals to take all ethically acceptable measures to retrieve organs that will be viable for transplantation. It is also essential to do everything appropriate to ensure the comfort and dignity of the dying patient donor and to ensure that the life of the patient is not sacrificed to benefit another person. With these safeguards, life is given to one, but not taken from the other. This is truly a gracious act.

Pastoral Care of Persons Seeking Physician Aid in Dying

The Christian faith has a presumption toward life and understands the fulfillment of each person's life to be found in the love and service of God and neighbor. When our callings appear blocked by the extremes of depression, isolation, chronic pain, severe disability, or degenerative disease, we may question God's care and our own capacity to contribute to life. Then, sometimes in resignation, anger, grief, or to spare others the burden of our dependence, we may consider ending our lives. For some whose incapacity is advanced and pain seems unbearable and untreatable, new laws in several states allowing physician aid-in-dying (PAD)—also referred to by many as physician-assisted suicide (PAS)—may seem to promise deliverance or "death with dignity." These laws, within certain restrictions, allow a competent, terminally ill, adult patient to request and receive from her or his physician a prescription for medication (usually barbiturates) that is sufficient to produce unconsciousness and then death. While Presbyterians hold many views on the legalization of PAD, and while the PC(USA) has not taken a position in opposition to such legalization, pastoral and communal support of persons considering PAD needs to take into consideration a number of important factors.

In the above discussion of palliative sedation, it is noted that there may be a point at which an individual's pain is not manageable except by inducing some level of unconsciousness. By medically inducing a state of anesthesia, suffering is relieved. Additionally, the U.S. Supreme Court has already affirmed the legality of withdrawing artificial feeding and other life-support technologies, leading to death by 'natural' causes or processes. Finally, it is often said that hospice programs have turned pain control in dying patients into an art form and that there is hardly any pain that is uncontrollable. Given all of these options, many wonder why there is so much interest in legalizing PAD.

The availability of PAD indeed may allow patients to end pain and suffering or to avoid greater physical and mental deterioration. At the same time, however, experience in Oregon, the first U.S. state to legalize PAD, has shown that the majori-

ty of patients who request, receive, and actually use the lethal drugs do not do so because of unbearable physical pain, but in response to a different kind of anxiety or suffering. They employ PAD as a means of retaining (or regaining) some sense of control in an otherwise uncontrollable situation. PAD gives patients greater control over the timing of death because they choose when to swallow the medications that will cause death. While they cannot change the fact that they are terminally ill, these patients appear to highly value the ability to make choices about the timing and ease of their deaths.

It is important to note that even where it is legal, there are restrictions on PAD. Patients who wish to use this option sometimes wait too long, often anticipating one last visit from a loved one, and become unable to swallow the lethal medications without assistance. But if either the prescribing physician or a family member administers the medication, their action would fall into the category of active euthanasia (“mercy killing”), which is illegal in all fifty states.

As noted above, our Reformed tradition does not teach us to see pain and suffering as either redemptive or as some sort of just punishment, and we do not assume or project divine judgment on those who may hasten the end of their lives. Yet our tradition does emphasize the central theological significance of our interconnectedness, our relationships, and our covenants with one another and with God. To paraphrase the poet John Donne, “No one is an island,” and as Christians we are our “brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.” We recognize that each death diminishes us as a human community, but we have a positive responsibility to contribute to God’s healing whenever we can—even when that healing is not a cure, but a grace-filled conclusion.

For those ministering to persons who are seeking PAD for themselves, at least two theological concerns present themselves: (1) that the practice of PAD may encourage or reinforce isolation of the individual patient from community; and (2) that the potential exists for understanding one’s life or one’s body as a possession to be kept or disposed of rather than the gift of a gracious God. Precisely because we trust in a loving God who came not to “condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved,”³⁰ we do not condemn those who choose to die. We understand that a sense of damnation may well characterize the feelings of some who choose to end their lives, and we understand the Gospel as God’s hand—Christ’s body—ever stretched out to hold us, even to hold us back from self-destruction. Thus we, as a church, pray that each person in extremis, in a “dark night of the soul,” be empowered to cling to life even after the deepest tragedies and sadness.

Yet the choices of a severely ill person facing a terminal diagnosis are spiritual, emotional, and physical. The pastor should attempt to promote the fullest possible involvement of the family and congregation in supporting the patient in making decisions consistent with the patient’s lived experience and conscience. If it is indeed consistent with the values and beliefs of the dying patient, if the kinds of goodbyes and closings that they seek can be better accomplished, then the option of PAD might possibly be justified and done with reverence and even thanksgiving.

The role of the physician in end-of-life care should not be characterized as “playing God,” either in assisting the prolongation of life or allowing its cessation. In either case, health professionals can be seen as assisting God in the work of caring for us and bearing with us the burdens of bodily existence. This burden sharing is consistent with an incarnational theology. To be a patient is often to submit, to receive, and to endure a loss of powers that feels like dispossession and may be accompanied by other feelings of abandonment. So some people may conceive of the physician or even medical interventions themselves as an empowering deliverer or a cruel jailor. While that thinking borders on idolatry, it is *we* who are magnifying the professionals’ role. They are not usurping God’s role.

The second theological concern about understanding the body or life as a possession we control also represents an important consideration with respect to PAD. The old expression, “get right with God,” which can include the reconciliation with and forgiveness of family members and others, may be understood here as a preparation to “let go and let God” receive our spirits. Our pain or suffering may make it hard for us to pray or worship, or even to have visitors. Or we may be only intermittently conscious, and we may see ourselves increasingly falling away from the person we understood ourselves to be. God, who knows us better than we know ourselves, understands this process and calls doctors and other caregivers to accompany us on a journey. For Christians, however, this journey does not end with dying. While family, friends, pastoral leaders, and medical providers help us to the precipice of death, the next step on that journey beyond death is something with which no human can assist. At that point, we are lifted up into the communion of saints and the presence of Christ, an abiding presence from the beginning of life and beyond death.

APPENDIX A

Background: Previous Presbyterian Studies Regarding End-of-life Care and Decisions & Work of 2014–15 Study Team

Presbyterians have not needed to start from scratch in making theological and ethical contributions to advance care planning and other practices concerning the end of life. The 106th General Assembly (1974) of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A.³¹ adopted recommendations in, “An Essay on the Problems Related to the Prolongation of Life by Technological Means,” that dealt in part with involvement of patients in decision making, attention to nursing home residents, and suggestions for seminary curricula about death and dying. The 121st General Assembly (1981) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States adopted a paper entitled, “The Nature and Value of Human Life,” that dealt with, among other topics, euthanasia and the distinction between taking one’s life and allowing one to die, as well as informed consent for procedures involving considerable risk. The 195th General Assembly (1983) of the United Presbyterian Church adopted, “The Covenant of Life and the Caring Community.” Along with material on highlighting various theological and ethical foundations, it included a chapter on, “The

Provision of Health Care: Obedience to Divine Purpose,” which argued for “the distribution of the best health care for all people regardless of race, gender, or economic standing” as a requirement of justice. Another chapter of this document addressed, “Decision-Making at the End of Life,” which treats the importance of the values of doctors and patients in such decision making as well as the importance of advance planning and advance directives and of “harmony and integration” between intensive care, curative hospitals, and hospice.

The first initiatives focused on the debate over national health policy emerged after the 1983 reunion. The 200th General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted “Life Abundant: Values, Choices and Health Care” informed by a fifteen-year effort in National Health Ministries. Spurred largely by the raging public debate over physician-assisted suicide, two years later the 202nd General Assembly (1990) commissioned a very different study. Instead of focusing on public policy, this document concentrated on, “the theological issues that emerge from the public debate of euthanasia and assisted suicide.” Instead of providing public policy recommendations, this document called on congregations to explore the spiritual, theological, ethical, legal, and medical dimensions to end-of-life issues within the congregational context. Although previous assemblies had touched on the topic, there previously had been no full-scale denominational study. The result was “In Life and in Death We Belong to God: Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and End-of-life Issues,” containing plans for twelve study sessions and six appendices.

The 213th General Assembly (2001) of the PC(USA) approved the “Resolution on the Ministry of Caregiving in Relation to Older Adults.” Among its recommendations, it called for special attention to older adults with debilitating or fatal illnesses and their caregivers, affirmation of a parish nursing model for ministry, and advocacy for just and fair pay for caregivers. There have also been special issues of *Church & Society* dealing with “Ethics of Life and Death” (March/April 2001) and “Encircling Care: Alzheimer’s Disease and Congregational Caregiving” (May, June 2003).

Conversations around end-of-life care and the growing consideration of physician-assisted suicide prompted the 213th General Assembly (2001) to call the church to focus on congregational care. It called for the Office of Theology and Worship to conduct a six-year, churchwide dialogue on end-of-life issues, during which the church would refrain from the development of end-of-life policies. This led to a conference in conjunction with the Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life, “In Life and in Death We Belong to God: The Congregational Continuum of Care in the Presbyterian Church” in 2007.

The ground work has certainly been done both regarding a theological ethic of care at the end of life and a social ethic of universal access to comprehensive health care, but twenty years have passed since “In Life and in Death We Belong to God” was developed for intensive study of end-of-life issues by our church. Since that time the clinical context of care, public opinion about assisted suicide, and the political context for access to health care all have undergone dramatic changes. In addition, the overture approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014) cited, “the legalization of physician-assisted suicide in five states and several nations, and increases in the technological choices facing patients and their families in end-of-life circumstances” (*Minutes*, 2014, Part I, p. 647) in commissioning the preparation of a pastoral and educational booklet giving guidance on a wide-ranging list of end-of-life issues and policies. Outside church statements on the subject, the recent report from the Institute of Medicine titled, “Dying in America: Improving Quality and Honoring Individual Preferences Near the End of Life,” has given new impetus to the church to adapt the covenant of care that has informed its earlier positions and resolutions to the challenges of a new context.

The Work of the 2014–15 Study Team

This booklet, commissioned by the 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is intended as an educational and pastoral resource regarding end-of-life care and decision-making. It is the product of research, study, prayer, discussion, and deliberation by its joint drafters, the Study Team on End-of-Life Issues.

Following the action of the 221st General Assembly (2014), the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy appointed the following team: Ernest F. Krug III, MDiv, MD, professor of biomedical sciences & pediatrics, Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, ret., Rochester, Mich.; James B. Tubbs Jr, PhD, professor of religious studies, University of Detroit, Mercy, Detroit, Mich.; Sheryl Buckley, MD, Bay Village, Ohio; Jennifer Lowe Ellis, MD, MPH, regional medical director, AseraCare Hospice & Palliative Medicine, Clarksville, Tenn.; James Irwin, MD, chief medical officer (previous: surgeon), Samaritan Healthcare, Moses Lake, Wash.; Thomas James, PhD, MDiv, pastor, Covenant Presbyterian, Southfield, Mich.; Jane R. Martinez, RN, MDiv, pastor, East End & Westminster churches, Ottumwa, Iowa; Eric Mount, PhD, STM, MDiv, professor of religion, ret. Centre College, Danville, Ky., and member of ACSWP. The study team was co-chaired by Ernest Krug and James Tubbs.

Staff services were provided by Christian Iosso, PhD, MDiv, coordinator of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy; and Charles Wiley, PhD, MDiv, coordinator of the Office of Theology and Worship, both of Louisville, Ky.

The study team expresses thanks to Marsha Fowler, PhD, RN, MDiv, and other members of ACSWP for their helpful editorial and substantive suggestions. William F. May, PhD, and Terri Laws, PhD, have been generous in their careful reviews of and suggestions about this booklet; and Jason Wasserman, PhD, has provided thoughtful and insightful editing of the final draft. Finally, the study team is grateful for the efficient coordination of communications, travel, lodging, and dining provided by Peggy Dahmer, ACSWP administrative assistant, and for the generous hosting, for two group meetings, provided by the staff and congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Michigan.

APPENDIX B

Background: Historical Ethical and Legal Context for End-of-life Decision Making in American Culture

In the development of modern American ethical and legal-judicial attitudes regarding the appropriateness of medical treatment decisions in end-of-life care, several older traditions have had significant influence. This particularly includes the Catholic moral tradition re-

garding duties to prolong life and the Anglo-American political philosophies that prioritize bodily integrity along with natural rights and freedoms.

By the sixteenth century, as European medicine was developing at least rudimentary forms of treatment to prolong life or postpone death, Catholic theologians began to consider the question of whether one was always required to accept or provide such treatments in order to extend the length of life. It was quite natural that such a question would emerge, since the theology of the early Church had emphasized our natural and spiritual obligations to preserve the gift of life and our obligation to avoid choosing against life (such as with suicide). So, in a sense, the question became: When does the refusal of life-prolonging treatment amount to the equivalent of suicide (or when does the failure to provide treatment constitute the equivalent of murder) and when might such a refusal be morally and spiritually acceptable? The general consensus that emerged from these early debates ultimately took shape as the distinction between “ordinary” and “extraordinary” means of prolonging life. That terminology did not refer to what is medically ‘usual’ or ‘unusual’ but rather to what is morally required versus morally optional. This distinction essentially turned on two criteria: the prospect of benefit that the treatment could provide to the sick person and the degree to which the treatment would be burdensome, measured relative to the potential benefits. While the former criterion involves some medical prognostication regarding the prospects for treatment or cure, the latter criterion involves very subjective and relative judgments of what is more beneficial than burdensome to *this* patient in *this* condition. One influential and fairly modern summary of the distinction defines “ordinary” [morally required] means of prolonging life as “all medicines, treatments, and operations which offer a reasonable hope of benefit and which can be obtained and used without excessive expense, pain, or other inconvenience.” In contrast, “extraordinary” [morally optional] means are “all medicines, treatments and operations which cannot be obtained or used without excessive expense, pain, or other inconvenience, or which, if used, would not offer a reasonable hope of benefit.”³²

While there have been debates over the centuries about the scope of benefits to be considered and the relevance of particular forms of burden, the ordinary/extraordinary means distinction remains the guiding formula for moral decisions about life-prolonging treatment in Catholicism (although the Vatican now prefers the terminology of “proportionate” and “disproportionate” treatments instead of “ordinary” and “extraordinary”). More broadly, however, the pattern of reasoning that was enshrined in that distinction has been enormously influential in Anglo-American theology, philosophy, and judicial discourse regarding life-prolonging treatment decisions. Most contemporary ethical analyses of such decisions ultimately amount to assessments of the benefits of treatment versus its burdens for the individual affected. Likewise, American judicial decisions regarding withholding or withdrawing life-prolonging treatment for persons who are incapable of making their own treatment decisions have tended to rely on what has been called the “best interests” standard, a measure that nearly always includes a “calculus of [the] benefits and burdens” of treatment. In many cases, courts have also described what needs to go into that calculus, such as:

[E]vidence about the patient’s present level of physical, sensory, emotional, and cognitive functioning; the degree of physical pain resulting from the medical condition, treatment, and termination of treatment, respectively; the degree of humiliation, dependence, and loss of dignity probably resulting from the condition and treatment; the life expectancy and prognosis for recovery with and without treatment; the various treatment options; and the risks, side effects and benefits of each of those options.³³

Clearly, modern American ethical and legal judgments about the appropriateness of providing, or not providing, life-prolonging treatments reflect a strong emphasis on the necessity of evaluating the predicted benefits and burdens of those treatments for the patient. While in some respects this provides relatively concrete and empirical standards, questions remain about *whose* evaluation of those benefits and burdens should constitute an acceptable basis for treatment decisions. The dominant modern American answer to that question, both in ethical discourse and in law, has been formulated in terms of individual autonomy (or self-determination) and personal liberties. Partly this emerged from English common law tradition that was largely maintained in American jurisprudence. At common law, the right of each competent individual to control what is done to his or her own body—the notion of bodily integrity—was formalized for health care practice in the requirement of informed consent for medical treatment. As a result, even beneficial medical ‘touching’ of one individual by another without the former’s consent or without legal justification became identified as legal battery. Moreover, the right to be treated only with one’s free consent also implied the right *not* to be treated via one’s refusal of consent. As expressed in a famous New York Court of Appeals decision in 1914, “Every human being of adult years and sound mind has the right to determine what shall be done with his own body; and a surgeon who performs an operation without his patient’s consent commits an assault, for which he is liable in damages.”³⁴ By implication, then, the judgment that a particular treatment might be too ‘burdensome’ to be acceptable was recognized in the common law as a judgment reserved for the competent patient alone.

In addition to the common law’s emphasis on protection from unwelcome bodily intrusions, contemporary American law and ethics has also been shaped by a strong tradition of emphasis on individual freedoms or liberties. That emphasis has both religious and philosophical roots. A common theme of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation in Europe, especially in its Lutheran and Reformed expressions, was the primacy and liberty of individual conscience (as opposed to ecclesial authority) in matters spiritual. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Enlightenment-era liberal philosophies carried this notion further and into the political realm, stressing the protection of human beings’ natural freedoms not only of conscience and belief, but also of self-chosen actions (at least where those actions do not impinge upon the freedoms of others). Most Americans are familiar, for example, with Thomas Jefferson’s stirring expression of this concept in our Declaration of Independence, where he asserts the “self-evident” truth of all persons’ natural equality and their Creator-endowed “unalienable rights,” including rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Following that idea, the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution present a long list of individuals’ rights that cannot be infringed or abridged by their government, including freedoms of speech, worship, assembly, the press, bearing arms, etc. Over the succeeding centuries, legislatures and courts have struggled with how best to respect and maintain these and other liberties in practice, especially when the full exercise of some freedoms seems to conflict with the full exercise of others.

Eventually, of course, the question of potential conflict of freedoms involved in the delivery of medical care would need to be addressed. For a long time, prevailing public sentiment generally favored deference to the wisdom and skill of the medical profession and acceptance of the Hippocratic tradition’s description of the physician’s duty and implied freedom to act “for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgment” and to “keep them from harm and injustice.” However, by the end of the 1960s—a decade notable for advances in organ transplant, dialysis, resuscitation modalities and other life-prolonging technologies – a rather different emphasis began to

find voice in American society. A popular philosophical movement we now refer to as the “patient rights” movement began to question whether deference to medicine’s remarkable scientific skills in curing disease and delaying death must also entail deference to medical judgments about various humanistic *values* that might be nested in “medically indicated” treatments. Emerging from this movement was a new academic sub-discipline—“bioethics” (or “medical ethics” or “health care ethics”)—and a renewed and profound emphasis on the notion of individual patient ‘autonomy’ (or self-determination) in decisions involving one’s own care. Respect for patient autonomy was understood to encompass not only respect for patient privacy and confidentiality, but also respect for the patient’s freedom to evaluate the benefits and burdens of prescribed treatments and to accept or reject them based upon his or her own values, needs, goals, and aspirations.

Coinciding with this popular emphasis on patient self-determination regarding medical treatment, state courts began hearing and deciding cases concerning patients’ rights to be free of unwanted life-prolonging treatment. The first of these so-called “right to die” cases was that of Karen Ann Quinlan, who was diagnosed as being in a persistent vegetative state (PVS; a state of presumably permanent unconsciousness that includes sleep/wake cycles, but no capacity for thinking or responding). In 1975, her parents successfully sued to have her artificial ventilation removed. Karen survived for nine more years before dying of pneumonia. In the *Quinlan* and many similar cases over the next fifteen years, various courts granted family-initiated requests to remove life-prolonging treatments from unconscious or otherwise incompetent individuals based on reasonable evidence that the individual would have chosen to refuse that treatment for themselves. These decisions were based on the assumption that all competent adults have a right to refuse even life-prolonging treatment—based either on the common law right to informed consent to treatment or on U.S. constitutional guarantees of liberty and privacy. The courts basically held that those rights do not disappear once the individual becomes incompetent. Of course, questions about *how much* evidence is required in order to conclude that he or she would indeed choose against life-prolonging treatment remained largely unresolved. Complicating matters, state courts differed among themselves as to what standard of evidence is necessary to meet that test. The highest standard of “clear and convincing evidence,” requires fairly specific oral or written statements, from when the individual had been competent, about his or her treatment preferences. In other states, the less restrictive “substituted judgment” standard, would allow for treatment decisions to be made by those who had known the individual well (usually family members) and who could provide evidence and examples of that individual’s past value preferences, lifestyle choices, anecdotal comments about others’ end-of-life situations, etc. This provides a reasonable “substitution” for the judgment the individual *would probably* make in these circumstances. [Note: Obviously, neither of these standards can apply in cases where the individual in question has never been competent to make treatment choices or has never indicated any treatment preferences in the past. In those cases, courts generally rely upon the more objective “best interests” standard, weighing the relative benefits and burdens of treatment on the patient’s behalf, as noted above.]

The most consequential judicial claim regarding a patient’s right to refuse treatment came in the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1990 *Cruzan* decision. Nancy Beth Cruzan had been in an accident-induced persistent vegetative state for several years when her parents petitioned for removal of her artificial nutrition and hydration (which were the primary treatments keeping her alive). In its majority decision the Court cited the Constitution’s 14th Amendment provision wherein no State shall “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law,” and then affirmed “[t]he principle that a competent person has a constitutionally protected liberty interest in refusing unwanted medical treatment. . . .” This liberty interest, the Court continued, would also include a “constitutionally protected right to refuse lifesaving nutrition and hydration.” Further, the right to refuse treatment does not end when the competent person becomes incompetent. However, this liberty interest is not absolute, and in some cases must be balanced against other “relevant state interests” (such as prevention of harm to third parties, prevention of suicide, and maintaining the ethical integrity of the medical profession). Among those state interests, the Court noted, is the safeguarding of the personal element of treatment choices by requiring whatever standard of evidence the individual states deem necessary, including the “clear and convincing evidence” standard.³⁵

In essence, the *Cruzan* decision affirmed the freedom of all persons to judge for themselves the benefits and burdens of accepting further life-prolonging treatments, or even the perceived burden of medical extension of life itself as a basis for accepting or rejecting medical interventions. But for persons no longer capable of forming those judgments, it also allowed the states to require significant levels of evidence regarding the judgments those persons had made while competent. Recognizing both of these aspects of the High Court’s ruling, the U.S. Congress acted within months to encourage and enable competent adults to prospectively express their treatment decision preferences before such a time that they become incompetent. The Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990 (PSDA) created a legal obligation for healthcare organizations receiving federal funding to educate and assist their patients, clients, residents, staff, and communities in the creation of advance directives for health care (e.g., Living Wills and Durable Powers of Attorney for Health Care). These documents allow individuals to express their own considered preferences regarding treatment options or proxy decision-makers and provide the equivalent of “clear and convincing evidence” of the individual’s wishes should they become incapable of expressing them.

In contemporary American culture, public policy and broad popular sentiment essentially agree about the need to respect the freedoms of individuals to refuse life-prolonging treatment. Many differences remain, however, over the notion of an individual’s freedom to receive active assistance in dying. The same Supreme Court that asserted a constitutional liberty interest in *allowing* one’s death by refusing life-prolonging treatment found in 1997 that there is no similar constitutional right to assistance in *causing* one’s death to occur. Yet, the Court also held that individual states are free to legally permit and regulate that assistance. Five states now allow what is called “physician aid in dying” (PAD)—previously known as “physician-assisted suicide” (PAS)—in which competent, terminally ill patients may request and receive from physicians prescriptions for lethal doses of sedative or analgesic medications with which to end their lives.³⁶ At the same time, the practice of “active euthanasia” (or “mercy killing”), in which a physician (or other person) acts directly to cause the death of a suffering person, remains illegal throughout the United States, even though it has been legalized in several European countries.

In summary, today’s dominant American cultural and legal attitudes about end-of-life treatment decisions have been strongly influenced by traditional moral-theological distinctions between “ordinary” and “extraordinary” treatments, the English common law’s insistence upon informed consent as a means of protecting bodily integrity, and the liberal Enlightenment’s emphasis upon the individual’s ‘natural’ or God-given freedoms to make choices regarding his or her own future. In this cultural climate, patients are given both the freedom and the responsibility to discern for themselves the benefits of treatment they value and the burdens of treatment they are able and willing to bear. Christians also must consider these choices in light of their understandings of God’s call to them and of their covenantal promises and responsibilities to God and to other persons.

APPENDIX C

Suggested Reading

Web-Based Resources

Advance Directive forms state-by-state (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization): <http://www.caringinfo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3289>.

American Nurses Association position statement on RN's roles and responsibilities in providing expert care and counseling at the end of life: <http://www.nursingworld.org/mainmenucategories/ethicsstandards/ethics-position-statements/etpain14426.pdf>.

Institute of Medicine Report, "Dying in America: Improving Quality and Honoring Individual Preferences Near the End of Life," (2014) available at: <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2014/Dying-In-America-Improving-Quality-and-Honoring-Individual-Preferences-Near-the-End-of-Life.aspx>.

State-by-State POLST (Physician Order for Life Sustaining Treatment) forms: <https://www.everplans.com/articles/state-by-state-polst-forms>.

Print Resources

Tom L. Beauchamp, ed., *Intending Death: The Ethics of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1996).

Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7th Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Allan S. Brett and Paul Jersild, "Inappropriate Treatment Near the End of Life: Conflict Between Religious Convictions and Clinical Judgment," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 164 (July 28, 2003): 1645–48.

Sheryl Buckley, *Moral Dilemmas: What You Need to Know About Dying Before You Are Dying* (2013).

Ira Byock, *Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at the End of Life* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1997).

Maggie Callahan and Patricia Kelley, *Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992).

Pauline W. Chen, *Final Exam: A Surgeon's Reflections on Mortality* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007).

Kenneth J. Doka, Amy S. Tucci, Charles A. Corr, and Bruce Jennings, *End of Life Ethics: A Case Study Approach* (Part of the Living with Grief Series, Hospital Foundation of America, 2012).

Wendy Duggleby, "Hope at the End of Life," *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing* 3/2, (April–June 2001): 51–64.

Joseph J. Fins, *A Palliative Ethic of Care: Clinical Wisdom at Life's End* (London: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, International, 2006).

Sandra L. Friedman and David T. Helm, *End-of-Life Care: for Children and Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, (Washington, D.C., American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2010).

William C. Gaventa and David L. Coulter, eds., *End-of-Life Care: Bridging Disability and Aging with Person-Centered Care* (Binghamton, N.Y.: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2005).

Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014).

Stanley Hauerwas, *God, Medicine, and Suffering* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1994).

Stanley Hauerwas, *Suffering Presence: Theological Reflections on Medicine, the Mentally Handicapped and the Church* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

Albert R. Jonsen, Mark Siegler, William J. Winslade, *Clinical Ethics: a Practical Approach to Ethical Decisions in Clinical Medicine*, 7th Ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010).

Rushworth Kidder, *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living*, Rev. Ed. (Harper Collins, 2009).

Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963).

William F. May, *Testing the Medical Covenant: Active Euthanasia and Health Care Reform* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

Margaret Mohrmann, *Attending Children: A Doctor's Education* (Georgetown University Press, 2005).

Margaret Mohrmann, *Medicine as Ministry: Reflections on Suffering, Ethics and Hope*. (Pilgrim Press, 1999). Also a video—*The Way We Die: Listening to the Terminally Ill*.

14 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL ISSUES & INSTITUTIONS

- C. Eric Mount, *Professional Ethics in Context: Institutions, Images, and Empathy* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990).
- Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- Sherwin Nuland, *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1994).
- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969).
- John Swinton and Richard Payne, eds., *Living Well and Dying Faithfully* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).
- Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
- James B. Tubbs, *A Handbook of Bioethics Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009).

Endnotes

1. In addition to the current guide, *Abiding Presence*, the Presbyterian resource, "In Life and in Death We Belong to God: Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and End-of-Life Issues (1995)," has provided a way to study these issues in adult study format that is consistent with this resolution's position.
2. This is to recognize that withdrawing life support and terminal sedation are not PAS, and that laws which allow a physician to prescribe a death-inducing drug may also restrict the role of anyone other than the patient in administering such a drug. The approach in *Abiding Presence* would caution against any legal provision that might enforce an isolation of the patient that challenges our Christian approach to care-giving and community.
3. This affirmation, the recommendations, and the resource for those facing end-of-life decisions honor those traditions of ethical care by the several medical disciplines. These documents do not provide specifically legal advice and a disclaimer to that effect will be provided in any posted or printed versions.
4. Rom. 8:38–39.
5. Rom. 14:8.
6. Philip A. Pizzo, "The Doctor: For Life and at the End of Life," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 162, no. 3 (2015): 228.
7. Institute of Medicine (IOM). *Dying in America: Improving Quality and Honoring Individual Preferences Near the End of Life* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academics Press, 2015).
8. Katy Butler, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: The Path to a Better Way of Death* (New York: Scribner, 2013).
9. Elizabeth B. Lamont and Nicholas A. Christakis, "Prognostic Disclosure to Patients with Cancer near the End of Life," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 134, no. 12 (2001): 1102.
10. United States Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, *Advance Care Planning: Preferences at the End of Life*, (USAHRQ, 2003).
11. David I. Shalowitz, Elizabeth Garrett-Mayer, and David Wendler, "The Accuracy of Surrogate Decision Makers: A Systematic Review," *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 166, no. 5, 2006: 493–97.
12. James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective, Vol. I: Theology and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
13. The latter suggests that life has an innate or "natural" trajectory.
14. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 194.
15. For a fuller discussion of these norms, see Presbyterian Church in the United States, *The Nature and Value of Human Life* (The 121st General Assembly (1981)).
16. All names are pseudonyms.
17. 1 Thess. 4:13.
18. Formerly known as the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.
19. Abigail Rian Evans, "Healing in the Midst of Dying: A Collaborative Approach to End of life Care," in *Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End of life Care*, ed. John Swinton and Richard Payne (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 178.
20. International Federation of Social Workers, "Global Definition of Social Work," 2014, <http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work>.
21. See the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
22. Presbyterian Church in the United States, *The Nature and Value of Human Life* (The 121st General Assembly (1981)), 5.
23. Amy Platinga Pauw, "Dying Well" in *Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End of Life Care*, ed. John Swinton and Richard Payne (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 18.

24. Gen. 1:26.

25. Paul L. Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 122.

26. Timothy E. Quill, Bernard Lo, Dan W. Brock, and Alan Meisel, "Last Resort Options for Palliative Sedation," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 151, no. 6, 2009: 421–24; Nigel Sykes and Andrew Thorns, "Sedative Use in the Last Week of Life and the Implications for End of Life Decision-making," *Archives of Internal Medicine* 163, no. 3, 2003: 341–44; Timothy E. Quill, Ira R. Byock, and the ACP-ASIM End of Life care Consensus Panel, "Responding to Intractable Terminal Suffering: The Role of Terminal Sedation and Voluntary Refusal of Food and Fluids," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 132, no. 5, 2000: 408–14; American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, *Primer of Palliative Care, 6th Edition* (American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, 2014).

27. 1 Cor. 15: 44.

28. One kidney can be taken from living donor because that person can survive on the other kidney alone.

29. The numbers of persons requiring an organ transplant for survival or to live a life free of the burden of dialysis (in the case of kidneys) far exceeds the number of organs available for transplant.

30. Jn. 3:17.

31. In 1983 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) was formed through the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

32. Gerald Kelly, "The Duty to Preserve Life," *Theological Studies* 12, no. 4, 1951: 550.

33. In Re Rosebush, 491 N.W. 2d 633, 640 (Mich. Ct. App. 1992).

34. *Schloendorff v. Society of New York Hospitals*, 211 N.Y. 125, 129–30, 105 N.E. 92, 93 (1914).

35. *Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health*, 497 U.S. 261, 58 L.W. 4918, 4920–23 (1990).

36. Proponents of this practice prefer the term "physician aid in dying" so that the negative connotations traditionally associated with the term "suicide" are not invoked. But others argue that "physician-assisted suicide" is more accurate and that the term "physician aid in dying" could easily be understood to include the practice of active euthanasia.

Item 14-15

[The assembly approved Item 14-15 with amendment. See pp. 14, 22.]

Commissioners' Resolution: "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity."

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency, in coordination with the Office of the General Assembly, to help the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make use of "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity" by:

1. Learning how synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations are currently benefitting from "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity";

2. Calling the attention of the whole church to the great treasure from more than two hundred years of Presbyterian life and witness that is to be found in the "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity";

3. Helping synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations to access, understand, and use the riches that are found in "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity," utilizing current technology and social media, such as short videos and webinars; and

4. Reporting to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) what was learned and accomplished through this effort.

Rationale

In 2011, our *Book of Order* underwent a significant change with the adoption of a new Form of Government. Part of this change was the creation of a new section of our *Book of Order*, "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity." This new section is a skillful revision of material previously contained in the first four chapters of the Form of Government.

"The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity" draws on our long history of being a church, and preserves language that has shaped the Presbyterian church for more than two hundred years. Yet, since these convictions and formulations are no longer located in the Form of Government, and are not usually the focus of constitutional amendment, an unintended consequence of the change of format in our *Book of Order* is that "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity" has little influence in the life of the church.

For a large part of the church, "The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity" is an undiscovered treasure. It includes historic principles that were hammered out in the past and have guided the Presbyterian church ever since.

When Presbyterian members, deacons, and ruling elders actually encounter the material found in “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,” they are inspired, instructed, and encouraged. Many who are new to Presbyterian theology and government are pleased to understand and embrace the convictions that undergird the life of this church and make them their own.

Our Theology and Worship staff have helped the church significantly on other matters by producing excellent written materials. They are well-qualified to introduce us, or reintroduce us, to valuable resources that emerge from our own family history.

Gale Watkins, Presbytery of Grand Canyon
Michele (Mickey) Stueck, Presbytery of Santa Barbara

ACSWP ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-15

Advice & Counsel on Item 14-15—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP).

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that Item 14-15 be approved.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the General Assembly approve this overture in part because it reminds the church about the relationship that social witness has to the greater mission to the church. Social witness is integral to what the church should be doing and cannot be separated from rest of the marks of the church. Out of gratitude for God’s reconciling love for us, we as the church are called to live lives that work towards God’s new creation and confess sin where we find it. In the same way that God’s gift of catholicity or universal call is to the relationship for all people, the church is called to embrace all people at all times in all places and to work share the Gospel with everyone and to work to redeem all people and all things. Our hope is that teaching on this historical grounding will strengthen the vocation of the whole people of God.

ACREC ADVICE & COUNSEL ON ITEM 14-15

Advice & Counsel on Item 14-15—From the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC).

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) approve Item 14-15 with comment.

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns agrees with the rationale commissioners provided with this resolution. There are many rural and racial ethnic congregations that, for many reasons (i.e. economic and/or technological, etc.), that will not have access to these valuable resources. It is ACREC’s feeling that a concerted effort should be made to ensure that Recommendation 3 be implemented in such a way as to provide resources and or guidance for accessing and “utilizing current technology and social media ...” for these congregations. The ACREC advises approval of this resolution.

COGA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-15

Comment on Item 14-15—From the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA).

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly advises approval of Item 14-15 with amendment.

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly consists of fifteen elected members. Its responsibilities include supporting and reviewing the work of the Office of the General Assembly.

The committee agrees with the authors of Item 14-15 that “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity” is one of our constitutional treasures. The committee suggests that if the assembly approves Item 14-15, it amend the proposal to include the Office of the General Assembly in the work this item would authorize. The Office of the General Assembly has primary responsibility for providing the congregations and councils of the denomination with resources for the use and interpretation of our Constitution. Accordingly, COGA advises that the first paragraph of Item 14-15 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown with brackets and with an underline.]

“The 222nd General Assembly (2016) directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency[, in coordination with the Office of the General Assembly.] to help the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make use of ‘The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity’ by:”

PMA COMMENT ON ITEM 14-15

Comment on Item 14-15—From the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).

The Presbyterian Mission Agency (through its Office of Theology and Worship) and the Office of the General Assembly (through Constitutional Services) often work in close collaboration on theological studies regarding constitutional matters. If the assembly would like to see the work described in Item 14-15 be accomplished, we suggest a joint referral to both agencies is the most appropriate way to reflect the collaboration that is expected to occur. Both bodies would then work together to bring a response to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

Item 14-A

[The Assembly Committee on Theological Issues & Institutions approved Item 14-A with comment. See pp. 16, 22.]

Minutes, Committee on Theological Education.

Approved with comment.

[Comment: The subcommittee for COTE minutes approval moves to recommend approval of the Committee on Theological Education minutes from February 25–26, 2014, through September 22, 2015, with the following comments:

- [A. The committee would prefer to have the original bound minutes in hand.
- [B. A notice of approval of the previous year minutes should be included.
- [C. Although it may be necessary to involve different clerks, care and consistency is needed in presentation of the minutes:
 - [1. All meetings (both committee and subcommittees) to be opened and closed with prayer.
 - [2. Persons attending should be referenced by their full name or with title.
 - [3. If margin headings are used, consistency throughout the year is required.
 - [4. Care in using standard abbreviations is needed.
 - [5. Actions as motions should be emphasized and discussion more concise when presented.

[A copy of the “Guideline for Preparation on Minutes of Agencies” should be made available to the acting clerks of the meeting.

[Matt Miles, Committee on Theological Education (COTE) member, abstained]

Item 14-Info

Committee on Theological Education Agency Summary

Overview

A. *Assigned Responsibilities*

The Committee on Theological Education (COTE) has the responsibility for developing and maintaining a comprehensive plan for theological education from the perspective of the whole church.

- The committee seeks to identify, develop, and propose strategies for a denomination-wide approach to theological education.
- The committee serves as an advocate for theological education, seeking to support the seminaries and to strengthen them for their mission in the world.
- The Committee on Theological Education is a two-way communication link between the denomination and its graduate theological institutions.
- Voting members of the committee include thirteen people elected to represent the church at large and a representative from each of the ten seminaries related directly to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
- Corresponding members of COTE include:
 - representatives from Auburn Theological Seminary and from the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (both institutions related to the General Assembly through covenant agreements negotiated every six years),
 - a representative of the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation, and

- representatives of two, non-Presbyterian seminaries invited by the committee, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Fuller Theological Seminary.

B. *Accomplishments*

Jeffrey F. Bullock, chair of COTE, and Mindy Douglas, vice-chair of COTE, led the committee through two years of significant transition. Under the direction and with the guidance of the 221st General Assembly (2014), COTE effected the move of The Theological Education Fund (TEF) from oversight of the PMA (Presbyterian Mission Agency) to oversight from The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation.

COTE fulfilled its General Assembly assigned functions by centering plenary and subcommittee meetings on key questions to foster generative thinking and action. COTE prioritized most agendas, meetings, and work to track, resource, and consult with the 220th General Assembly (2012)'s Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions by fulfilling the subsequent 221st General Assembly (2014) directions to complete the transition process.

Committee meetings were held on the campuses of Montreat Conference Center in Montreat, N.C. (October 2014); Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, N.J. (February 2015); McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Ill. (September 2015), and San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, Calif. (February 2016). COTE enjoys the opportunities presented to be present and in place in PC(USA) institutional setting throughout the country. During this biennium, several alternate members were welcomed as strong contributors to the conversations and business discussions. Likewise, COTE sent corresponding members to meetings of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, and was further represented at national meetings of Presbyterian Women, Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators, and the Presbyterian Youth Triennium.

1. *The Theological Education Fund*

Five General Assemblies (198th in 1986, 205th in 1993, 219th in 2010, 220th in 2012, and 221st in 2014) called on the PC(USA) and COTE to strengthen the funding mechanism for our PC(USA) seminaries through the Theological Education Fund (TEF) and Theological Schools Endowment Fund (TSEF). The 221st General Assembly (2014) agreed with a Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions ([Item 13-07](#)) and COTE that moving the fiduciary responsibility of the TEF and TSEF from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation would reduce expenses and enlarge the possibilities for theological education support.

In the Fall of 2014, and in accordance with the 221st General Assembly (2014), a new position was created by the Foundation as directed by COTE and another staff position was transferred to lead the Seminary Support Network. The senior director (new role) and associate director (transferred role) job descriptions were approved, persons were called by COTE Executive Committee (The Reverend Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty as senior director and the Reverend Nancy Benson-Nicol as associate director), with both beginning January 1, 2015. A TEF Fund Advisory Agreement was signed February 9, 2015 to implement the 221st General Assembly (2014) mandated actions. The Executive Committee of COTE functions as the TEF Advisory Committee monitoring the transfer and progress of the project and partnering with Foundation staff regularly in 2015 and 2016.

2. *Referral 14-04*

Referral 14-04 from the 221st General Assembly (2014), combined with recent national events and a deepening understanding of racial injustice in our country and the world, had the effect of galvanizing COTE with regard to racial injustice and white privilege. The September 2015 meeting of COTE at McCormick Theological Seminary, hosted by President Frank Yamada, became a moment of decision as the members of COTE committed themselves to taking racial injustice head-on, both in their seminaries and in their fields of ministry and mission. The response to this referral became a first step for COTE in an ongoing process, rather than a one-and-done response to referral. While details are still being worked out, the first concrete result will be a resource consisting of all activities, programs, and initiatives at the PC(USA) seminaries related to the dismantling of white privilege and the struggle for racial justice. This resource will be made widely available to the denomination.

3. *Implementing a Transitional Process*

The move of TEF entailed known and unknown ripple effects for COTE. COTE has undertaken this transition through self-reflection at meetings, first through subcommittees and then through the whole committee. COTE is using this period of time to reassess both how it can serve the denomination and the seminaries with new staff, new accountability procedures, and the adaptation of its current mandate. At its February 2016 stated meeting at San Francisco Theological Seminary (to take place after the deadline for this report), COTE will undertake a structured review process to assess the opportunities for support of formal theological education opened up by the TEF transition.

4. *Successful Institutional Support, Non-Financial*

The Institutional Support subcommittee of COTE consists of all elected members. At each meeting they review seminary needs and how they, the elected members, might be able to help our PC(USA) graduate theological institutions. A recent ini-

tiative has been particularly well-received. The Institutional Support subcommittee members decided to “adopt a president”: they pray for the presidents, send notes, and check in throughout the year. The presidents expressed effusive and loud appreciation for this Christian spiritual support for their work and ministry, and have asked that it continue.

C. *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological Institutions*

The Committee on Theological Education brings to the assembly a narrative report from each of the ten seminaries related to the PC(USA), Auburn Theological Seminary, the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, and the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation.

a. *Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

Since 2014, Austin Seminary has called four new faculty members: the Reverend Dr. Margaret Aymer to teach New Testament, The Reverend Dr. Phil Wingeier-Rayo to teach in the area of mission and evangelism and Methodist studies, The Reverend Dr. Carolyn Hesel to teach homiletics, and Mr. Eric Wall to teach sacred music. The Reverend Dr. Thomas W. Currie III is the Jean Brown Visiting Scholar (2015–16). In 2016, Austin Seminary launched a new Spanish-language certificate in ministry program. We are entering the final phase of our comprehensive campaign, Weaving Promise and Practice into Ministry, having added, since 2014, five new merit “full-ride” student fellowships and completed funding to begin building a new student apartment, McCoy House.

b. *Columbia Theological Seminary*

Two important leadership changes happened at Columbia Seminary over the last year. In January 2015, the ninth president of Columbia, Dr. Steve Hayner, died after a battle with pancreatic cancer. In July 2015, Columbia welcomed their tenth president, Dr. Leanne Van Dyk. Her vision for the next chapter of Columbia’s mission has led to new conversations and plans, as well as a commitment to preserving the strong focus on pastoral formation that has long been at the center of Columbia’s identity. Dr. Jake Myers was welcomed as a new professor of preaching. New initiatives launched by the dean included a new Center for Academic Literacy, which is a support center for students who seek help in their writing. The Center for Lifelong Learning celebrated its thirty year anniversary in spirituality programs and also launched a new Certificate in Spiritual Direction. The seminary’s faculty frequently speak and teach in congregations and give papers at academic conferences.

c. *Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary*

Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (JCSTS) is the only historically black theological seminary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). JCSTS provides innovative theological education to advance communities of faith, justice, and compassion. We offer customizable, competency-based theological education specializing in (1) African American worship, preaching, and sacred arts; (2) community organizing; (3) racial reconciliation; and (4) clergy care. In a year of radical change, JCSTS has crafted a fresh identity as a justice-oriented Christ-centered institution.

d. *Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

At a time when our society is increasingly polarized and our world is deeply divided, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary has dedicated itself to educating a new generation of bridge-builders: pastors, counselors, teachers, chaplains, and other church leaders. Through our Doors to Dialogue Interfaith Education and Black Church Studies programs, together with one of the finest core theological education programs in the country, we are committed to healing the brokenness of God’s world. And, because of the success of the first stage of our Covenant for the Future program, every student chosen to study with us at the master’s level has their tuition paid by the seminary through the generosity of our school’s supporters. We want our graduates to be liberated from debt to be able to follow God’s call wherever God leads them.

e. *McCormick Theological Seminary*

McCormick launched the Center for Faith of Service through generous grants from the Henry Luce and the Arthur Vin-ing Davis Foundations. The center seeks to recruit, train, and launch young adults to change the world through their commitments to justice and service. McCormick welcomed the Reverend Dr. Cláudio Carvalhaes as the associate professor of worship and the Reverend Dr. Steed Davidson as associate professor of Hebrew Bible. The Reverend Dr. David Esterline, who served as director of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Education at McCormick, accepted a call to be the president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2015. In 2016, Dr. Carvalhaes accepted a call to be associate professor of worship at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

f. *Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is celebrating the May 2016 installation of the Reverend Dr. David Esterline as the seminary’s sixth president. We continue in our commitment of forming and equipping people for ministries familiar and yet to unfold, and communities present and yet to be gathered through our Church Planting Initiative and additional special programs. For twenty-five years the Metro-Urban Institute has been combining the theory and practice of collaborative commu-

nity ministry into a program of urban theological education. Since 1996 the World Mission Initiative has been dedicated to developing mission vision, nurturing missionary vocations, and cultivating missional congregations. And for two decades the Miller Summer Youth Institute has been providing high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to grow in faith, engage in academic theological study, and explore vocation.

g. *Princeton Theological Seminary*

The academic years 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 at Princeton Theological Seminary have been filled with growth and the development of new partnerships and initiatives as the seminary seeks to serve the church faithfully. Three scholars were appointed to the faculty. Dr. Raimundo Barreto and Dr. Afeosemime Adogame joined the department of History and Ecumenics, and Dr. Sonia Waters joined the Practical Theology department. The seminary has formed partnerships with several Korean churches and universities, including Yonsei University and Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, to promote student and faculty exchanges. Two new academic centers were launched to offer programs, graduate certificates, and research opportunities. The Center for Black Church Studies highlights the theological witness of the African American and African Diaspora Christian experience, and the Center for Theology, Women, and Gender fosters critical theological reflection on gender issues in the church and culture. The new Farminary Project offers theological education at the seminary farm, which is a fertile training ground for pastoral leadership development and the practices of sustainability and innovation.

h. *San Francisco Theological Seminary*

In both its physical campus and revitalized programs, San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) exemplifies its mission statement: “In Christ. A new creation.” Construction of the new Student Village, completed in November 2015, used green technology to help preserve our local environment. Just as the Bay Area invites visitors from all over the world, our campus reflects a culture of inclusion and diversity. A variety of races, genders, nationalities, and faith backgrounds have come to live and study as part of a community committed to hospitality, respect for difference, honesty and accountability, compassion, and service. Blending academics in the Reformed tradition with the inventive spirit for which the area is famous, SFTS has broadened the scope of its programs to become a type of research and development laboratory, offering an education that is biblically grounded, intellectually open, fearlessly critical, and unapologetically hopeful. The new Interdisciplinary Lecture series brings together staff, students, and teachers once a week to hear different perspectives on a chosen theme; online classes reach students whose ministry work may not allow for traditional class times. Several certificate and diploma programs are available to those wishing to deepen their theological and spiritual studies. Drawing upon the Christian meditative and mystical spiritual traditions, Wendy Farley fortifies the seminary’s approach to spirituality, combining prayer and public witness, ancient practices, and contemporary experimentation across many faith traditions. The Reverend Floyd Thompkins, accomplished and award-winning pastor and community activist, took the helm in February as the first director of The Center for Innovation in Ministry. Individually, these developments represent a purposeful course, combined they are a force, designed to increase the church’s capacity to respond faithfully to the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

i. *Union Presbyterian Seminary*

Union Presbyterian Seminary (UPSem) completed and initiated a new curriculum. The new curriculum features a *Church in the World* component that includes required coursework or supervised ministry in each of the following three areas: community engagement; evangelism; interfaith relations. A \$50 million capital campaign has reached 80 percent of its goal in a quiet phase. The public phase of the campaign will kick off in November of 2016. As part of the campaign, a complete renovation of Richmond Hall has begun. When complete, the new Richmond Hall will house a café, the Jim Holderness dining room, the Barbara Lemon community center, and two floors of suite styled single student rooms. The building will also house the Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center for Christian Education. When complete, the campaign will also fund, among other seminary mission goals, two new faculty chairs in Christian Education, the completion of a faculty chair in evangelism, a *Library Without Walls* initiative, technological support for hybrid distance learning, the journal *Interpretation*, the Leadership Institute, and the Communities of Learning pre-matriculation program. To provide housing for married students as well as commercial housing for the Richmond community, the seminary has entered into partnership with the Bristol Development Group on a \$50 million apartment complex on fifteen acres of the seminary’s land. UPSem celebrates the call of visiting assistant professor of evangelism, John Vest, who joined the seminary from his previous position as associate pastor, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago. UPSem also celebrates the call of assistant professor of preaching and worship, Richard Voelz, a Vanderbilt Ph.D., who comes to the seminary from his present position as senior minister of the Johns Creek Christian Church, Johns Creek, Georgia.

j. *University of Dubuque Theological Seminary*

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) is energetically pursuing its mission to “Follow Jesus, Walk in the Spirit, and Join God’s Mission.” In the fall of 2015 the seminary faculty, in collaboration with the undergraduate school, launched a one-year completely online Master of Arts in Christian Leadership degree. This coming August we are initiating a Graduate Assistant Program in Young Adult Ministry so Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Mission and Discipleship students can gain valuable experience working with undergraduate students at the University of Dubuque while earning their degrees. Our newly revised M.Div. degree, with an emphasis on mission and leadership, can now be earned

primarily online in only three years. Likewise, our revised Master of Arts in Mission and Discipleship can be earned primarily online in only two years. UDTs continues to be the leading provider of training for commissioned ruling elders and offers rich continuing education for clergy on campus and online.

k. *Auburn Theological Seminary*

Auburn Theological Seminary's work to equip leaders to work for justice through education, platforms for public leadership, and research continues to grow. The newly created Auburn Senior Fellows program brings together game-changing leaders from a variety of faith traditions for shared learning, support, and collective action. Auburn's Center for the Study of Theological Education published its latest study, "Learning Pastoral Imagination: A Five-Year Report on How New Ministers Learn in Practice." Auburn's Coach Training Program prepared students to coach church leaders in developing resilience, leading change, and thriving within the challenges of ministry. Auburn supported the Edwards Presbyterian Leadership Fellows cohort of current and recent seminary students with trainings on entrepreneurial ministry, storytelling, conflict resolution, the polity and dynamics of the General Assembly, and more. Through training and other resources, Auburn Media and Groundswell, the digital organizing platform, advanced faith leaders in uniting people of faith and moral courage in a multi-faith movement for justice and in speaking on issues of social concern that transcend partisan politics. Recent campaigns included gathering more than 25,000 signatures on a letter of support to the Muslim community and nearly 1,000 faith leaders demanding immigration reform.

l. *Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico/ Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico*

The Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (Evangelical Seminary of PR-ESPR) responds to its missionary origin by collaborating in the holistic education of men and women called to serve in the Christian ministry within the Reformed and Evangelical traditions in Puerto Rico and the Americas. We employ our resources in the service of the Christian church by accompanying the theological, biblical, and pastoral development of its leadership and by promoting and engaging the faith journey of its constituencies through several academic and non-academic programs (M.Div., M.A.R. and D.Min.), pastoral initiatives, and events. Given the financial situation of the seminary and the need of the church in lay training; the PR-ESPR is initiating an intercultural and interdisciplinary certification program for laypersons to explore their vocations and equip themselves to serve in the areas of Christian education, missions, liturgy, and leadership. We will continue accompanying the Apostolic Church in Los Angeles providing theological education to their candidates and extending our services to other groups in the U.S. and in Latin America as well.

m. *Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation*

Since the 221st General Assembly (2014), the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation (OPSF), continued to provide scholarships for inquirers and candidates attending any of the ten PC(USA) seminaries. Financial assistance extended to seminarians now exceeds \$9 million including nearly 800 merit scholarships, based on potential excellence in ministry, awarded. We also support fifteen to twenty annual lifelong learning events for clergy and lay leaders in our thirteen state primary service area. We are exploring several new initiatives including limited, one time awards to Doctor of Ministry candidates in PC(USA) seminaries and funding for Master of Arts candidates in various Christian studies programs. Finally, we are preparing a pilot program to provide some debt relief to first call PC(USA) pastors in our thirteen states.

MODERATOR'S REPORT
MODERATOR HEATH RADA
REPORT TO THE
222ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2016) PC(USA)

“A Conversation with the Denomination”

For months I have had the privilege of listening to our sisters and brothers across the church as they have shared their hopes, dreams, visions, concerns, disappointments, and love for the PC(USA).

I am acutely aware of what we read about in the Book of Romans from the 5th chapter. Listen to God's Word:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our ... sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Rom. 5:1–5)

Hope does not disappoint. Friends, say this with me, “Hope does not disappoint.” That, my friends, is what I have heard from our church. We have been going through times of suffering, but we have shown endurance. We have demonstrated character and we are filled with hope. God has enabled us to do this. God is the source of that hope today. Hope does not disappoint.

Let me share with you four areas that I believe, after listening carefully, comprise the bulk of the issues, concerns, and hopes that our members have shared.

Identifying WHO and WHAT We Are?

First, our church is hungry for *renewal of faith formation and proclamation*. Over and over groups have said to me, “Our commission is clear: tell the story of Jesus Christ and serve others.” One provocative quote came from a member who said, “We must engage in radical listening in evangelism.” Today we live in a largely unchurched cultural climate. Growing numbers of Americans view themselves as “NONES,” that is, those who have no religious affiliation. Others consider themselves as “DONES,” that is those who have had it with organized religion. Yet people are asking for spiritual encounters that can help them make connections, embrace differences, and live into commonalities with others. This circumstance should quicken within us a renewed sense of urgency about the ministries of proclamation and faith formation.

And we are finding an interesting dynamic as a number of people who have been disenchanted by what they call irrelevant religions are looking to us to see if we are genuinely looking to be different. We live in a society where people are longing to find a structure, a sanctuary if you will, a place that addresses their deepest longings and questions, and which reinforces our love of Jesus Christ. Our denomination could do this. We believe in faith formation. We believe in proclamation of God's Word. By joining our voices, and our different perspectives, we might be able to tell even more people about Jesus. *Hope does not disappoint.*

Congregational Vitality

Second is congregational vitality. This is the hallmark of who we are and our members believe it is in the local church that we learn the primary purpose of the church and where we have our major point of connection. Our local congregations are calling for attention and support from our denomination in a variety of ways:

Our small churches (many of which are rural), which comprise approximately 80 percent of our congregations, are saying they feel they are not being supported adequately. This isn't even primarily a money issue. It is the fact that we do not connect and share resources in ways that smaller churches can benefit easily. These churches are saying we need to find ways to allow them not just to survive, but to flourish in their own ways. They realize that they may not have the potential for growth in numbers, but they do believe they can strengthen their ministries in the ways they embrace and nurture their members and communities.

Our larger, more urban churches are also dealing with difficult issues and want some guidance and support, especially as it relates to property, which oftentimes feels like the proverbial noose around the neck. These larger churches say that they are, in many cases, almost entities unto themselves, and a number say they do not feel any particular loyalty or responsibility to the national church, or even, in some cases, to their particular presbyteries.

Churches are calling for new models to reach out, and particularly are asking that our national church consider new ways to assist our congregations in the areas of resourcing, networking, and referring. By that they also are asking that our denomination work more to promote partnerships—not just among Presbyterians, but in local, ecumenical, and multifaith communities as they breathe new life into their congregations.

In essence, what I have heard is a desire for us to right size our resources as a denomination and to encourage and affirm new paradigms for congregational life, ministry, mission—and that we enable ways for greater self-sufficiency and opera-

MODERATOR'S REPORT

tional independence in the denomination. People are calling for grass roots, bottom-up, rather than what they perceive to be top-down lines of communication and structures. Congregations baptize the young, form faith, celebrate the sacraments, and put the saints gently to their rest. The lives of congregations must be a top priority. Hope does not disappoint.

Justice for All People

The third area concerns the beloved community and its standard of justice for all people. Our members are unapologetically affirming of our heritage for promoting social justice and witness. We have historically been willing to stand up against the cultural norm if we felt it was doing what Jesus wanted us to do.

At the same time, however, we are calling for a space where we can have a difference of opinion and protect the individual consciences of our members. I heard that cry expressed acutely as it related to the areas of racial, economic, creation, and religious justice. Presbyterians said we are called to be spokespersons for justice both within and outside the church.

Let's first look at our concerns about racial justice. This position is especially acute among blacks and whites in our society where we are finding divisions growing rather than lessening. Are we to be a prophetic voice in our nation in calling for all of God's children to be treated with dignity and respect? Presbyterians unequivocally say "YES" in faithfulness to our Christ.

Our predominantly African American churches are asking us to look for ways to support them by joining together with one voice. Many are facing challenging issues because of racial bias and separation. Among Latinos and whites we see Presbyterian communities growing, at some places fairly dramatically. But we also see our Hispanic sisters and brothers dealing with inequities, threats, and challenges that most of us can hardly believe are occurring in our nation. While we hold a variety of views about how change is to be achieved, we acknowledge a common calling to enable our sisters and brothers to live the lives for which they were created with a sense of dignity. Native Americans, too, are systematically excluded from the blessings of the wider culture. Nowhere was this more evident to me than in my recent conversation with our Native American Presbyterians, who shared with me their deep pain over feeling like they are too often the forgotten members of our family. There was no hostility, nor mean spirited outburst, but a profound sadness. They said, "We want to continue to be part of this family of Presbyterians, but we do not have the resources in many cases to keep on. Please help us develop new ways where we can find ministers, or share training, or give more fully. We do not have the capacity to do it all ourselves, but we are willing to do more than our fair share."

Our growing economic disparity poses enormous challenges to our denomination too. As Christians we must acknowledge a system that privileges some, leaving many behind. We say we don't have access to the money necessary to do what we need to do. But that isn't true. We are among, and according to some polls, the wealthiest denomination in the United States. But with wealth comes responsibility and challenging ethical decisions. How can we, as wealthy Christians, live our lives in ways that please our Lord? And what is our role in dealing with those who are not as blessed as we are? You may be surprised to learn that these questions are asked by both Presbyterians of wealth as well as those with limited resources.

And the other area of justice that was frequently mentioned was creation justice. Creation justice has to do with all aspects of our creation and how we are called to deal with everything that God created by showing compassion and acting responsibly. It means a commitment to equitable distribution and use of all God's good gifts.

Forging the beloved community is a deeply spiritual and difficult enterprise. From many perspectives on many issues the question is asked, "Given my particular views, is there still a place for me in the PC(USA)? I don't want to feel as an outcast within the family." This is the challenge before us: we must find a way to make the diversity among us become our strength, and not our weakness. When we do so we will have gained enormous capacity to be witnesses of justice. Our members say that one thing they love about us is that we welcome everyone around the communion table. How do we disagree agreeably? How do we move from primarily being proponents of justice to primarily being supporters of unity, and peace, and love? Hope does not disappoint.

Education

The fourth area is education. No denomination, no Christian organization, has directed more of its heart, soul, and resources into education than has the PC(USA). We put our clergy in academic robes; we give Bibles to third graders; we have developed some of the most outstanding curriculum related to faith development that has ever been written. Everywhere we see education as part of our church, Christian education in the local church, possibly the most extensive and strong network of camps and conference centers in the world. Our seminaries are still viewed, in light of their heritage, as the beacons for assuring sound theological education to be brought into our churches, and we have, even more than any other denomination, had a profound impact on public education across the country and around the world.

Our forebearers had an incredible commitment to education. Now it is time for this generation to find a renewed passion to continue being the pacesetters for educational ministry and modeling. Educational methods and approaches are rapidly changing. We may be engaged via new technology. It might be through new forms of communicating. But we know how to do it better than most. We must find ways to pursue this so all can live to the fullest the dreams to which their hearts call

MODERATOR'S REPORT

them, and to be able to grapple with and discover new ways to relate to God. Our heritage of educational advocacy must not languish but rather find new dimensions, particularly for those whose educational aspirations have been thwarted by circumstance or design. Hope does not disappoint.

Where do we go now?

If these four—faith formation and proclamation, congregational vitality, justice for all people, and education—constitute our common calling, how are we to let go of our malaise and respond as a family of faith? In our historic context, in our anti-institutional age, even with fewer numbers, we must pursue this calling with all the energy, intelligence, imagination, and love that God has given us. It is the vow we have all taken. The methodologies are emerging and will continue to emerge in our dynamic religious landscape. My own instincts are that we will find our way both remembering who we are and daring to become who we could be.

Indeed we need to celebrate the “thinking faith” that characterizes us, and our systematic way of doing things. But once the general direction is known, we need to set out on the journey. We no longer have the luxury of fleshing out every detail along the way, but instead need to adjust or reform as we go. Strategic planning may be our usual mode of operating, but maybe we need to set aside a bit of our desire to always do things decently and in order, and act boldly by faith.

By doing this I am not suggesting we not provide standards or marks for our commitment, nor that we forego all measures to hold ourselves accountable, but if it is true that “by our actions we are known” our methodology matters. And if we adapt our methodology, there is hope that together we can begin to address the deepest issues, the ones that rose to the top in my conversations with the church, issues like racial justice, and biblical authority, and stewardship of creation.

Some things will take longer, and we can set those in motion. But some we can set in place right away. It's about our getting “UNSTUCK.” The process has already begun. We just need to continue it.

In looking at a new “Denominational Identity,” what is our image? Do we need a brand like the Methodists or the UCC that will appeal to an unchurched public?

As we look to our “Governance,” I dare to ask you, can we stop weaponizing our polity? Can we utilize our governance as a source of unity and not division?

Can we develop “New Methods and Strategies for Communicating,” which will more effectively tell our story and which will shift from one-way to two-way conversations, and engage not only in information sharing but conversations?

Can we encourage and affirm “New Paradigms for Ministry and Mission,” and enable ways for greater self-sufficiency and operational independence in the denomination? People are calling for grass roots and bottom-up decision making and control, rather than what they perceive to be top-down lines of communication and structures.

In my conversations, as well as in the denominational studies done by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the NEXT CHURCH, we have learned that we as Presbyterians know who we are and we like our church. In fact, the COGA study says that the second most popular thing we appreciate in our denomination is our polity. But we want it to work for us and not separate or divide us. We want to continue defining who we are, and about those matters for which we care. We want to do it in a way that is consistent with our Savior Jesus Christ who said in John Chapter 17:

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, God, Just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world might believe.” (John 17:20–23)

That, my dear family of Presbyterians, is what we are to be about. That is our calling. May we, you and I, be messengers for Christ in ways that allow the world to believe in Him. That is what I have heard our church asking me to share.

Hope does not disappoint. And we must not disappoint hope.

May the God who has “kept us safe thus far” joyfully lead us home!

SECTION THREE

SUPPLEMENT:

Roll of the General Assembly,
Standing Rules,
Moderators and Clerks,
Members of Entities Elected by the General Assembly

Abingdon

Teaching Elder Edwin Lacy
 Ruling Elder Jim Gearhart
 YAAD Lindsey Pratt

Albany

Teaching Elder Glenn Leupold
 Ruling Elder Brown Lynn
 YAAD Samantha Brewer

Arkansas

Teaching Elder Elizabeth Gabbard
 Teaching Elder Leslie Roper
 Ruling Elder Jesse Rancifer
 Ruling Elder Gail Murdoch
 YAAD Sam Anderson

Atlantic Korean

Teaching Elder Byeongho Choi
 Ruling Elder James Park
 YAAD—Not Sending YAAD

Baltimore

Teaching Elder Merritt Schatz
 Teaching Elder Caroline Kelly
 Ruling Elder Anita Bishop-Johnson
 Ruling Elder Guy Moody
 YAAD Hannah Tennies

Beaver-Butler

Teaching Elder Nadine "Dena" Roy
 Teaching Elder Mark Boyd
 Ruling Elder Allen Kitchen
 Ruling Elder Glenn Wooley
 YAAD Hunter Paff

Blackhawk

Teaching Elder Blake Richter
 Teaching Elder Kimberly R Hulen
 Ruling Elder Charles Johnson
 Ruling Elder Loreen Stravers
 YAAD Paulie Stevens

Boise

Teaching Elder Martin Geisel
 Ruling Elder Evelyn Cates
 YAAD Brooke Collaer

Boston

Teaching Elder Young Ghil Lee
 Ruling Elder Sarah Donovan
 YAAD Pruling Elderious Tah

Carlisle

Teaching Elder Graham Fowler
 Teaching Elder Kimberly Wadlington
 Ruling Elder Deborah Madden
 Ruling Elder Richard Lee
 YAAD Howard Ambe

The Cascades

Teaching Elder Jennifer Martin
 Teaching Elder Brian Heron
 Teaching Elder David Hutchinson
 Ruling Elder Julianne Stermer
 Ruling Elder Denise Mcpherson
 Ruling Elder David Dunford
 YAAD Leah Olson

Cayuga-Syracuse

Teaching Elder Lorrie Cooney
 Ruling Elder Gordie Howard
 YAAD Shaughn Anson

Central Florida

Teaching Elder Wesley Porto
 Teaching Elder Leon Bloder
 Teaching Elder Cara Gee
 Ruling Elder Monia Yust
 Ruling Elder David Simmons
 Ruling Elder Hugh Lackey
 YAAD Cassie Clark

Central Nebraska

Teaching Elder Karen Larson
 Ruling Elder Gary Smith
 YAAD Kelsey Cobb

Central Washington

Teaching Elder Robert D Johnson
 Ruling Elder James R Irwin
 YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Charleston-Atlantic

Teaching Elder Rebecca Albright
 Teaching Elder Maggie Beamguard
 Teaching Elder Robert Capers
 Ruling Elder Jim Collette
 Ruling Elder Marilyn Muckenfuss
 Ruling Elder Margaret Mitchell-Rivers
 YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Charlotte

Teaching Elder Albert Moses
 Teaching Elder Stephen Lindsley
 Teaching Elder Katherine Harrington
 Teaching Elder Priscilla Durkin
 Teaching Elder Matthew Drumheller
 Ruling Elder W. Fletcher Wright
 Ruling Elder Marsha Mcelroy
 Ruling Elder Eric Mccaw
 Ruling Elder Jesse Gilbert Hite, Jr
 Ruling Elder Donna Fair
 YAAD Jordan Shriefer

Cherokee

Teaching Elder Greg Lund
 Ruling Elder Bob Foster
 YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Chicago

Teaching Elder Brian Paulson
 Teaching Elder David Thornton
 Teaching Elder Jennifer Lewis
 Teaching Elder Jan Edmiston
 Teaching Elder John Chu
 Ruling Elder Anne Warnke
 Ruling Elder Barbara Vaughan
 Ruling Elder Sonia Bodi
 Ruling Elder Ralph Intagliata
 Ruling Elder Barbara Coop
 YAAD Kate Roca

Cimarron

Teaching Elder Leah Hrachovec
 Ruling Elder Cassandra Penka
 YAAD Katherine Nipp

Cincinnati

Teaching Elder William Love
 Teaching Elder Cynthia Maxwell Mason
 Ruling Elder Robert Northcutt
 Ruling Elder Claire Kroger
 YAAD Max Stainton

Coastal Carolina

Teaching Elder Lavera Parato
 Teaching Elder Laura Lupton
 Teaching Elder John Bryan
 Teaching Elder John Causey
 Ruling Elder William Millar
 Ruling Elder Naomi Newton
 Ruling Elder Rosia Freeman
 Ruling Elder Mebane Boyd
 YAAD Alex Fisher

Dakota

Teaching Elder Moccasin Ronn
 Ruling Elder Lufkins Carl
 YAAD Not Sending YAAD

De Cristo

Teaching Elder John Cheek
 Ruling Elder Robin Thomas
 YAAD Erin Cech

Denver

Teaching Elder Stanley Jewell
 Teaching Elder Russell Kane
 Ruling Elder Peter Hulac
 Ruling Elder Sharon Blackstock
 YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Des Moines

Teaching Elder Nathaniel Lamb
 Ruling Elder Midge Slater
 YAAD Sharon Boer

Detroit

Teaching Elder Robert Allen
 Teaching Elder Isaac Chung
 Teaching Elder Edward Koster
 Teaching Elder Judy Shipman
 Ruling Elder Harold Ellis
 Ruling Elder William Herhilar
 Ruling Elder Stefanie Lewis
 Ruling Elder Kathleen Johnson
 YAAD Esther Lee

Donegal

Teaching Elder Patricia Stoltzfus
 Teaching Elder William Wisneski
 Teaching Elder Ann Hatfield
 Ruling Elder John Yurkutat
 Ruling Elder Eleanor Grove
 Ruling Elder Janel Lawrence Nelson
 YAAD Olivia Campbell

East Iowa

Teaching Elder Oak Thomas
 Teaching Elder Melody Oltmann
 Ruling Elder Perry Ross
 Ruling Elder Ann Luedtka
 YAAD Mika Rangel

East Tennessee

Teaching Elder Ann Myers
 Teaching Elder Max Reddick
 Ruling Elder Kenneth Kim
 Ruling Elder Mary Boyd
 YAAD Malerie Lazar

Eastern Korean

Teaching Elder Sangchun Park Joshua
 Teaching Elder Hyon Kim
 Ruling Elder Moon Kim
 Ruling Elder Shin Lee
 YAAD Lydia Choi

Eastern Oklahoma

Teaching Elder Wally Johnson
 Teaching Elder Todd Freeman
 Ruling Elder Jan Keene
 Ruling Elder Eileen Grantham
 YAAD Julia Metcalf

Eastern Oregon

Teaching Elder Ginger Johnston
 Ruling Elder Ellen Jones
 YAAD Avery John Madril

Eastern Virginia

Teaching Elder Cynthia Higgins
 Teaching Elder Lawrence Willis
 Ruling Elder Gerry Ellis
 Ruling Elder Terry Simpkins
 YAAD Jamea Dewitt

Eastminster

Teaching Elder Russell Cowden
Ruling Elder Carol Glesacion
YAAD Zachary Young

Elizabeth

Teaching Elder Chris Belden
Teaching Elder Paul Rack
Ruling Elder Maryjane Finne
Ruling Elder Madelynne Lindsay
YAAD Luck Rasoanilana

Flint River

Teaching Elder Jarred Hammet
Ruling Elder Elizabeth Allison
YAAD Christopher Gilstrap

Florida

Teaching Elder G.W. (Bill) Bess
Ruling Elder Mary Bevis Schmidt
YAAD Quinn Schoppe

Foothills

Teaching Elder Michael Hoyt
Teaching Elder Deborah Foster
Ruling Elder Theodore Morrison
Ruling Elder Leland Close
YAAD Alexander Davis

Genesee Valley

Teaching Elder Amy Fowler
Teaching Elder Jim Renfrew
Ruling Elder Sylvia Fix
Ruling Elder Sarah Noble Moag
YAAD Zachery Caloritis

Geneva

Teaching Elder Nancy Meehan Yao
Ruling Elder Rob Anderson
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Giddings-Lovejoy

Teaching Elder John Marcus "Marc" Wendleton
Teaching Elder Joy Myers
Ruling Elder Lawson Calhoun
Ruling Elder Dianne Modrell
YAAD Sarah Cleeland

Glacier

Teaching Elder Miriam Mauritzen
Ruling Elder Kathy Herman
YAAD Kaycee Cronk

Grace

Teaching Elder Richard Young
Teaching Elder Patrick Mccoy
Teaching Elder Susan Sytsma Bratt

Grace (Continued)

Teaching Elder Lisa Juica
Teaching Elder David Ivie
Ruling Elder Kathy Porter
Ruling Elder Man Ho Park
Ruling Elder Don Mcintire
Ruling Elder Kathy Jones
Ruling Elder Cindy Baker Burnett
YAAD Emily Williams

Grand Canyon

Teaching Elder Gale Watkins
Teaching Elder Chuck Proudfoot
Ruling Elder Carol Gerlach
Ruling Elder Mary Lynn Walters
YAAD Sophia Horen

Great Rivers

Teaching Elder Timothy Snart
Teaching Elder Cheyanna Losey
Ruling Elder Karen Beshears
Ruling Elder Michael Gizzi
YAAD Nathaniel Null

Greater Atlanta

Teaching Elder Sylvia Wilson
Teaching Elder Kimmy Stokesbary
Teaching Elder Jihyun Oh
Teaching Elder Pam Driesell
Teaching Elder Jeff Davis
Ruling Elder Ken Whitehurst
Ruling Elder Karen Turney
Ruling Elder Jo Ann Nelson
Ruling Elder Chris Mccain
Ruling Elder Robert Lukat
YAAD Jessie Laverty

Heartland

Teaching Elder Jean Murphy
Teaching Elder Jonathan Mitchell
Teaching Elder Bonnie Grawboski
Ruling Elder Vera Phillips
Ruling Elder Terry Miller
Ruling Elder Teresa Clark
YAAD Timothy Gibson

Holston

Teaching Elder J Thomas Phillips
Ruling Elder Carol Baird
YAAD Courtney Fletcher

Homestead

Teaching Elder Heidi Bolt
Teaching Elder Jeff Warrick
Ruling Elder Regina Meester
Ruling Elder Brian Moock
YAAD Hannah Dierking

Hudson River

Teaching Elder George Bolton
Teaching Elder Leslie Mott
Ruling Elder Hans Hallundbaek
Ruling Elder Yzette Swavy-Lipton
YAAD Heather Mustavs

Huntingdon

Teaching Elder Earnest Walls
Ruling Elder Nancy Bostian
YAAD Sarah Yarger

Indian Nations

Teaching Elder Ron Fike
Ruling Elder Craig Stanley
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Inland Northwest

Teaching Elder Betsy Wynne
Ruling Elder Kevin Kirking
YAAD Anna Daley Laursen

The James

Teaching Elder Rebekah Johns
Teaching Elder Joshua Andrzejewski
Teaching Elder Gordon Mapes
Ruling Elder Deborah Rexrode
Ruling Elder Melissa Phillips
Ruling Elder Tonya Johnson
YAAD Sarah Shimer

John Calvin

Teaching Elder Mary Kay Glunt
Ruling Elder Jim Holt
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

John Knox

Teaching Elder Kathleen Owens
Teaching Elder Lindsay Beals James
Ruling Elder Laurie Jones
Ruling Elder Linda Jawson
YAAD Haley Jenson

Kendall

Teaching Elder John Wall
Ruling Elder Candice Wyckoff
YAAD Caitlyn Probasco

Kiskiminetas

Teaching Elder Dana Wilmot
Ruling Elder Sandy Gandolfi
YAAD Michael Kahle

Lackawanna

Teaching Elder Alexander Becker
Ruling Elder Harry Skene
YAAD Melissa Fleming

Lake Erie

Teaching Elder Rick Cepris
Teaching Elder Nicola Vitiello
Ruling Elder Allen Bennett
Ruling Elder Sue Mueller
YAAD Megan Whitman

Lake Huron

Teaching Elder Rhonda Myers
Teaching Elder James Offrink
Ruling Elder Kathy Maurer
Ruling Elder Cheryl Hosler
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Lake Michigan

Teaching Elder Ann Conklin
Teaching Elder Paul Tomlinson
Ruling Elder Daniel Van Beek
Ruling Elder Eileen Best
YAAD Gigi Goshorn

Lehigh

Teaching Elder Timothy Dooner
Teaching Elder Don Brown
Ruling Elder Paul Lucia
Ruling Elder Alicia Shussett
YAAD Mary Lazar

Long Island

Teaching Elder Nancy Howarth
Teaching Elder James Rea
Ruling Elder Magalene Mcclarrin
Ruling Elder Barbara Messier
YAAD Grace Segers

Los Ranchos

Teaching Elder Gail Stearns
Teaching Elder Steven C. "Steve" Marsh
Ruling Elder Jack Clement
Ruling Elder Hagar Benitez
YAAD Justin Botejue

Mackinac

Teaching Elder Nicholas Cammarata
Ruling Elder Donald Mclennan
YAAD Brad Premo

Maumee Valley

Teaching Elder Gary Saunders
Ruling Elder Kathy Jaroscz
YAAD Rebecca Snedeker-Meier

Miami Valley

Teaching Elder George Mcconnel
Teaching Elder Richard Culp
Ruling Elder Marvella Lambright
Ruling Elder Cheryl (Gidget) Collins
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Mid-Kentucky

Teaching Elder David Maxwell
Teaching Elder Patricia Tull
Ruling Elder Betty Muse
Ruling Elder Charles Kendell
YAAD Anna-Katelyn Biller

Mid-South

Teaching Elder John White
Ruling Elder Kristen King
YAAD Davis Crocker

Middle Tennessee

Teaching Elder Richard "Rik" Rouquie
Teaching Elder Jeanne' Hoechst
Teaching Elder Guy D. Griffith
Ruling Elder Virginia Lovellette
Ruling Elder Joyce Harris
Ruling Elder Steven C. "Steve" Douse
YAAD Jocelyn Wildhack

Midwest Hanmi

Teaching Elder Yohan Son
Ruling Elder Sae Duk Hwang
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Milwaukee

Teaching Elder Jean Dow
Ruling Elder Sue Volkman
YAAD Theodore Leavell

Minnesota Valleys

Teaching Elder Andrew Davis
Ruling Elder Charles Moore
YAAD Elizabeth Prouty

Mission

Teaching Elder Amy Meyer
Teaching Elder Joshua Robinson
Teaching Elder Carol Rahn
Teaching Elder Tom Heger
Ruling Elder Geoff Leech
Ruling Elder Ann Felts
Ruling Elder Bill Bohart
Ruling Elder Bruce Goodlock
YAAD Madelyn Haulotte

Mississippi

Teaching Elder Sally-Lodge Teel
Ruling Elder Marcia Willett
YAAD Olivia Turner

Missouri River Valley

Teaching Elder Sarah Dickinson
Teaching Elder A David Paul
Ruling Elder Sandra Hanna
Ruling Elder Chris Olson
YAAD Sarah Stage

Missouri Union

Teaching Elder Brad Sheppard
Ruling Elder Georgia Reid
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Monmouth

Teaching Elder Merideth Mueller
Teaching Elder John Monroe
Ruling Elder Walter Vincent
Ruling Elder Julissa Alvarez-Garcia
YAAD Crystal Garcia

Muskingum Valley

Teaching Elder James Mccurdy
Teaching Elder Susan E Skinner
Ruling Elder Cathy Piekarski
Ruling Elder Tim Pollock
YAAD Elizabeth Addington English

National Capital

Teaching Elder Tawnya Denise Anderson
Teaching Elder Robert (Bob) Melone
Teaching Elder Dorothy (Dottie) Lapenta
Teaching Elder Jocelyn (Jc) Cadwalladar
Ruling Elder William Plitt
Ruling Elder Therese Taylor-Stinson
Ruling Elder Lisa Miller
Ruling Elder Jochebed Jordan
YAAD Courtney Steininger

Nevada

Teaching Elder Bob Kelley
Ruling Elder Marshall Hanson
YAAD Eva Karttunen

New Brunswick

Teaching Elder Nicholas Craig Hatch
Teaching Elder Anita J. Milne
Ruling Elder Samuel L Bonner
Ruling Elder Janice B Everett
YAAD Molly Trevor

New Castle

Teaching Elder Jeff Howard
Teaching Elder Carolyn Winfrey Gillette
Ruling Elder Pam Ruarke
Ruling Elder Mawuna Gardesey
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

New Covenant

Teaching Elder David Green
Teaching Elder Nora Fitch
Teaching Elder Becky Downs
Teaching Elder Kevin Boyd
Ruling Elder James Hooper
Ruling Elder Gary Denmon, Jr.
Ruling Elder Johnna Cormier
Ruling Elder Regena Bass
YAAD Aaron Seay

New Harmony

Teaching Elder Jody Foster
Teaching Elder Franklin Colclough
Ruling Elder Dan Miller
Ruling Elder Bernadine Lamar
YAAD Stewart Holler

New Hope

Teaching Elder Wanda Neely
Teaching Elder Joseph Welker
Teaching Elder Samuel Son
Teaching Elder Kerri Hefner
Ruling Elder Leorita Hankerson
Ruling Elder Nancy Oates
Ruling Elder Robert Griffin
Ruling Elder George Matthew Wood Jr.
YAAD Hunter Wynns

New York City

Teaching Elder Rosemary (Jill) Schaeffer
Teaching Elder Luis Espinosa-Batista
Ruling Elder Justina Serlin
Ruling Elder Ryan Tirre
YAAD Audrey Canfield

Newark

Teaching Elder Greg Horn
Ruling Elder Victoria Andrade
YAAD Brittany Heun

Newton

Teaching Elder Nancy Young
Teaching Elder Rebecca Segers
Ruling Elder Joe Martinoni
Ruling Elder Lisa Gray
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

North Alabama

Teaching Elder Robin Palmer
Ruling Elder Debbie Book
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

North Central Iowa

Teaching Elder Lynne Hanna
Ruling Elder Ron Pepples
YAAD Joanna Wilson

Northeast Georgia

Teaching Elder Cheryl Barnes
Ruling Elder Wanda C. Butler
YAAD Jon Forbes

Northern Kansas

Teaching Elder Christopher Davis
Ruling Elder Emily Mark
Gas Griffin Lowrey

Northern New England

Teaching Elder Susan Gleason
Ruling Elder Janet Fuhrmeister
YAAD Isaac Donkoh-Halm

Northern New York

Teaching Elder Melodie Long
Ruling Elder Stuart Voss
YAAD Amber Baker

Northern Plains

Teaching Elder Donna Monteith
Ruling Elder Sylvia Pringle
YAAD Adam Allmer

Northern Waters

Teaching Elder James Deeters
Ruling Elder Paul Rigstad
YAAD Francesca Duquette

Northumberland

Teaching Elder Gene Gordon
Ruling Elder James Zaiser
YAAD Polhill Madeline

Northwest Coast*

Teaching Elder James Kwon
Teaching Elder Amy Delaney
Ruling Elder Shannon Smythe
Ruling Elder Bill Simpson
YAAD Jessamine Anderson

Presbiterio Del Noroeste

Teaching Elder Osvaldo Montalvo Nazario
Ruling Elder Antonio Roldan Rodriguez
YAAD Raquel Ramirez Torres

Ohio Valley

Teaching Elder John Erickson
Ruling Elder Jane Gore
YAAD Anna Tilstra-Smith

Olympia

Teaching Elder Taeler Morgan
Ruling Elder David Ammons
YAAD Stephen Hornyak

Pacific

Teaching Elder Elizabeth Leavitt
Teaching Elder Timm Cyrus
Ruling Elder Karen Mizrahi
Ruling Elder Eric Beck
Ruling Elder De Lano Hull
YAAD Lauren Beck

Palisades

Teaching Elder Jonathan Brown
Ruling Elder Marcena Steele
YAAD Cameron Mcindoe

Palo Duro

Teaching Elder Robert Field
Ruling Elder Gene Deason
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Peace River

Teaching Elder India Dennis
Teaching Elder Christopher Carlson
Teaching Elder Lal Browne
Ruling Elder Lillian Rea
Ruling Elder R. Gerald Fox
Ruling Elder Claudia George
YAAD Rebecca Deibert

The Peaks

Teaching Elder George Anderson
Teaching Elder Linda Dickerson
Ruling Elder John Arehart
Ruling Elder Jordan Phillips
YAAD Jude Swanson

Philadelphia

Teaching Elder Sandy Hull
Teaching Elder Cynthia Jarvis
Teaching Elder Ki Nam Lee
Teaching Elder Adan Mairena
Ruling Elder Beth Bauer
Ruling Elder Mike Henry
Ruling Elder Julia Hill
Ruling Elder Deborah Merritt
YAAD Maria Dichiaro

Pines

Teaching Elder Philip Faris
Ruling Elder Nancy Bergeron
YAAD Jaelyn Smith

Pittsburgh

Teaching Elder Donna Giver-Johnson
Teaching Elder James Ramsey
Teaching Elder Heather Schoenewolf
Teaching Elder Jay Lewis
Ruling Elder Margaret Bonfiglio
Ruling Elder Leslie Kaplan
Ruling Elder Alan Perry
Ruling Elder Anthony Savatt
YAAD Alyssa White

Plains And Peaks

Teaching Elder Michelle Witherspoon
Ruling Elder Raine Stefford-Grey
YAAD Zelig Boothby

Prospect Hill

Teaching Elder Brian Camara
Ruling Elder Elaine Doorenbos
YAAD Robert Lyons

Providence

Teaching Elder Edgar McCall
Ruling Elder Ellen Green
YAAD Najha Feemster

Pueblo

Teaching Elder Adrian Washington
Ruling Elder Jim Simpson
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Redstone

Teaching Elder Colleen Molinaro
Teaching Elder Curtis Paul
Ruling Elder Bernice Adams
Ruling Elder Tom Shipley
YAAD Mandi Pascarella

The Redwoods

Teaching Elder Pamela Novelty
Ruling Elder Nancy Walsh
YAAD Sierra Mink

Riverside

Teaching Elder Claire Schlegel
Ruling Elder Carol Nord
YAAD Morgan Morgan

Sacramento

Teaching Elder Thomas Smith
Teaching Elder Tom Tripp
Ruling Elder Hazel Watson
Ruling Elder Louis Nevins
YAAD Dresden Vogt

St Andrew

Teaching Elder Wil Howie
Ruling Elder Kevin Magee
YAAD Abby Bruce

St Augustine

Teaching Elder Gary Goodman
Teaching Elder Laurie Furr-Vancini
Ruling Elder Patti Phillips
Ruling Elder Ricky Kirby
YAAD Alexis Green

Salem

Teaching Elder Steve Scott
Teaching Elder William Hoyle
Teaching Elder Debbie Layman
Teaching Elder Stephanie Hankins
Ruling Elder David Parker
Ruling Elder Jung Kim
Ruling Elder James Norris
Ruling Elder Laqreshia Bates-Hartley
YAAD Rachel Franklin

San Diego

Teaching Elder Elizabeth Wilson Manahan
Teaching Elder Nathan Byrd
Ruling Elder Cheryl Kosits
Ruling Elder Frances Lin
YAAD Jocelyn Fischer

San Fernando

Teaching Elder John Langfitt
Ruling Elder Carol Sherwood
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

San Francisco

Teaching Elder Katherine Runyeon
Teaching Elder Margret Henderson
Ruling Elder Linda Lee
Ruling Elder Antoinette Nixon
YAAD Rachel Wong

San Gabriel

Teaching Elder Robert Crowell
Teaching Elder Karen Sapio
Ruling Elder Fried Wilson
Ruling Elder Arnolfo Bringas
YAAD Nader Makar

San Joaquin

Teaching Elder Mary Raine
Ruling Elder Cindi Rogers
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

San Jose

Teaching Elder Bryan Franzen
Teaching Elder Tom Coop
Ruling Elder Judi Johnson
Ruling Elder David Leith
YAAD Brian Herrel

Presbiterio De San Juan

Teaching Elder Luis Ocasio-Torres
Ruling Elder Eileen Rivas-Garcia
YAAD Miguel Rosa-Morales

Santa Barbara

Teaching Elder Jarrett Johnson
Ruling Elder Michael (Mickey) Stueck
YAAD Paul Gillis-Smith

Santa Fe

Teaching Elder Drew Henry
Ruling Elder Jennifer Holmes
YAAD Alex Watson

Savannah

Teaching Elder Andy Meeker
Ruling Elder James Mcgraw
YAAD Rebekah Woodburn

Scioto Valley

Teaching Elder Randy Terry
Teaching Elder Timothy Luoma
Teaching Elder Amy House
Ruling Elder Meg Wilson
Ruling Elder Mary Dahs
Ruling Elder Debra Bergman
YAAD Aidan Anderson

Seattle

Teaching Elder Chris Pritchett
Teaching Elder Doug Early
Ruling Elder Pattie Holt
Ruling Elder Steve Aeschbacher
YAAD Riley Drinkwine

Shenandoah

Teaching Elder John Haney
Teaching Elder Betty Dax
Ruling Elder Dave Thalman
Ruling Elder Mary Lou Cox
YAAD Isaac Haney

Shenango

Teaching Elder Don Stanley
Ruling Elder Don Christy
YAAD Calvin Gealy

Sheppards And Lapsley

Teaching Elder Leanne Pearce Reed
Teaching Elder Robert Hay
Ruling Elder George Miller
Ruling Elder Eva Carter
YAAD Noah Foster

Sierra Blanca

Teaching Elder Amy Pospichal
Ruling Elder Dietta Hitchcock
YAAD Katie Joner

South Alabama

Teaching Elder Bob Madsen
Ruling Elder Barkley Shreve
YAAD McCain Walker

South Dakota

Teaching Elder Kristie Bergland
Ruling Elder Sue Holloway
YAAD Hannah Moerke

South Louisiana

Teaching Elder Zach Sasser
Ruling Elder Nanette Cagney
YAAD Erica Sonnier

Southeastern Illinois

Teaching Elder Rachel Helgeson
Ruling Elder Lynn Neal
YAAD Not Sending YAAD

Southern Kansas

Teaching Elder Denise Pass
Ruling Elder Glenda Hawthorne
YAAD Nivin Lee

Southern New England

Teaching Elder Patrick Notley
Ruling Elder Louis Deloma
YAAD Madeleine Olson

Presbiterio Del Suroeste

Teaching Elder Hernan Rodriguez Morales
Ruling Elder Wilson Lugo Rios
YAAD Omar Alfonso Santiago Cordero

Stockton

Teaching Elder Augustine Wright Iii
Ruling Elder Cecilia Moran
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Susquehanna Valley

Teaching Elder Patricia Wolff
Ruling Elder George Budine
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Tampa Bay

Teaching Elder Libby Shannon
Teaching Elder Kathy Dain
Teaching Elder Bobby Musengwa
Ruling Elder Barry Dowdy
Ruling Elder Paula Salter
Ruling Elder Dan Johnson
YAAD Emily Snyder

Transylvania

Teaching Elder James Stewart
Teaching Elder Lisa Eye
Ruling Elder Linda Crawford
Ruling Elder Latoe Busroe
YAAD Claire Roberts

Tres Rios

Teaching Elder Matt Miles
Ruling Elder David Cooper
YAAD Katherine Mullings

Trinity

Teaching Elder Leon D Page
Teaching Elder Lawrence Peebles
Ruling Elder Jane Brissette
Ruling Elder Lilly Gallman
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Tropical Florida

Teaching Elder Douglas Hood
Teaching Elder Pedro Rivera
Ruling Elder Kimberly Chun
Ruling Elder Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz
YAAD Melissa Benedek

Twin Cities Area

Teaching Elder Stephen Robertson
Teaching Elder Katherine Estes
Teaching Elder April Davis Campbell
Ruling Elder Sue Rutford
Ruling Elder Peter Soulen
Ruling Elder Attie Kay Yost
YAAD Mara Emmons

Upper Ohio Valley

Teaching Elder Homer Hardin
Ruling Elder Christian Kestner
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Utah

Teaching Elder Derek Forbes
Ruling Elder Laquitta Probasco
YAAD Sarah Ratzlaff

Utica

Teaching Elder Elsie Rhodes
Ruling Elder Patricia Joseph
YAAD Megan Scaccia

Wabash Valley

Teaching Elder Sarah Bishop
Teaching Elder Sarah Sanderson-Doughty
Ruling Elder Sandy Carlson
Ruling Elder Michael Munson
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Washington

Teaching Elder Geoff Rach
Ruling Elder Nellie Baker
YAAD Cassandra Laughlin

West Jersey

Teaching Elder Keith Reed
Teaching Elder Cheni Khonje
Ruling Elder Michael Smith
Ruling Elder Wendy Frisby
YAAD Sarah Hafer

West Virginia

Teaching Elder Todd Wright
Teaching Elder Barbara Accord
Ruling Elder Chet Parsons
Ruling Elder Tina Vial
YAAD Madalyn Digiulian

Western Colorado

Teaching Elder Patrick Bailey
Ruling Elder Gary Skaggs
YAAD Not SendingYAAD

Western Kentucky

Teaching Elder Archie Fugate
Ruling Elder Wayne Goolsby
YAAD Abigail Troutman

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Western New York

Teaching Elder Richard Young
Teaching Elder Justin Marple
Ruling Elder Gladys Gifford
Ruling Elder Maryann Macdonald
YAAD Jackson Collis

Western North Carolina

Teaching Elder Don Scofield
Teaching Elder Esta Jarrett
Teaching Elder Kathy Campbell
Ruling Elder Rodney Lytle
Ruling Elder Mary Louise Bringle
Ruling Elder John Pea
YAAD Anna Huntley

The Western Reserve

Teaching Elder Charles Swartz
Teaching Elder Sharon Budin
Ruling Elder Isaac Monah
Ruling Elder Chris Hiestan
YAAD Robert Garrett

Whitewater Valley

Teaching Elder Youngsoo An
Teaching Elder Jonathan Reinink
Ruling Elder Mike Whitfield
Ruling Elder Judi Trabue
YAAD Grace German

Winnebago

Teaching Elder Thomas Willadsen
Ruling Elder Marilyn Paulson
YAAD Nicholas Schmidt

Wyoming

Teaching Elder Yoon Kak Cho
Ruling Elder Fred Feth
YAAD Sam Richins

Yellowstone

Teaching Elder Harlan Rounds
Ruling Elder Emily Keegan
YAAD Tanner Robison

Yukon

Teaching Elder Henry Woodall
Ruling Elder Sara Johnston
YAAD Charlie Mcneill

OTHER ADVISORY DELEGATES

Theological Student Advisory Delegates

Jessie Light	Austin Theological Seminary
Madeline Hart-Andersen	Austin Theological Seminary
Lauren Patrus	Columbia Theological Seminary
Rachel Mathews	Columbia Theological Seminary
Ashley Love	Fuller Theological Seminary
Ainsley Herrick	Louisville Presbyterian Theo. Sem.
Doris Evans	Louisville Presbyterian Theo. Sem.
Stephanie Quintana-Martinez	McCormick Theological Seminary
Christopher Williams	McCormick Theological Seminary
Debbie Smith	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Evan Wildhack	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Jess Rigel	Princeton Theological Seminary
Robert Galloway	Princeton Theological Seminary
Patrick Kiptum	San Francisco Theological Seminary
Brooklynn Smith	San Francisco Theological Seminary
Owen Gray	Union Presbyterian Seminary
Sally Herlong	Union Presbyterian Seminary
Lee Sartain	Union Theological Seminary (NY)
Maggie Lewis	University of Dubuque Theo. Sem.
Kate Orth	University of Dubuque Theo. Sem.

Missionary Advisory Delegates

Hugh Anderson	China
Tracey King-Ortega	Central America
Karen Moritz	Czech Republic
Kristi Van Nostran	El Salvador
Burkhard Paetzold	Germany
Don Choi	Indonesia
Janet Guyer	Malawi
Doug Tilton	South Africa

Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

Modesto Mamani Achata	Methodist Church in Bolivia
Motlalentwa Betha	Unitg. Ref. Ch. in South. Africa
Stephen Bils	American Baptist Church
Alison Budhlall	Presbyterian Ch. in Grenada
Martin HIRAK Chowdhury	Church of Bangladesh
Vicki Garber	Evang. Lutheran Ch. in Amer.
Herman "Harmelink III	Intl. Council of Comm. Chs.
Kyung Ho Hong	Korean Presby. Ch. Abroad
Annie Ntumba Tshiswaka	Presbyterian Ch. of Kinshasa
Steven A. Voytovich	Orthodox Church in America
Christopher Williams	Guyana Presbyterian Church
Kamal Youssef Yacoub	Evang. Ch. of Egypt, Synod of the Nile

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Office of the General Assembly

Gradye Parsons	Stated Clerk
Tom Hay	Assoc. Stated Clerk
Beth Hessel	Assoc. Stated Clerk
Sue Krummel	Assoc. Stated Clerk
Joyce Lieberman	Assoc. Stated Clerk
Kerry Rice	Assoc. Stated Clerk
Robina Winbush	Assoc. Stated Clerk
SanDawna Ashley	Asst. Stated Clerk
Tim Cargal	Asst. Stated Clerk
Molly Casteel	Asst. Stated Clerk
Deborah Davies	Asst. Stated Clerk
Melissa Davis	Asst. Stated Clerk
Laurie Griffith	Asst. Stated Clerk
Martha Miller	Asst. Stated Clerk
Kay Moore	Asst. Stated Clerk
Laura Polk	Asst. Stated Clerk
Toya Richards	Asst. Stated Clerk
Valerie Kiriishi Small	Asst. Stated Clerk
Nancy Taylor	Asst. Stated Clerk
Kris Valerius	Asst. Stated Clerk
Teresa Waggener	Asst. Stated Clerk

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Margaret Elliott
 Jim Wilson
 Barbara Gaddis
 Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo
 Leah Johnson
 Wilson Kennedy
 Larissa Kwong Abazia
 Eileen Lindner
 Leon Lovell-Martin
 Kathy Matsushima
 Ginny Rainey
 Vince Thomas

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Dan Williams
 Julie MacLemore Wells
 Steve Plank
 Therese Howell
 Alyson Janke
 Moon Lee
 Daniel Saperstein
 Michael Williams
 Daryl Fisher-Ogden

Other Permanent and Special Committees

Tim Read	Advisory Committee on Litigation
Aimee Moiso	Comm. on Ecum. & Interfaith Rel.
Amy Kim Kyremes-Parks	GA Nominating Committee
Martha Ross-Mockaitis	GA Comm. on Representation
Jean Lungwitz	Permanent Judicial Commission
Louis Weeks	Presbyterian Historical Society
Carol McDonald	Stated Clerk Nomination Comm.
Cliff Lyda	Review Committee on the PMA
Eliana Maxim	Review Committee on the OGA
Luke Choi	Korean Task Force

Presbyterian Mission Agency

Tony De La Rosa	Interim Executive Director
Marilyn Gamm	PMAB Chair
Marsha Anson	PMAB Member
James Ephraim	PMAB Member
Chad Herring	PMAB Member
Mihee Kim-Kort	PMAB Member
Nancy Ramsay	PMAB Member
Melinda Sanders	PMAB Member
David Shinn	PMAB Member
Jo Stewart	PMAB Member
Ken Godshall	PMAB Member
Barry Creech	Exec Dir. Office
April Davenport	Assoc. Legal Counsel
Mike Kirk	Assoc. Legal Counsel
Kathy Francis	Deputy Director
Earline Williams	Deputy Director
Rosemary Mitchell	Deputy Director
Christine Darden	ACSWP
Raafat Labib Zaki	ACREC
Susan Carter Wiggins	ACWC
Sara Lisherness	Director, CPJ
Rhashell Hunter	Director, RE&WM
Chip Hardwick	Director, TFE
Hunter Farrell	Director, WM

Other Agencies

John Hamm	Board of Pensions
Frank Spencer	Board of Pensions
Marilee Hopkins	Presbyterian Foundation
Tom Taylor	Presbyterian Foundation
Maggie Jorgensen Co.	Presbyterian Invest. & Loan
Jim Rissler	Presbyterian Investment &
Loan Company	
Adlai Amor	Presbyterian Publishing
Corporation	
Marc Lewis	Presbyterian Publishing
Corporation	

Synod Executives

Ruben Ortiz Rodriguez	Boriquen En Puerto Rico
Raafat Labib Zaki	The Covenant
Elona Street-Stewart	Lakes And Prairies
Sara Dingman	Lincoln Trails
Terry Newland	Living Waters
Landon Whitsitt	Mid-America
Warren Lesane	Mid-Atlantic
Harold Delhagen	The Northeast
Jane Odell	The Pacific
David Ezekiel	The Rocky Mountains
Doska Ross	Southern California and
Hawaii	
Conrad Rocha	The Southwest
Valerie Young	The Sun
Susan Faye Wonderland	The Trinity

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Theological Seminary Presidents

Ted Wardlaw	Austin Theological Seminary
Leanne Van Dyk	Columbia Theological Seminary
Jeffrey Bullock	Dubuque Theological Seminary
Paul Roberts	Johnson C. Smith Seminary
Michael Jinkins	Louisville Theological Seminary
Frank Yamada	McCormick Theological Seminary
David Esterline	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Craig Barnes	Princeton Theological Seminary
Jim McDonald	San Francisco Theol.l Seminary
Brian Blount	Union Presbyterian Seminary
Doris Garcia-Rivera	Seminario Evangel. de Puerto Rico

Former Moderators

Susan Andrews
John Buchanan
John Fife
Neal Presa
Bruce Reyes-Chow
Rick Ufford-Chase
Herbert D. Valentine
Heath Rada

VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING THE STATED CLERK

Assembly Assistants

Chip Andrus
Rebecca Chancellor
Vilmarie Cintron-Oliviera
Kerry Clements
Jim Collie
Mathew Eardley
Terry Epling
Edwin Gonzalez Castillo
Martin Han
Robert Hay Jr.
Christopher Hooker
Paul Huh
Joshua Kim
Keishla Lanzot Rivera
Don Lincoln
Kathy Lueckert
Jeff Moles
Jose' Olagues
Paulina Reyes
Jorge Sayago-Gonzalez
Tamara Williams
Nathan Young
Sharon Youngs

Committee Assistants

Emily Anderson
Diana Barber
Bronwen Boswell
Mary Gene Boteler
Stephen Choi

Committee Assistants (*Continued*)

Jodi Craiglow
Diane Curtis
Freda Dye
Bridgett Green
Rebecca Kirkpatrick
Rick Nutt
Kevin Porter
Chris Rhodes
James Tse
Steve Yamaguchi

Student Assistants

Becca Cummings	Union Presbyterian Seminary
Jerry Egbert	Univ. of Dubuque Theol. Seminary
Annie Franklin	Union Presbyterian Seminary
Kitti Ginn	Univ. of Dubuque Theol. Seminary
Melanie Hardison	Louisville Presby. Theol. Sem.
Ashia Huelsenbeck	Louisville Presby. Theol. Sem.
John Larkin	Austin Theological Seminary
Callie Malone	
Heather McIntyre	
Tim McNinch	Louisville Presby. Theological Sem.
Katherine Norwood	Louisville Presby. Theol. Sem.
Katelyn Nutter	Columbia Theological Seminary
Ed Sackett	Austin Theological Seminary
Mara Sawdy	
Shannon Schmidt	
Paul Seif	
Joshua Stanley	Columbia Theological Seminary
Beatrix Weil	Princeton Theological Seminary

MID COUNCIL STAFF AND STATED CLERKS

Synod Stated Clerks

Dean Strong	Alaska-Northwest
David Bartley	The Covenant
Nancy Talbot	The Northeast
Wayne A Yost	The Trinity

Presbytery Staff and Stated Clerks

Randy Webb	Abingdon	Elissa Bailey	Great Rivers
Bill Parish	Abingdon	Penny Hill	Greater Atlanta
Shannan Epling	Albany	Donna Wells	Greater Atlanta
Stewart Smith	Arkansas	Charles Spencer	Heartland
Robert Lowry	Arkansas	Sally Hinchman	Heartland
Mary Gaut	Baltimore	Rich Fifield	Holston
Catherine Blacka	Baltimore	Richard Wyatt	Homestead
Alan Adams	Beaver-Butler	Raymond Meester	Homestead
John Rickard	Blackhawk	Gavin Meek	Hudson River
Daryl Wilson	Boise	Susan De George	Hudson River
Dick Green	Boise	Joy Kaufmann	Huntingdon
Cindy Kohlmann	Boston	Sheryl Kinder-Pyle	The Inland Northwest
T. J. DeMarco	Boston	Larry Veith	The Inland Northwest
Jim Speedy	Carlisle	Carson Rhyne	The James
Aleida Jernigan	The Cascades	Susan Rosenbaum	John Calvin
Dawn Champoux	The Cascades	Melana Scruggs	John Calvin
Paul Belz-Templeman	The Cascades	Chaz Ruark The	John Knox
Kevin Nollette	Central Washington	Pamela Mayes	Kendall
Michael Nixon	Central Washington	Don Wilson	Kiskiminetas
Donnie Woods	Charleston-Atlantic	Marilyn Tully	Kiskiminetas
Betty Meadows	Charlotte	Virginia Miner	Lackawanna
Tamara Williams	Charlotte	Marge Zeigler	Lackawanna
Nikki MacMillan	Cherokee	David Oyler	Lake Erie
Debbie Rundlett	Chicago	Ted McCulloch	Lake Huron
Barbara Bundick	Chicago	John Best	Lake Michigan
Gordon Edwards	Cimarron	Fran Lane-Lawrence	Lake Michigan
Deborah Meinke	Cimarron	Marsha Heimann	Lehigh
Brad Munroe	de Cristo	Tom Cramer	Los Ranchos
Tom Sheffield	Denver	Forrest Claassen	Los Ranchos
Cathy Ulrich	Denver	Susan Meier	Maumee Valley
David Hamilton	Des Moines	Shelley Wiley	Miami Valley
Al Timm	Detroit	Larry Hollar	Miami Valley
Erin Cox Holmes	Donegal	Warner R. Durnell	Middle Tennessee
Michael Wilson	Donegal	John Odom	Mid-Kentucky
Rebecca Blair	East Iowa	Jerry VanMarter	Mid-Kentucky
Judd Shaw	East Tennessee	Bo Scarborough	Mid-South
Moongil Cho	Eastern Korean	Sam Y. Kim	Midwest Hanmi
Greg Coulter	Eastern Oklahoma	Craig Howard	Milwaukee
Bonnie Smith	Eastern Oklahoma	Christian Boyd	Milwaukee
Linda Toth	Eastern Oregon	Rick Carus	Minnesota Valleys
Pete Wells	Eastern Oregon	Pamela Prouty	Minnesota Valleys
Liza Hendricks	Eastern Virginia	Sallie Watson	Mission
John Tamm	Eastern Virginia	Susan Sumrall	Mississippi
Nancy Kahaian	Eastminster	Mary Newbern-Williams	Missouri River Valley
Dale Riley	Eastminster	Bob Keefer	Missouri River Valley
Cheryl Galan	Elizabeth	Deborah Boucher-Payne	Missouri Union
Jeremy Campbell	Elizabeth	Carl Wilton	Monmouth
Deb Bibler	Flint River	Wendy Bailey	Monmouth
Jerry Watts	Flint River	Wilson "Gunn Jr.	National Capital
Gordon Raynal	Foothills	Sara Coe	National Capital
Anita Hendrix	Giddings-Lovejoy	Joan Jeffers	Nevada
Terry Epling	Giddings-Lovejoy	Jim Moseley	New Castle
Michael Thompson	Grace	Bob Schminkey	New Castle
Bob Schulz	Grand Canyon	Mike Cole	New Covenant

THE ROLL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Lynn Hargrove	New Covenant	Sharon Yates	Santa Fe
Bruce Ford	New Harmony	Russell Gladding	Savannah
Ted Churn	New Hope	Jeannie Harsh	Scioto Valley
Robert Foltz-Morrison	New York City	Rick Hays	Scioto Valley
Andy James	New York City	Scott Lumsden	Seattle
Barbara Smith	Newark	Karen Breckenridge	Seattle
Warren McNeill	Newark	Roy Martin	Shenandoah
Jeanne Radak	Newton	Kerry Foster	Shenandoah
Tammy Gregory	Brown North Alabama	Ralph Hawkins	Shenango
David Feltman	North Central Iowa	Jay Wilkins	Sheppards And Lapsley
Hilary Shuford	Northeast Georgia	Al Thompson	South Alabama
Melanie Hancock	Northern Kansas	Kevin Veldhuisen	South Dakota
Bob Frasier	Northern Kansas	Ron Sutto	South Louisiana
Pieter Visscher	Northern New York	Bill McLean	Southeastern Illinois
Mike Lochow	Northern Plains	Cynthia Bean	Southeastern Illinois
Brad Carloss	Northern Waters	Bea Hoover-Mulvany	Southern New England
Corey Schlosser-Hall	Northwest Coast	Nancy Clegg	Stockton
Susan McGhee	Ohio Valley	Jim Martin	Susquehanna Valley
Larry Jackman	Ohio Valley	Patrice Hatley	Tampa Bay
Keith Tanis	Olympia	Dave Baker	Tampa Bay
Kari McFarland	Olympia	Philip Lotspeich	Transylvania
Linda Culbertson	The Pacific	Jerry Utt II	Transylvania
Marianne Rhebergen	Palisades	Jose Luis Casal	Tres Rios
Kurt Kaboth	Palisades	Kay Long	Tres Rios
Richard Schempp	Palo Duro	Danny Murphy Sr.	Trinity
Ruth Clendenin	Palo Duro	David Torrey	Trinity
Graham Hart	Peace River	Amalie Ash	Tropical Florida
Randy Moody	Peace River	Jeff Japinga	Twin Cities Area
Nancy Dawson	The Peaks	Bill Davnier	Twin Cities Area
Ruth Santana-Grace	Philadelphia	Robert Nagy	Upper Ohio Valley
Kevin Porter	Philadelphia	Frank Lewis	Upper Ohio Valley
Joe Hill	Pines	Jeff Silliman	Utah
Dan Hignight	Pines	Candice Sweet	Utah
Sheldon Sorge	Pittsburgh	Linda L Long	Wabash Valley
Carla Campbell	Pittsburgh	Craig Kephart	Washington
Lynn Smit	Plains And Peaks	Debby Brincivalli	West Jersey
Mark Verdery	Providence	Wendy Boer	West Jersey
Ronald Anderson	Pueblo	Ed Thompson	West Virginia
Skip Noftzger	Redstone	Maureen Wright	West Virginia
Robert Conover	The Redwoods	Ken Dick	Western Kentucky
Diane Frasher	Riverside	Charlie Evans	Western Kentucky
Robert Watkins	Sacramento	Laura Norris Buisch	Western New York
Greg Goodwiller	St Andrew	Bobbi White Western	North Carolina
Steve Benz	St Augustine	Linda Badger Becker	The Western Reserve
Sandra Hedrick	St Augustine	Jessica MacMillan	The Western Reserve
Sam Marshall	Salem	Alan Thames	Whitewater Valley
Michael Mudgett	San Diego	Kristy Quinn	Whitewater Valley
Linda Therien	San Diego	Sarah Moore-Nokes	Winnebago
Ken Baker	San Fernando	Steve Shive	Wyoming
Jeff Hutcheson	San Francisco	Mark Owens	Wyoming
Wendy Tajima	San Gabriel	Kathy Goodrich	Yellowstone
Les Hyder	San Joaquin	Debbie Blackburn	Yellowstone
Joey Lee	San Jose	Curtis Karns	Yukon
John Kelso	San Jose	Sharon Rayt	Yukon
Edwin Gonzalez Castillo	Presbiterio De San Juan		
Larry Lindsey	Santa Barbara		

ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Seth Senyo Agidi	Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana"
Andrew Beunk	Christian Reformed Church in North America
Jorge Cardenas Brito	Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Chile
Derek Browning	Church of Scotland
Miguel Cancu	Dominican Evangelical Church
Douglas F. Chipofya	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian/Livingstonia Synod
Jeffery Cooper	African Methodist Episcopal Church
Iris de Leon-Hartshorn	Mennonite Church USA
Loida Gaffaro de Valera	Presbyterian Church of Venezuela
Khalfani Drummer	Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Martha Munoz Duarte	Presbyterian Church of Colombia
Lowell Greathouse	United Methodist Church
David Guthrie	Moravian Church (Southern Province)
Herbert Ivory	United Methodist Church
Daniel Izquierdo	Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba
Stephen Kendall	Presbyterian Church in Canada
Hong Jung Lee	Presbyterian Church of Korea
Leighton Christopher Mason	United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
Sophie Mathonnet-Vander Well	Reformed Church in America
Colleen Michael	Church of the Brethren
W. Darin Moore	AME Zion Church
Matorofa Mutonganavo	Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
Mark Pettis	United Church of Christ
Marc Ravalomanana	Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
Bishoy Ray	Coptic Orthodox Church in NA
Charles Robertson	The Episcopal Church in America
Sonia Skupch	Evangelical Church of Rio de la Plata
Henny William Booth	Sumakul Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa, Tomohon
Halvard B. Thomsen	Seventh Day Adventist
Mary Jo Tully	U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

INTERFAITH REPRESENTATIVES

Mareen Fisher	Ch of Jesus Christ of LDS
Joshua Rose	Congregation Shaarie Torah
Wajdi Said	Portland Muslim Community

Standing Rules of the General Assembly

[AS AMENDED BY THE 222ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2016).]

Introduction

Values Present at General Assembly

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor. 12:4–7 and 26–27)

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness. (G-3.0501)

With glad and grateful hearts, we affirm these core values in our worship, work, and witness together in gatherings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- That the common life of the whole church, as evidenced in our meetings, will reflect the mind of Christ, demonstrating consolation, spiritual sharing, compassion and sympathy, and doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regarding others as better than ourselves. We will be in full accord and strive to model the faithful, obedient, humble, and self-emptying witness of Jesus Christ.
- That our engagement with one another in the ministry of the gathered church will reflect the transforming love of God, enabling us to discern God's will together. We will use our gifts on behalf of one another and the world, giving glory to God. We will love genuinely and hold fast to all that is good. We will rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. We will live in harmony with one another and overcome evil with good.
- These values will enable us
 - to engage with one another in love, humility, grace, and servant discipleship, as the council of the whole church;
 - to encourage and increase collaboration within and among all councils of the church;
 - to participate in discussion, deliberation, and discernment in ways that are fair and honest and open;
 - to focus each meeting of the General Assembly to encourage the full and prayerful participation of those seeking the mind of Christ for the whole church.

We acknowledge these core characteristics of gatherings of the General Assembly:

- Affirming the Presbyterian distinctives that God is sovereign and God alone is Lord of the conscience;
- Encountering and learning from Presbyterians and many others from across the United States and around the world;
- Gathering again with old friends in the family reunion that is General Assembly;
- Creating and expanding generative relationships with fellow Christians;
- Learning from individuals who are quite different from one another;
- Witnessing with joy and thanksgiving the emergence of new leaders for the church;

Introduction

- Experiencing an intentional, faithful process for discernment and decision making;
- Experiencing God's presence through worship, devotions, hallway prayers, and Christ-centered conversations;
- Hoping and yearning together that our mutual witness will point to the reign of God;
- Demonstrating the church is not focused on any one cause or individual;
- Growing in our understanding of Christ and the church;
- Meeting sisters and brothers in Christ who represent a particular perspective and who listen and share with care and respect;
- Making decisions through contemplation, prayer, and heartfelt sharing;
- Continuing a history and heritage together since 1789.

We demonstrate and sustain our core values through these central commitments.

- *Reflect the Body and Seek the Mind of Christ*
In all things, the General Assembly reflects the body of Christ and seeks the mind of Christ through worship, prayer, discernment, and action.
- *A Broad Context for Christ's Broad World*
The General Assembly provides a helpful, faithful context for understanding the beauty and diversity of the body of Christ in the world.
- *Expansive and Spiritual Deliberation*
The General Assembly embraces an easily understood and accessible process that creates opportunities for questions, prayer, and God's unexpected movement, rather than hurrying to yes/no votes.
- *Order and Flexibility*
The General Assembly deliberates with fairness, attention to process, order, and the encouragement of minority voices, while creating space for decision making grounded in discernment and dialogue and for the emergence of new leadership.
- *Reunion and Affirmation*
The General Assembly encourages the best of our Presbyterian tradition and friendships new and old.
- *Faithful Stewardship*
The General Assembly demonstrates faithful stewardship of human and financial resources.

STANDING RULES FOR MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Sources of Business for the Meeting

1. **Papers in General**
 - a. Papers to Be Considered
 - b. Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly
2. **Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees**
 - a. Reports Deadline
 - b. Budget Consultation
 - c. Appropriate Background Information
 - d. Report Length
 - e. Report with Recommendations
3. **Overtures**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Writing Overtures
 - c. Submitting Overtures
 - d. Distributing Overtures
 - e. Overture Advocate
4. **Entity and Synod Minutes**
 - a. Submit for Review
 - b. Review Process
5. **Presbytery Reports**
6. **Commissioners' Resolutions**
 - a. Who May Propose
 - b. Deadline
 - c. Existing General Assembly Policy
 - d. May Not Amend *Book of Order*
 - e. Already Before Assembly
 - f. Same Issues as Previous Assembly
 - g. Referral
 - h. Referral Declined
7. **Communications and Resource Material**
 - a. Provide Comment or Advice
 - b. Forty-five Day Deadline
 - c. Resource Materials
 - d. Advice and Counsel Memoranda
8. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report**
 - a. Report
 - b. Presented Directly to General Assembly

1. Papers in General

Papers to Be Considered

a. The General Assembly shall consider only those papers delivered to the Stated Clerk in compliance with Standing Rule A. Ordinarily, such papers shall have been forwarded to the Stated Clerk postmarked, or electronically delivered, no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly.

Received Less Than 60 Days Prior to General Assembly

b. All papers intended for consideration by the General Assembly that are forwarded to the Stated Clerk and postmarked less than sixty days, but no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be reviewed by the Stated Clerk, who shall determine whether or not to refer them to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The Stated Clerk shall report to the committee regarding those papers not referred.

2. Reports of Entities, Commissions, and Committees

Reports Deadline

a. All reports from entities, commissions, and committees of the General Assembly shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk on or before 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall publish these reports (print or electronic) and

distribute them so that they shall reach the commissioners thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly.

Budget

b. An entity, commission, or committee submitting a report with a recommendation that affects the work or budget of another entity(ies) shall submit evidence that a consultation has been held with the affected entity(ies).

Consultation

**Appropriate
Background
Information**

c. Committees, agencies, or corporations presenting reports shall provide the appropriate background information necessary to interpret or understand the recommendations or responses to referrals to the members of the General Assembly committees to which the business is referred. Any and all documents or publications referred to in these reports that require approval by the assembly for publication and distribution to the church, including but not limited to curriculum, study papers/guides, position papers, and program resources, shall be made available to commissioners at the time the reports are published.

Report Length

d. All reports shall be limited to ten thousand words except the report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the length of which shall be determined by the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A request for an exception to the length of a report shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no later than forty-five days prior to the deadline for the submission of the report and shall include the anticipated length of the report. The Stated Clerk may assess a fee of the entity or committee whose report exceeds ten thousand words for the costs incurred in printing and distributing the excess pages. Payment of the fee shall be submitted to the treasurer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. If the Stated Clerk and the representatives of any body are unable to agree, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the length of the report.

**Reports with
Recommendations**

e. All reports that bring recommendations shall use the following form:

The [name of agency, commission, or committee] requests the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [year] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action or actions the General Assembly is being asked to take].

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the requests and/or the report of the entity, commission, or committee.

3. Overtures

Definition

a. Overtures are items of business that have been approved by a presbytery (with concurrence of another presbytery) or a synod and shall request the General Assembly to take a particular action, or approve or endorse a particular statement or resolution. (See *Book of Order*, G-3.0302d.)

**Writing
Overtures**

b. The stated clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall:

(1) Examine the most recently published *Minutes of the General Assembly* to determine if a similar overture has already been passed.

(2) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether the desired action has been voted by any previous General Assembly.

(3) Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether a similar overture has already been proposed in order that the presbytery or synod may concur with the existing overture.

(4) Draft the overture in the following form:

“The Presbytery of _____ overtures the [# of the assembly] General Assembly [(year)] of the PC(USA) to [state the specific action the General Assembly is asked to take].”

To this shall be appended a rationale, stating the reasons for submitting the overture.

Submitting Overtures

c. Submitting Overtures

(1) Overtures proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order* (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a and G-6.02) must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, and shall be promptly referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.02 and G-6.04).

(2) All overtures that have financial implications for current or future years' budgets must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. Overtures with financial implications not received within the designated time limit shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council.

(3) All other overtures intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

(4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council for reconsideration.

(5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted. If such evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the overture be received and referred to a future session of the General Assembly so that consultation may take place.

(6) In the event that the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly receives an overture similar to one already proposed (excluding the rationale), she or he shall inquire of the presbytery or synod in question whether it would be willing to concur with that existing overture or desires to withdraw the overture. A presbytery or synod concurring with an overture may submit additional rationale for its action, provided that it does not duplicate the rationale provided by the overturing body. The concurrence and any additional rationale will be printed with the original overture in the Reports to the General Assembly. Concurrences to any overture shall be received up to 45 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly. Concurrences to any overture with constitutional implications shall be received up to 120 days prior to the convening of the next session of the General Assembly.

Distributing Overtures

d. Overtures that do not propose constitutional amendment or interpretation, and that are postmarked at least sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be published (print or electronic) in the reports distributed by the Stated Clerk. Overtures received in the same manner, postmarked no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, shall be distributed to the commissioners before the convening of the General Assembly.

Overture Advocate

e. Overture Advocate

Each presbytery or synod that submits an overture shall notify the Stated Clerk of the name of an overture advocate *who* shall be available to provide information on the background and intent of the overture to any assembly committee to which the overture may be referred. Each council who submits an overture or concurrence may appoint only one overture advocate. (See Standing Rules A.3.c.(6) and E.2.)

4. Entity and Synod Minutes

Submit for Review

a. Entities and synods required to submit minutes for review by the General Assembly shall submit such minutes on a calendar year basis so as to present minutes of all meetings for the calendar year (from January 1 through December 31) preceding the year in which is held the session of the General Assembly to which such minutes are submitted. The minutes shall contain

the attestation that they have been approved by the entity or synod submitting them in the manner regularly in use within that body.

Review Process b. Minutes of General Assembly entities will be reviewed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Preparation of Minutes of Agencies” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Minutes of the synods will be reviewed in accordance with “Guidelines for Reviewing Synod Records” as printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*.

5. Presbytery Reports

Each presbytery shall act upon all papers sent to the presbytery to be voted upon in ample time to permit the stated clerk of the presbytery to mail the results to the Stated Clerk so that they are received no later than two weeks before the convening of the General Assembly. The response of the presbytery shall be mailed to the Stated Clerk by certified mail.

6. Commissioners’ Resolutions

Who May Propose a. An item of new business, in the form of a commissioners’ resolution, must be signed by commissioners representing at least one other presbytery. Such resolutions must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk or the Stated Clerk’s designee. No commissioner may sign more than two such resolutions.

Deadline b. The Stated Clerk shall determine and announce at the first meeting at which business is conducted the deadline for receipt of commissioners’ resolutions. The deadline shall not be earlier than twenty-four hours after the assembly has convened.

Existing GA Policies c. In the preparation of a resolution, commissioners are urged to be aware of existing General Assembly policies relevant to their proposal and, where appropriate, to make reference to these policies.

May Not Amend Book of Order Already Before Assembly d. Commissioners’ resolutions shall not contain business that requires an amendment to or interpretation of the Constitution (see *Book of Order*, G-6.04a).

Same Issues as Previous Assembly e. The Stated Clerk shall not transmit as new business any resolution that deals with matters of business already before the General Assembly, nor transmit any resolution whose purpose can be achieved by the regular process of amendment and debate.

Referral f. Should the commissioners’ resolution deal with substantially the same issue considered by one of the two previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures take one of the following actions on the commissioners’ resolution: “refer to a subsequent assembly,” “decline for consideration,” or “take no action.”

Referral Declined g. If the proposed resolution does deal with new business, the Stated Clerk shall transmit it to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures with a recommendation for its referral.

Referral Declined h. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may decline to refer proposed items of new business if it decides that the matters proposed are already before the assembly or that the purpose of the proposals can be reached by the process of amendment and debate. Proposed items of business not referred, whether declined by the Stated Clerk or the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall be identified in the first report of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures distributed to commissioners after the period docketed for committee meetings, with a brief description of the content and a statement of the reasons for declining the proposed business. Twenty-five percent of commissioners present and voting is required to overturn action of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to decline, take no action, or refer a commissioners’ resolution to a subsequent assembly. If a commissioners’ resolution affects a substantial change in an existing social witness policy, the Stated Clerk should recommend to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures that it be referred to the next General Assembly.

7. Communications and Resource Material

**Provide
Comment or
Advice**

a. Communications and resource material provide comment or advice on business already under consideration by the assembly and shall neither contain nor constitute business to be considered by the assembly. Communications may be directed to the General Assembly

(1) by entities of the General Assembly that desire to comment on a single item of business coming before the General Assembly from any source other than their own entity, but which do not introduce new business,

(2) by organizations in which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) holds membership, and

(3) by other denominations in correspondence with the General Assembly.

**Forty-five Day
Deadline**

b. All communications intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.

**Resource
Materials**

c. Resource material (except for previously published books), including advice and counsel memoranda from advocacy and advisory committees, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall not exceed 1,000 words on each item of business referred. This material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the assembly meeting, who shall then publish (print or electronic) and distribute the material to all commissioners prior to the assembly.

**Advice and
Counsel
Memoranda**

d. Advice and counsel memoranda are resources prepared by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns for the purpose of providing information about existing policy, current work on specific topics, recent developments, and other factors useful to commissioners as they consider issues before the assembly.

8. Advisory Committee on the Constitution Report

Report

a. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report to the General Assembly its findings along with its recommendations on all questions requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the *Book of Order*, including proposals for constitutional change. The General Assembly shall vote on the recommendations, and may amend or decline to approve them (*Book of Order*, G-6.02). The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall report any editorial changes made to the *Book of Order* since its last report to the General Assembly.

**Presented
Directly to
General
Assembly**

b. The report of the committee shall be presented directly to the General Assembly. The General Assembly may take action on the recommendations immediately, or it may refer them to an assembly committee for consideration by that committee and report to the General Assembly for action later during the same session of the General Assembly.

B

Commissioners, Delegates, and Other Participants at the Meeting

1. **Commissioners**
 - a. Election
 - b. List Delivered by 180 Day Deadline
 - c. Able to Attend
 - d. Entitlements, Expenses
 - e. Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners
 - f. Alternates
2. **Advisory Delegates**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Categories
 - c. Voting Privileges
 - d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates
 - e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates
 - f. Missionary Advisory Delegates
 - g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates
3. **Corresponding Members**
 - a. Definition
 - b. Entitled to Speak, Not Vote
4. **Advisory Committee on the Constitution**
5. **Other Participants**
 - a. Special Guests
 - b. Assembly Committee Moderators
 - c. Ecumenical Representatives
 - d. Resource Persons
 - e. Presbytery Staff
 - f. Ecumenical Visitors
 - g. Interfaith Representatives
6. **List of Participants**

1. Commissioners

Election

a. Each presbytery shall elect commissioners to the General Assembly in accordance with *Book of Order*, G-3.0501. The number of commissioners attending General Assembly will be based on the number of active members, including resident clergy members of presbytery. The figures for active members will be taken from the information recorded in *Minutes of the General Assembly*, Part II, *Statistics* of the year in which per capita apportionment is assessed for the year in which General Assembly meets.

List Delivered by 180 Day Deadline

b. Presbyteries shall elect commissioners in sufficient time to permit the list of commissioners to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are commissioned.

Able to Attend

c. Teaching elders and ruling elders considered for election as commissioners must be able to be in attendance for the duration of the General Assembly.

Entitlements, Expenses

d. Commissioners shall be entitled to speak under the rules, and to vote and present motions in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees to which they are assigned. Commissioners shall be reimbursed for approved expenses.

Newly Created Presbytery's Commissioners

e. In the case of a newly created presbytery, the presbytery shall be entitled to elect commissioners to the General Assembly if the qualifying enrollment of teaching elders and congregations in that presbytery shall have been completed by December 31 of the year preceding the assembly meeting (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0501).

Alternates

f. Presbyteries may elect alternates in number up to, but not exceeding, the number of commissioners to which the presbytery may be entitled. Such alternates shall be seated with other visitors to the assembly.

2. Advisory Delegates

Definition

a. Advisory delegates are persons who are active members in one of the constituent churches or councils of the General Assembly (or, in the case of ecumenical advisory delegates, of a denomination of Christians designated by the General Assembly) who are selected to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in an advisory role so that the assembly may be assured of hearing and taking cognizance of their special viewpoints.

Categories

b. There shall be four categories of advisory delegates: young adult, theological student; missionary, and ecumenical. When the ratio of advisory delegates to commissioners exceeds one to three, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be authorized to make changes to the Standing Rules to create a ratio of less than one to three. The expenses of each advisory delegate shall be paid by the General Assembly (see Standing Rule I.3.) on the same basis as the expenses of commissioners (see Standing Rule B.2.f.(2) below for exception).

Voting

c. Advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees as voting members and shall have the privilege of the floor of the General Assembly without vote. Only voting members shall have the privilege of proposing or seconding a motion. When certain issues come before a plenary session of the General Assembly, the advisory delegates may be polled prior to the vote of commissioners to determine their advice.

Privileges

**Young Adult
Advisory
Delegates**

d. Young Adult Advisory Delegates

(1) Each presbytery shall appoint an active member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who shall be between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three years on the date the General Assembly convenes, to be a young adult advisory delegate.

(2) Presbyteries shall elect young adult advisory delegates in sufficient time to permit the list of advisory delegates to be delivered to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected.

**Theological
Student
Advisory
Delegate**

e. Theological Student Advisory Delegates

There shall be a delegation of theological student advisory delegates each year: two from each of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); one from each of the theological institutions in a covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); and one each from three selected other theological seminaries. The selection process for these delegates is as follows:

(1) Each theological institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate three students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. Two of these students shall be designated by the institution as delegates and the other student shall be designated as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery, or a student nominated by the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the names of the two students to be delegates to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(2) Each theological institution in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall nominate two students who, at the time of the General Assembly, will have at least one year of study remaining in their degree program. One of these students shall be designated by the institution as the delegate and the other student as the alternate. Such a student must be either an inquirer or a candidate in preparation for ministry under care of a presbytery. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who

shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(3) All non-Presbyterian theological schools represented by corresponding members on the Committee on Theological Education and one additional non-Presbyterian theological seminary shall be asked to nominate one theological student advisory delegate and one alternate. The additional non-Presbyterian seminary shall be chosen on a rotating basis, descending alphabetically, from those that have at least twelve Presbyterian enrollees (either inquirers or candidates under the care of a presbytery) as of October 1 in the year preceding the assembly. These nominations shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly 180 days prior to the convening of the session of the General Assembly to which they are elected, who shall transmit the name of the delegate to the presbytery of jurisdiction for election. The presbyteries shall then certify the election to the Stated Clerk when completed.

(4) Nominated students shall have at least one more year of study following the assembly remaining in their degree program. The Stated Clerk shall forward the name of the nominated students to the presbyteries of jurisdiction for election and confirmation.

**Missionary
Advisory
Delegates**

f. Missionary Advisory Delegates

(1) There shall be eight missionary advisory delegates who shall be chosen by the Worldwide Ministries Division from persons who are members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mission personnel assigned by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in another country in which this church is engaged in mission. To the degree possible, the selection shall provide a global geographical representation with no two delegates representing the same country or geographical area and rotating the geographical representation. The Worldwide Ministries Division shall notify the Stated Clerk at the time these persons are named.

(2) The expenses to the General Assembly of each missionary advisory delegate shall include transportation only from the point of entry or domicile of the delegate in the United States and return.

**Ecumenical
Advisory
Delegates**

g. Ecumenical Advisory Delegates

There shall be up to fifteen ecumenical advisory delegates. Ten of these delegates shall be from churches outside of the United States. No more than five shall be from member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Ecumenical advisory delegates shall be selected by the highest ecclesiastical authorities of their churches, in response to the invitation of a previous General Assembly. The assembly shall extend such invitations at the recommendation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency upon nomination by the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

3. Corresponding Members

Definition

a. The following persons shall be corresponding members: Moderators of earlier General Assemblies; the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other members of the staff of the Office of the General Assembly as designated by the Stated Clerk; the members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; the members of the PMA Executive Committee and staff of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and of the divisions and related entities designated by the council; all members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution; the executives of synods; one person designated by each entity reporting directly to the General Assembly, including permanent, special, and advisory committees (additional persons may be designated by such bodies if authorized by the Moderator of the preceding General Assembly in consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly); the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. or her designee; and the presidents (or their designee) of the theological institutions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and seminaries related by covenant agreement.

**Entitled to
Speak, Not Vote**

b. Corresponding members shall be entitled to speak, under the rules, in meetings of the General Assembly and of assembly committees on matters related to the work of the body represented, but they may neither vote nor present motions.

4. Advisory Committee on the Constitution

During the General Assembly, three or more members of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution [this committee] shall be present at the session of the General Assembly to advise the General Assembly and its Moderator on constitutional matters.

5. Other Participants

Special Guests

a. The assembly, out of honor, courtesy, recognition, and the need for information and resource material, may recognize other persons as guests or observers. As such, they may be invited by the General Assembly to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing enlightenment or information germane to the decision-making process. An assembly committee may extend a similar invitation at its own meeting.

Assembly Committee Moderators

b. When the moderator of an assembly committee is not a commissioner to the current assembly (Standing Rules C.1.c), they shall have voice in committee and voice in plenary on business from their committee.

Ecumenical Representatives

c. Ecumenical representatives are individuals sent at the initiative of another church to be the official representative of that church. The Stated Clerk may announce to member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches the date and place of the next meeting of the General Assembly. When officially certified through appropriate ecclesiastical channels at least forty-five days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, these persons shall be welcomed as guests of the General Assembly and introduced to the council through the report of the assembly committee addressing ecumenism. The assembly may assume the expense and housing of such guests on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

Resource Persons

d. The assembly may welcome persons invited by the Presbyterian Mission Agency or another entity of the General Assembly for the purpose of establishing or affirming particular ecumenical, mission, or program relationships, or assisting the entity in the presentation of particular items of business. Any expense reimbursement shall be the responsibility of the inviting entity.

Presbytery Staff

e. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be supplied with all reports and materials related to the General Assembly, but shall not be entitled to speak in plenary meetings or in meetings of assembly committees unless called upon by a moderator to provide information.

Ecumenical Visitors

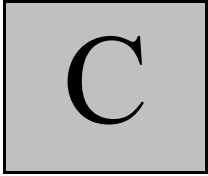
f. Ecumenical visitors are individuals attending a session of the General Assembly at their own initiative. These persons are welcomed to the assembly as unofficial visitors. The assembly shall assume no expenses for these ecumenical visitors.

Interfaith Representatives

g. Interfaith Representatives—Three observers of other faiths or religious traditions, who shall be representatives chosen by recognized religious bodies of non-Christian religious traditions and/or faith communities shall be present at the assembly at the invitation of the General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical Relations. The interfaith representatives shall be present with the church in its deliberations, and to speak to the assembly for the purpose of conveying greetings or messages, or bringing information germane to the decision-making process. The assembly may assume the expense of housing and on the same basis as the expense of commissioners, but shall not reimburse any travel expenses to the assembly site.

6. List of Participants

Upon request, the Stated Clerk shall make available the list of participants registered for a session of the General Assembly to entities of the General Assembly, councils of the denomination, educational institutions, teaching elders, ruling elders, and independent organizations composed primarily of members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A fee will be charged for lists or mailing labels to cover the costs incurred for printing, postage, and handling.



Formation of Committees and Referral of Business

1. **Assembly Committee Structure**
 - a. Number and Designation of Assembly
 - b. Committee Assistants
 - c. Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator
 - d. Assembly Committee on Business Referral
 - e. Orientation
2. **Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees**
 - a. Committee Assignments
 - b. Notification of Assignment
 - c. Assignment List Provided
 - d. Random Selection Process
3. **Referring Business**
 - a. Recommendation for Referral of Business
 - b. General Assembly Action on Referrals
 - c. How Business Is Referred
 - d. Referral Considered by One Committee
 - e. Referring Overtures to Committees
4. **Tentative Docket**

Number and Designation of Assembly Committees

1. Assembly Committee Structure

a. The Stated Clerk shall propose the number and designation of assembly committees to the General Assembly, which shall include a Committee on Mid Councils. The Stated Clerk shall present the proposed committee structure to the General Assembly for consideration and ratification at the first assembly meeting at which business is transacted. In making these proposals, the Stated Clerk shall consult with the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities, and may consult with other persons.

Committee Assistants

b. The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly for appointment the names of persons to serve as committee assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before recommending persons to serve as committee assistants. Persons proposed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly or any person who is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or any person who is a member of any other entity of the General Assembly. A committee assistant shall be appointed to provide staff services to each assembly committee. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0401.

Assembly Committee Moderator and Vice Moderator

c. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a moderator and a vice moderator to each committee. The moderator positions are filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly or may be from an assembly within the last six years. All vice moderator positions shall be filled by commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly. Final appointment shall be made only after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, and then also with representatives of the General Assembly Committee on Representation regarding the inclusivity mandated in the *Book of Order*, F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees, including any committees dealing with finance and budgets, shall be ruling elders. The moderators of at least one-half of the assembly committees should be women. The moderators of at least two-thirds of the assembly committees shall be current commissioners. No more than one person from any one presbytery may be appointed to serve as a moderator. All synods shall be equitably represented.

**Assembly
Committee on
Business Referral**

d. The moderators and vice moderators of the assembly committees, as a group, shall function as the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. The moderator and vice moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall function as the moderator and vice moderator of this committee as well. This committee shall report to the assembly for its action at the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

Orientation

e. The Stated Clerk shall conduct an orientation for moderators, vice moderators, and committee assistants of assembly committees no less than three weeks prior to the convening of the General Assembly. The orientation shall include information regarding business likely to be referred to each committee; suggested procedures for dealing with business referred to committees, especially the use of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*; utilization of available resources, both persons and materials; and preparation and presentation of assembly committee reports. The Stated Clerk, following consultation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency, may invite persons designated by the council as General Assembly resource coordinators to participate in the orientation. During this orientation, the Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall meet and carry out the duties given it by these rules. The Assembly Committee on Business Referral shall also meet, if necessary, just prior to the convening of the assembly and its function shall end at the convening of the assembly.

2. Assigning Commissioners to Assembly Committees

**Committee
Assignments**

a. Forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner and advisory delegate to one of the assembly committees by the random selection process described in this standing rule.

**Notification of
Assignment**

b. No later than thirty days before the convening of the assembly, commissioners shall receive the number and designation of committees. At the same time that the number and designation of committees is communicated, the Stated Clerk shall notify each person of the assignment, the time of their first meeting, and the necessity to confirm appropriate housing and travel arrangements.

**Assignment List
Provided**

c. The Stated Clerk shall provide a list of the assignments to those who need it to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

**Random Selection
Process**

d. Commissioners and advisory delegates shall be assigned to assembly committees by random selection as follows:

(1) The Stated Clerk shall divide the presbyteries into six regional districts. Each district shall be composed of one or more presbyteries so arranged that, insofar as possible, the presbyteries in the district have contiguous boundaries and the numbers of commissioners in the several districts are approximately equal. Within each district the presbyteries shall be arranged alphabetically. The commissioners from each presbytery shall be listed alphabetically in two parallel lists: the first containing the names of the teaching elders; the second, the ruling elders. In those cases where the presbytery has not designated commissioners, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified. The names of moderators and vice moderators of assembly committees shall be removed from the list and the names below them shall be moved up to fill the vacated positions. The teaching elder commissioners and vacant positions for teaching elder commissioners shall be numbered in sequence. The list of ruling elder commissioners in each district shall be rotated downward so that no ruling elder commissioner is opposite a teaching elder commissioner from the same presbytery. Separate lists of groups identified in *Book of Order*, F-1.0403, shall be prepared, insofar as it may be practical, to assure the most equitable distribution of such commissioners to the various committees in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

(2) The Stated Clerk shall list the young adult advisory delegates in one list arranged in the alphabetical order of the presbyteries that designated the delegates. In any case where the presbytery has not designated a young adult advisory delegate, the position shall be listed as vacant so that the name may be inserted later when the Stated Clerk is notified.

(3) The Moderator shall pick by lot a number from one to ten. This number shall identify the number of the name in the first column of names in each district in which the assignment will begin. It will also identify the number of the young adult advisory delegates in which assignment will begin.

(4) The Moderator shall then pick by lot a second number equal from one to the number equaling the total number of committees. This number shall identify the assembly committee in the order in which the committees are arranged in the standing rules to which the first assignment of members shall be made.

(5) The assignment of members of the assembly committees shall then proceed in sequence. When initial assignments have been made to all committees in sequence so that the committees with the fewest number of commissioners are full, additional assignment shall be made to the other committees in the same manner, until all commissioners and young adult advisory delegates have been assigned to committees.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall assign missionary advisory delegates and ecumenical advisory delegates to assembly committees in consultation with those delegates. Ordinarily not more than two persons in each of these categories shall be assigned to any one assembly committee.

(7) Theological student advisory delegates will be assigned to committees at the same time and in the same way as are commissioners to ensure their full participation and attendance.

(8) Names of commissioners and advisory delegates received after these assignments have been made shall be inserted in the appropriate position in the original list and assigned to the committee to which that position was assigned.

3. Referring Business

Recommendation for Referral of Business

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a recommendation for the referral of all items of business coming before the General Assembly.

General Assembly Action on Referrals

b. After making any necessary changes, this committee shall present the prepared referrals to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend referrals to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business. Ordinarily, this committee shall recommend referrals to the General Assembly for its action. When the General Assembly is not scheduled to meet in time to act on its recommendation, the committee may refer business. Such referrals shall be reported to the General Assembly at its next business meeting.

How Business Is Referred

c. Items of business to be considered by the General Assembly shall be referred in one of the following ways:

(1) for consideration by an assembly committee and recommendation for action by the General Assembly;

(2) for consideration and action by an assembly committee with a report of the action to the General Assembly;

(3) for consideration by the General Assembly through its inclusion in a consent agenda when the committee has approved a motion by 75 percent or more;

(4) for consideration by the General Assembly in a plenary business session.

Referral Considered by One Committee

d. Each item of business referred to a committee shall ordinarily be considered by only one assembly committee, but in no case should there be more than one committee making a recommendation on an item of business. Business of a related nature shall be assigned to a single committee insofar as possible.

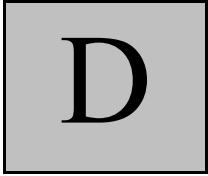
**Referring
Overtures to
Committees**

e. The Stated Clerk shall present such items of business to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with a recommendation for their referral. In the event that the presbytery or synod disagrees with the referral recommendation, this procedure shall be followed: The presbytery or synod shall be entitled to submit a written statement regarding the background and intent of the overture at the time the overture is initially being considered for referral by the Assembly Committee on Business Referral. If, after that committee makes its recommendation, the presbytery or synod still disagrees with the referral recommendation, the presbytery or synod shall notify the Stated Clerk, in writing, of its disagreement. The overture advocate will then be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture at a special meeting of the Assembly Committee on Business Referral that shall be held no more than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the convening of the assembly.

4. Tentative Docket

a. The Stated Clerk shall submit to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a tentative docket. After making any necessary adjustments, this committee shall present a proposed docket to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral so that it may recommend the docket to the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business.

b. The reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly regarding the initial docket of the General Assembly and referrals of business shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, along with any items of business not included in them (see Standing Rules I.4.b.(3) and I.4.b.(4)). Review of the minutes of the synods pursuant to G-3.0502c and of statement(s) of compliance with decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission by councils, reported by the Stated Clerk pursuant to IV.B.2.d. of the *Organization for Mission*, shall be assigned to the same assembly committee. Following the convening of the assembly, such matters shall be directed to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.



Beginning of the General Assembly Meeting

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration and Seating <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Registration of Commissioners and Delegates b. Commissioners with Disabilities c. Assigned Seats d. Alternates e. Ecumenical Representatives f. Presbytery Staff Seating g. Access to Commissioner and Advisory Delegate Seating | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Quorum 3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting |
|---|---|

1. Registration and Seating

Registration of Commissioners and Delegates

a. The Stated Clerk shall enroll commissioners and delegates on the opening day of the General Assembly and at such other times as may be necessary. The Stated Clerk shall determine any question that may arise regarding registration of commissioners and delegates. Any complaints regarding such decision shall be received by the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

Commissioners with Disabilities

b. A commissioner certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be entitled to designate a person to function as an assistant without vote during all proceedings of the General Assembly, including executive sessions and committee meetings, in order that the commissioner may fully participate in those proceedings. The expenses of the assistant shall be paid for by the General Assembly on the same basis as expenses of commissioners. The Stated Clerk shall also enroll assistants to commissioners who have been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance.

Assigned Seats

c. The Stated Clerk shall assign each commissioner, advisory delegate, and corresponding member to a seat in advance of the meeting. They shall occupy the assigned seats during each meeting of the General Assembly at which business may be transacted. An assistant to commissioner who has been certified by his or her presbytery as having a disability warranting assistance shall be assigned a seat adjacent to the commissioner.

Alternates

d. When a principal commissioner is replaced by an alternate prior to or during the course of an assembly session, whether for the remainder of the session or for a period of time during the session, the alternate shall assume that assembly committee position and seat assignment.

Ecumenical Representatives

e. Ecumenical representatives shall be seated on the floor of the assembly in a section clearly designated for such guests.

Presbytery Staff Seating

f. The presbytery's executive staff person (or designee) and the presbytery's stated clerk shall be provided assigned seating in proximity to the area that corresponding members are seated.

**Access to
Commissioner
and Advisory
Delegate Seating**

g. The only persons who shall be permitted access to the commissioner and advisory delegate seating area during plenary sessions are commissioners, advisory delegates, assistants enrolled by the Stated Clerk to assist commissioners having a disability warranting assistance, the Stated Clerk, Associate and Assistant Stated Clerks, and other staff and assembly assistants who are assigned responsibilities that require access to this area, including assisting at the floor microphones, delivery of official messages to commissioner and advisory delegates, and locating commissioners who are needed on the platform. The Stated Clerk will provide special credentials for the particular staff and assembly assistants who are authorized to enter the commissioner/advisory delegate seating area. Registered presbytery staff may have access to the seating area to contact their commissioners and advisory delegates during breaks in business.

2. Quorum

At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the General Assembly that the roll call of commissioners be established by registration. Alternately, the Stated Clerk may call the roll of commissioners and advisory delegates by calling the names of absentees as they appear on the roll. After any needed corrections have been made, the Stated Clerk shall announce whether or not a quorum is present (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0503). When commissioners and advisory delegates subsequently register, they shall be seated by the General Assembly. A commissioner who has not registered may not be seated and may not vote.

3. Committee Moderators and Overture Advocates Meeting

The Office of the General Assembly shall, on the first business day of the assembly, before committees meet to consider business, organize a forum where assembly committee moderators shall meet with overture advocates to discuss procedures for participation in committee discussion of business related to the overture that they are advocating.

E

Committee Meetings

- 1. Committee Leadership and Support**
 - a. Moderator and Vice Moderator
 - b. Recorder
 - c. Committee Assistant
- 2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings**
 - a. Open Meetings
 - b. Time of Worship and Prayer
 - c. Parliamentary Procedures
 - d. Use and Preparation of Resources
 - e. Reports of Special Committees
 - f. Privilege to Speak
 - g. Overture Advocates/
Signer of Commissioners' Resolution
 - h. Responsibilities of Overture Advocate
- 3. New Business**
 - a. Consider Only Matters Referred
 - b. Proposing Amendment to Constitution
 - c. Constitutional Matters
 - d. Approval Requirement
 - e. Presentation of
 - f. Referral to Advisory Committee on the Constitution
- 4. Organizational Meeting**
- 5. Public Hearings**
 - a. Schedule
 - b. Time Limits for Presentations
 - c. Hearing Form
- 6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures**
 - a. Responsible for Referral of Business
 - b. Coordination Between Committees
 - c. Distribution of Materials
 - d. Requests to Schedule Event
- 7. Reports of Assembly Committees**
 - a. Writing the Report
 - b. Content
 - c. Fiscal Implications
 - d. Identify Entity
 - e. PMA to Determine Entity
 - f. Votes Recorded
 - g. Confer with Entity Affected by Action
 - h. Minority Report

1. Committee Leadership and Support

Moderator and Vice Moderator

a. The moderator presides over the committee's deliberations. The moderator may request the vice moderator or others to preside and to assist in the work of the committee.

Recorder

b. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a recorder appointed by the Stated Clerk. The recorder shall be appointed from a pool of individuals who will already be attending the General Assembly, including staff members, local volunteers, and others. The recorder shall keep an accurate record of the actions of the committee with the votes on each indicating the number of committee members voting in the affirmative, or negative, or those abstaining; and shall assist in drafting the committee report.

Committee Assistant

c. Each committee shall have available to assist in its work a committee assistant. The committee assistant may address the committee offering suggestions regarding procedure, but shall not participate in its deliberations on any issue before the committee as an advocate of one position or view regarding its action. The committee assistant shall assist the committee in securing desired resources.

2. Procedures for Assembly Committee Meetings

Open Meetings

a. Meetings of assembly committees shall be open to the public (as space permits) provided, however, that the committee may go into executive session at any time in accordance with the Open Meeting Policy printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Ordinarily, the committee assistant will be expected to remain with the committee in executive session.

Time of Worship and Prayer

b. Each meeting of the committee shall include a time of worship and opportunity for prayer.

Parliamentary Procedure

c. Committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* except when in contradiction to the Constitution of the PC(USA). Prior to a vote, methods of deliberation shall be consistent with the principles of Presbyterian government. (F-3.02 and G-3.0305)

Use and Preparation of Resources

d. Use and Preparation of Resource Material:

(1) Each committee determines the use to be made of the resource material or resource persons available to assembly committees. Each assembly committee determines whether or not to permit the distribution of particular materials to the committee members.

(2) Resource material (except for previously published books or interpretive brochures), including advice and counsel memoranda, that provides background or advice on items of new business, including commissioners' resolutions, shall be prepared as necessary by entities of the General Assembly and shall be as succinct as possible. This material shall be submitted to the assembly committee leadership team prior to presentation to the assembly committee to which the business has been referred. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, with a commitment to equitable presentation of different perspectives, shall distribute this resource material to the full assembly.

Resource material provided for the committee by the appropriate General Assembly entity shall include well-written presentations from the variety of different perspectives on any issue under consideration. These presentations on other perspectives should come from the most articulate and informed proponents of that particular point of view. A report including a summary of the actions taken on this issue by our ecumenical partners and previous General Assemblies shall also be prepared by an appropriate General Assembly entity.

Reports of Special Committees

e. When business has been referred by a previous assembly to a special task force, committee, or commission created for that purpose, the assembly committee receiving that report shall set aside no less than ½ hour (30 minutes) to hear a presentation by the special task force (or committee or commission) giving background on their report. Each committee shall determine if additional time is required for presentation.

Privilege to Speak

f. During the deliberations of the committee, in contrast to public hearings, only the following persons, having been recognized by the moderator, may speak:

(1) Members of the committee;

(2) Committee assistant;

(3) Persons with special expertise, including elected members or staff members of General Assembly entities;

(4) Members of special committees, task forces, commissions created by previous assemblies (see E.2.d and K.1.f), overture advocates, and signers of commissioners' resolutions;

(5) Persons invited by the committee through a majority vote of the committee; and

(6) Representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, who may speak to overtures, commissioners' resolutions, or other business on which the Advisory Committee on the Constitution has presented advice or recommendations, or matters that propose amendments to the Constitution, or that affect compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.

(7) In the event that business being considered by an assembly committee has been referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution for advice, representatives of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall be entitled to speak.

(8) The committee moderator provides that the total time allotted to persons, other than members of the committee, who speak for or against a recommendation be equal so far as possible except as outlined in E.2.e.

**Overture Advocates/
Signer of
Commissioners’
Resolution**

g. Overture advocates and one signer of each commissioners’ resolution shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by any assembly committee considering the matter. The overture advocate or one of the signers of a commissioners’ resolution shall be entitled to speak, as an individual (or in cooperation with other overture advocates in a pre-arranged presentation), to the background and intent of the overture or resolution immediately after the motion is made and seconded, placing the overture or resolution on the floor of the committee or subcommittee.

**Responsibilities of
Overture
Advocate**

h. Overture advocates who have been designated by their presbytery or synod to speak to the response from a General Assembly entity to a referral of an overture shall be responsible for being available at the time selected by the assembly committee considering the response. The overture advocate shall be entitled to speak to the background and intent of the overture” or as asked for clarification by the committee concerning the original intent of the overture.

3. New Business

**Consider Only
Matters Referred**

a. Each assembly committee shall consider only matters referred to it by the General Assembly. No assembly committee may initiate new business except as it relates to the business of the particular assembly committee.

**Proposing
Amendment to
Constitution**

b. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-6.04b and G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

**Constitutional
Matters**

c. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter so referred and report its findings and recommendations, which may include proposals for constitutional change, to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The assembly committee shall vote on the recommendations and may amend or decline to approve them. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

**Approval
Requirement**

d. Recommendations and reports to the assembly regarding such new business must be approved in assembly committees by three-fourths of the committee members voting on the matter.

Presentation of

e. New business, other than that described in this standing rule, must be presented in accordance with Standing Rule A.8.

**Referral to
Advisory
Committee on the
Constitution**

f. New business initiated in an assembly committee proposing an amendment to the Constitution (*Book of Order*, G-6.04) or requiring an interpretation of the Constitution by the General Assembly (*Book of Order*, G-6.02) shall be referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Any other new business initiated in an assembly committee that touches upon constitutional matters shall be communicated in writing to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the Stated Clerk. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution shall consider each matter referred and report its findings and recommendations (which may include proposals for constitutional change) to the assembly committee and the Stated Clerk. The advice of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution on these matters shall be transmitted to the General Assembly with the report of the assembly committee.

4. Organizational Meeting

a. Ordinarily, the initial meeting of each assembly committee is an organizational meeting in private session for up to one hour for the purpose of developing intragroup dynamics and determining procedural matters, such as approval of the committee’s agenda and consideration of the style in which the committee plans to operate.

b. During this executive session, business items before the committee shall not be discussed or acted upon.

5. Public Hearings

Schedule

a. Each committee, with the exception of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, shall schedule at its convenience one or more public hearings on matters before it.

Time Limits for Presentations

b. The committee may limit the time for the presentation by any person during a public hearing, including an elected member or staff member of an entity of the General Assembly. If the time allotted for the public hearing is not sufficient to accommodate all the persons wishing to speak, a method shall be approved by the assembly committee that ensures that an equal number of persons on each side of an issue have an opportunity to speak. Any person denied the right to speak at the hearing may appeal to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures on the basis that the method employed in selecting speakers was not fair.

Hearing Form

c. Any person who wishes to be heard in a public hearing shall sign up on a hearing form, posted in a public place in the building in which the assembly is being held, no later than the close of business on the second day of the General Assembly or one hour after the subsequent referral of business to the committee by the General Assembly. The location of hearing forms shall be announced during the first session of the assembly. In the event that an issue is expected to be controversial, those wishing to speak shall be asked to indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the recommendation.

6. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures

Responsible for Referral of Business

a. This committee shall neither retain any items of business for its own consideration, nor suppress any matter that comes before it. However, business that substantially duplicates matters already before the assembly may be declined by this committee and reported to the assembly with a statement of the committee’s action.

Coordination Between Committees

b. This committee shall keep itself informed of the subjects being considered by the other assembly committees, and, when any subject is taken up by more than one committee, this committee shall advise the moderators of those committees regarding ways to avoid redundant or inconsistent recommendations.

Distribution of Materials

c. This committee shall determine whether or not particular materials may be distributed to the commissioners and delegates to the General Assembly, and specify the time and manner of distribution of any authorized by it. Particular materials distributed in assembly committees shall not be distributed to the full assembly without the approval of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, including the time and manner of distribution.

Requests to Schedule Event

d. The committee shall review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate, to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.

7. Reports of Assembly Committees

Writing the Report

a. The moderator, vice moderator, committee assistant, and recorder, together with such other persons as the moderator may designate, shall draft the report of the committee following the sample form provided by the Stated Clerk.

Content

b. The reports of assembly committees shall contain only (1) the recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly, and, where necessary, a brief statement of the committee's reasons for such recommendations, and (2) the actions taken by the committee on items referred to the committee for action. Material necessary to identify the item of business and brief explanations may be included in the report. Extensive background information and detail contained in other documents in the hands of the commissioners shall not be included.

Fiscal Implications

c. Each assembly committee shall include with each recommendation or action in its report statements advising the General Assembly whether or not the recommendation or action has fiscal implications affecting any budget under consideration by the assembly.

Identify Entity

d. Recommendation for assembly action, or action taken by the committee, shall identify the entity that is directed to carry out and report back to the General Assembly regarding the matter dealt with by the recommendation or action.

PMA to Determine Entity

e. When the entity to which an assembly action is directed is a part of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, such as a division or related entity, the Stated Clerk shall automatically amend the language so that the action is directed to the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Presbyterian Mission Agency shall determine which entity shall carry out the responsibility and report to the assembly on the matter.

Votes Recorded

f. The votes recorded in the assembly committee on each recommendation or action shall be included in the report for the information of the commissioners, but shall be omitted from the *Journal* of the General Assembly.

Confer with Entity Affected by Action

g. If the report of an assembly committee proposes or records an action affecting the interests of an entity of the General Assembly or of a council other than the General Assembly, it shall be the responsibility of that assembly committee to confer with the representative(s) designated by the entity or council concerned before proposing such action to the General Assembly or taking such an action.

Minority Report

h. Minority Report

(1) A minority of the members of an assembly committee, or an individual member of an assembly committee, may submit in writing views that differ from those in the committee report. If the moderator of the committee shall affirm in writing that the positions expressed as recommendations for action by the assembly in a written minority report were presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter, the Stated Clerk shall reproduce the minority report and distribute it with the report of the committee.

(2) A minority report must be appropriate for consideration as a substitute motion (see *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 2011, p. 527).

F

General Assembly Plenary Meeting

- 1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports**
 - a. Report at Beginning of Each Meeting
 - b. Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket
 - c. Review Minutes
 - d. Requests for Communicating with Assembly
 - e. Referral of Protests
- 2. Reports of Assembly Committees**
 - a. Distribution
 - b. Adequate Docket Time
 - c. Committee Moderators
 - d. Financial Implication
- 3. Minority Reports**
 - a. Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute
 - b. Reasons Supporting Committee's Recommendation
- 4. Committee Reports on the Budget**
 - a. Per Capita Budget
 - b. Amended Per Capita Budget
- 5. Plenary Meeting Procedures**
 - a. Debate
 - b. Voting Methods
 - c. Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations
 - d. Constitutional Questions
 - e. Electronic Devices
 - f. Emergency Messages
 - g. Confidentiality
- 6. General Assembly Nominating Committee**
 - a. Presentation of Nominations
 - b. May Decline to Submit Nomination
 - c. Nominating from the Floor
- 7. Docket Time for Special Greetings**
 - a. Head of Communion
 - b. Assignment of Docket Time
- 8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials**
 - a. Approval for Announcements
 - b. Nonofficial Printed Material
- 9. Distributing Study Documents**
 - a. Distribution
 - b. Responsible Entity Identified
- 10. Forming Social Policy**
- 11. Peaceful Demonstrations**
 - a. Where Allowed
 - b. Prohibited in Building

1. Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures Reports

Report at Beginning of Each Meeting

a. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall report at the beginning of each meeting, recommending any necessary changes in order of business and any referrals it may have considered since its last report.

Limits on Debate/Changes in Docket

b. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures may, at any time, recommend limits on debates or changes in the docket to facilitate the handling of business. The reports of the committee shall take precedence over any other business, including orders of the day.

Review Minutes

c. This committee shall review the minutes of the General Assembly daily, report to the General Assembly any suggested corrections, and recommend approval of the minutes. The minutes shall be posted on the church’s website and two printed copies of the minutes shall be posted in different places during the following day for examination by commissioners. The minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly during the last two days of its session shall be submitted for review and approval within ten days after the adjournment of the General Assembly to a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Requests for Communicating with Assembly

d. Requests for the privilege of communicating with the General Assembly shall be referred to this committee, which shall confer with persons making such requests about the time and the manner in which their concerns may be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. The Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall recommend to the General Assembly a response regarding any possible presentation to the assembly. At the time any such recommendation is acted upon, any commissioner may request that an opposing view be heard, and the assembly shall consider and act upon the matter.

Referral of Protests

e. Protests expressing disagreement with an action or failure to act on the part of the General Assembly shall be referred to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, which shall decide whether or not the protest is decorous and respectful. Should the committee decide the protest is decorous and respectful, the protest shall be entered in the Minutes. The committee may prepare an answer to be printed with any protest so entered (see *Book of Order*, G-3.0105b).

2. Reports of Assembly Committees

Distribution

a. Electronic copies of the written reports of assembly committees shall ordinarily be distributed to commissioners no later than the close of the meeting prior to the one at which they are to be considered. When necessary the Stated Clerk shall arrange for the reproduction and distribution of reports.

Adequate Docket Time

b. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, shall docket adequate time for the reports of committees, including ample time for debate and action. If a report requires more time than docketed, the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall consult with the committee for additional time to complete consideration of the report.

Committee Moderators

c. Committee moderators should move the approval of recommendations with minimum comment, and material in the commissioners’ provided resources shall not be read.

Financial Implication

d. The financial effect of each recommendation on budgets previously approved or under consideration shall be clearly presented at the time that the recommendation is considered by the assembly.

3. Minority Reports

Must Stand as Full and Complete Substitute

a. In order to be considered by the assembly, a minority report shall not only set aside the majority report but also be able to stand as a full and complete substitution for the majority report recommendations. A minority report shall be moved as a substitute only after the majority report has first been moved. When this happens, the assembly shall first consider (and may amend) the majority report. When consideration of the majority report is completed, the assembly may then consider (and may amend) the minority report. Further efforts to perfect each report shall be held to a minimum in order that the assembly can concentrate instead on the issue of whether to make the proposed substitution.

Reasons Supporting Committee’s Recommendation

b. The moderator of the committee, or another member of the committee, shall present reasons supporting the committee’s recommendation. They may be presented before any minority report is moved or presented during the narrative report of the committee, or presented during debate on the question of whether or not the substitution shall become the main motion. (See also Standing Rule E.7.h.)

4. Committee Reports on the Budget

Per Capita Budget

a. At the first meeting of the General Assembly for the transaction of business following the meetings of assembly committees, the assembly shall hear a report on the per capita budget from the committee that has reviewed that budget.

Amended Per Capita Budget

b. On the final day of the assembly, an amended per capita budget that incorporates the financial implications of actions taken by the assembly shall be presented to the assembly for approval.

5. Plenary Meeting Procedures

Debate

a. In debate on any pending matter, no commissioner or delegate shall be allowed to speak more than two minutes until all other commissioners or delegates who desire to speak on the pending matter have been heard.

Voting Methods

b.(1) The General Assembly shall ordinarily decide questions by electronic voting. The Moderator may also call for unanimous consent by voice vote or show of hands. All decisions made by assembly standing committees by a three-quarters (supermajority) vote shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda to be considered as the first order of plenary business following committee meetings. Any actions requesting constitutional change must be considered in plenary.

(2) In addition to all consent items from assembly committees, the following items shall be placed on the assembly plenary consent agenda:

(a) All unchallenged nominations from the General Assembly Nominating Committee.

(b) Unanimous recommendations from assembly agencies and entities for confirmations of those offices that, according to the Manual of the General Assembly, require General Assembly confirmation.

(3) In all cases, the right of any commissioner to remove any item from the plenary consent agenda or to call for one of the other forms of voting shall be preserved.”

Mindful of Effort Required to Fulfill Recommendations

c. In view of the relative ease in which studies and programs may be approved, commissioners and other assembly committee members are cautioned to be mindful of the effort required of staff and elected members to carry out the General Assembly’s instructions.

Constitutional Questions

d. When the General Assembly is in plenary session, questions that touch upon constitutional matters, including rulings on questions of order involving constitutional matters requested by the Moderator, shall be handled by the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. These questions shall be referred in writing by the Moderator to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, which shall consider each matter referred and make recommendations directly to the General Assembly through the Moderator.

Electronic Devices

e. Commissioners are expected to be present when meetings are in session both physically and mentally. The use of electronic devices for purposes other than those directly related to the current topic is therefore discouraged when meetings are in session. Commissioners are also expected to adhere to the General Assembly Social Media Policy.

Emergency Messages

f. Emergency messages will be relayed to a commissioner or advisory delegate during plenary meetings by way of a written message delivered by one of the Stated Clerk’s designated staff or assembly assistants.

Confidentiality

g. Any person permitted to remain during any executive session is expected to agree to be bound by the confidentiality required of commissioners.

6. General Assembly Nominating Committee

Presentation of Nominations

a. Unless the General Assembly shall have made some other provision, the nominating committee shall present to each session of the General Assembly a nominee for election to each vacancy on the entities of the General Assembly that shall exist because of a scheduled end of term, resignation, death, incapacity to act, change of residence, or any other reason.

May Decline to Submit Nomination

b. The General Assembly Nominating Committee may decline to submit a nomination(s) to a particular vacancy(s) when requested to do so by the affected entity because of an expected merger of entity or a transfer of duties between entities in order to reduce the number of persons serving on a particular entity(s).

Nominating from the Floor

c. Nominating from the Floor

(1) Nominations by commissioners shall be in order unless the vacancy is required to be filled upon nomination from some other source.

(2) When any nomination for service on a General Assembly committee, council, or board comes from the floor of the assembly, the commissioner making the nomination will provide the General Assembly Nominating Committee, no later than 48 hours after the convening of the General Assembly, with pertinent information about the person whose name is being presented, as well as the name of the particular person nominated by the nominating committee whose nomination is being challenged. Such information shall be provided on the “Nomination by Commissioner Form” provided for use at the assembly and available from the Stated Clerk. The availability of the pertinent information provided by the person challenging the nominating committee’s nominee shall be announced to the assembly at least twenty-four hours in advance of the nomination being made from the floor.

(3) In the event that there are nominations from the floor, the election shall proceed as follows:

(a) The General Assembly will deal with one challenged position at a time.

(b) The name of the General Assembly Nominating Committee’s nominee shall be placed in nomination by its moderator. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall call upon the commissioner who is placing a nomination from the floor to put that name in nomination.

(c) Once the names are placed in nomination, the order of speaking shall be first, the commissioner or a designee speaking on behalf of the floor nominee and second, the General Assembly Nominating Committee member or a designee speaking to its nominee. Both the commissioner (or designee) and the General Assembly Nominating Committee member (or designee) shall speak from the platform. Such speech shall not exceed three minutes in length. There shall be no other speeches seconding the nomination of any nominee.

(d) Without further discussion or debate, the General Assembly will move to vote.

7. Docket Time for Special Greetings

Head of Communion

a. When the Head of Communion of a member church of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, or the National Council of Churches is in attendance at a session of the General Assembly as an ecumenical advisory delegate or as an ecumenical representative, and proper notice is provided, the assembly shall provide up to three minutes of docket time to each such Head of Communion to present a greeting to the assembly.

Assignment of Docket Time

b. The placing of this greeting on the docket will be assigned by the Stated Clerk.

8. Announcements and Nonofficial Printed Materials

Approval for Announcements

a. Only announcements connected directly with the business of the General Assembly shall be read from the platform and all notices shall be submitted either to the Moderator or the Stated Clerk for approval. Telegrams and special letters shall be reported to the General Assembly only at times to be designated by the Moderator.

Nonofficial Printed Material

b. Ordinarily, printed materials that are not official business before the General Assembly may only be distributed at authorized booths in the General Assembly Exhibit Hall. Other distribution is permitted to be handed out twenty-five feet or more from entrances to the building in which the General Assembly meets.

9. Distributing Study Documents

Distribution

a. Whenever the General Assembly itself shall require the distribution of a document for study (whether the proposal originates through the recommendation of an entity, the presentation of an overture or resolution, or arises during the conduct of the assembly's business) with a request for a response (whether the response is sought from individuals, congregations, councils, organizations of any kind, or any combination of these), the study document shall be accompanied by resource materials, bibliography, and aids as set forth in the document "Forming Social Policy," Section 5, printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. Along with a response instrument and the resource materials, bibliography, and aids, the document shall be distributed on a schedule that provides for the study guide and all accompanying material to be in the possession of the proposed respondents for a minimum of twelve months before the due date of the response.

Responsible Entity Identified

b. The entity to be responsible for receiving the responses and reporting to the General Assembly the summary of the responses shall be identified in the material. The report on the responses to the study may be presented no earlier than to the General Assembly that convenes in the second year after the session of the General Assembly that approves the study.

10. Forming Social Policy

The entities of the General Assembly, including its committees, commissions, and special committees, shall be governed by the document, "Forming Social Policy" printed in the *Manual of the General Assembly*, when that entity is considering making a social witness policy.

11. Peaceful Demonstrations

Where Allowed

a. Peaceful demonstrations shall be allowed twenty-five or more feet outside of the entrances to the building in which General Assembly meets.

Prohibited in Building

b. Spontaneous or planned demonstrations by individuals or groups are prohibited inside the building where the General Assembly meets. The Moderator of the General Assembly shall declare all demonstrations that occur in plenary session out of order and, if demonstrators fail to immediately disband and desist, may recess the General Assembly to a fixed time and place. This rule does not prohibit the spontaneous or planned celebration of an action of the General Assembly or of any event in the life of the church.



General Assembly Meeting Worship

Services of Worship

- a. Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning
- b. Ecumenical Worship
- c. In Conformity with Directory for Worship

Services of Worship

Moderator of Preceding General Assembly Responsible for Planning

a. The Moderator of the preceding General Assembly shall plan daily worship at the General Assembly, and a worship service including the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and shall provide, in advance, suitable leadership for these periods of worship. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at the first service of worship of the General Assembly session, and the Moderator shall preside on this occasion and preach a sermon or deliver an address. The Moderator shall seek advice to ensure inclusivity in the planning of appropriate daily worship periods. The Moderator shall assure adequate transmittal of information about the planning of worship periods to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

Ecumenical Worship

b. The Stated Clerk shall plan an ecumenical period of worship and provide, in advance, suitable leadership for this period of worship.

In Conformity with Directory for Worship

c. The various acts of worship planned for the session of the General Assembly shall be in conformity with the requirements of the Directory for Worship, and shall be developed and led according to the guidance of the document, "Presbyterians at Worship in Mass Assemblies." In the preparation and conduct of all worship services, care shall be taken that all language, sight, hearing, accessibility, and other barriers be eliminated so that there can be full participation of all attendees. [Example: That printed orders of service also be printed in braille and that signing be available.]



Persons in Ordered Ministry and Elections

1. Moderator of the General Assembly

- a. Title/Functions
- b. Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice-Moderator Candidate
- c. Election
- d. Vice Moderator
- e. Vacancy

2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

- a. Title/Functions
- b. Election
- c. Acting Stated Clerk
- d. Associate Stated Clerks

1. Moderator of the General Assembly

Title/Functions

- a. Title and Functions of the Moderator at the General Assembly

(1) The Moderator of the General Assembly is an ecclesiastical person in ordered ministry, along with the Stated Clerk, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The ministry of the Moderator is grounded in the ministry of baptized persons and in the particular ordained ministry of ruling elders and teaching elders.

(2) The office of Moderator may be shared by Co-Moderators. In this case, the office of Vice Moderator will remain vacant until the next election of a Moderator.

(3) The title of the Moderator is “The Moderator of the [number] General Assembly [(year)] of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly is a commissioner of the General Assembly.

(5) When the Moderator presides at the assembly, it is to be a sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church. During the period between assemblies, the Moderator serves as an ambassador of the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, telling the story of the church’s life and upholding the people of God through prayer.

(6) The Moderator shall preside over the General Assembly that elects him or her, and over the meetings of the next General Assembly until a successor is elected. The Moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the council (*Book of Order*, G-3.0104).

(7) The Moderator(s) and the Vice Moderator (when filled) shall submit a written report of their work to the session of the General Assembly at which their successors are installed.

Stand with Either Co-Moderator or Vice-Moderator Candidate

- b. At the discretion of the candidate, he or she may choose to stand for election with a Co-Moderator or with a Vice Moderator candidate. When choosing to stand with another Moderator candidate, both candidates:

- (1) must fulfill all the requirements specified in these Standing Rules,
- (2) notify the Stated Clerk of their intention to stand for election together, and
- (3) will together determine how to fulfill the duties of the office.

Election

- c. Election of the Moderator

(1) Each person nominated to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly must be a commissioner to the General Assembly. Action by presbyteries to endorse candidates for

Moderator of the General Assembly shall not take place until after the adjournment of the immediately preceding assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall provide resourcing and orientation for Moderatorial candidates.

(2) Ordinarily, no later than forty-five days prior to the convening of the assembly, the Moderatorial candidates will announce the name of a commissioner each has selected to offer to the assembly to elect as Vice Moderator, as appropriate.

(3) The following guidelines are intended to create an equal and open opportunity for moderatorial candidates. To this end, the following procedures shall be observed:

(a) Candidates shall covenant not to spend in excess of \$2,000 in making their candidacy known to the church. This \$2,000 includes out of pocket expenses as well as the estimated value of in-kind contributions, but does not include travel and meeting expenses.

(b) Each candidate shall submit to the Stated Clerk an itemized statement of expenses, including travel and meeting expenses related to his/her candidacy and in-kind contributions. This statement shall be submitted to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly prior to the convening of the General Assembly. This information shall be distributed to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the election of the Moderator. The statement of expenses of all candidates shall be kept on file in the Office of the General Assembly following the meeting of the General Assembly.

(c) The Office of the General Assembly shall not reimburse a candidate for campaign expenses, but shall assume expenses involved in printing and distributing material submitted for information packets as outlined in Standing Rule H.1.c.(3)(g).

(d) In order to encourage reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit in the selection of the Moderator, neither candidates or their advocates are allowed to communicate with commissioners and/or advisory delegates.

(e) Distribution of written campaign materials at General Assembly shall be limited to the public distribution area.

(f) Candidates are encouraged to meet and make themselves available for conversation with commissioners and advisory delegates within the scope of these procedures.

(g) Not less than fifteen days before the convening of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish for commissioners and advisory delegates an electronic information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Moderator who is known to the Stated Clerk and who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate that includes a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) A written presentation by the presbytery having jurisdiction over the candidate, if that council has endorsed the candidate,

(iii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the Stated Clerk.

The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but all material including photographs submitted for each presentation shall be provided in electronic format as well as print. The material shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk no less than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution, and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Moderator, if elected.

(4) The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be elected in the following manner:

(a) When the General Assembly is ready to elect its Moderator, each candidate shall be nominated by a commissioner to the assembly in the following manner: the

commissioners making nominations shall be recognized at microphones on the assembly floor. Upon recognition by the assembly Moderator, the nominator shall say one of the following statements:

(i) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling/Teaching Elder _____ from the Presbytery of _____ and Ruling/Teaching Elder _____ from the Presbytery of _____.”

(ii) “Moderator, I place in nomination for the office of Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling/Teaching Elder _____ from the Presbytery of _____. And for Vice Moderator of the ___ General Assembly Ruling/Teaching Elder _____ from the Presbytery of _____.”

The nominator shall then return to his/her seat on the plenary floor. No seconds to nominations are required.

(b) After nominations are closed, each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to address the General Assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the concerns that nominee feels to be the most important for the church. The order of speaking shall be determined by lot, the drawing conducted by the most recent Moderator attending the General Assembly

(c) At the conclusion of all the presentations by the nominees, they shall respond to questions from the floor. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who spoke first in the original presentation, and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they spoke earlier. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly.

(d) Where there is only one nomination for Moderator, the election may be by acclamation. Where there is more than one, the election may be by secret ballot in a format which is determined by the Stated Clerk and announced to commissioners and advisory delegates prior to the convening of the assembly.

(5) The Stated Clerk shall provide a service of installation for the newly elected Moderator and Vice Moderator, as appropriate, as the last item of business at the session in which the Moderator is elected. The families of the newly elected officers and all present previous Moderators shall be invited to the platform. The service shall use the order of service for “Installation of Governing Body Officers and Staff” from the *Book of Occasional Services*. The processional banner of the Moderator shall precede the newly elected Moderator into the assembly. The Moderator’s cross and stole shall be presented by the most recent serving Moderator. The newly elected Moderator invites a person to lead the prayer of installation. The most recent serving Moderator gives the charge, a hymn is sung by the assembly, and the newly elected Moderator gives the benediction.

Vice Moderator

d. Vice Moderator

(1) The Vice Moderator represents the assembly at the request of the Moderator. When the Vice Moderator serves in this capacity, all those duties incumbent on the Moderator shall be expected of him/her.

(2) Each proposed Vice-Moderator candidate shall include biographical information and a photograph in electronic format to be included with the Moderator candidate information.

(3) The Moderator may request the Vice Moderator to preside and to assist in the performance of other functions of the Moderator during and following the General Assembly.

Vacancy

e. Vacancy in the Office of the Moderator or Vice Moderator

(1) Should the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly become vacant, the Vice Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator. In such

circumstance, all constitutional obligations and functions as prescribed by the Standing Rules of the General Assembly and the *Book of Order* shall be incumbent upon the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly.

(2) Should the office of the Vice Moderator of the General Assembly also become vacant, the most recent living Moderator shall fulfill the functions of the Moderator as specified in the Constitution of the church.

2. Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Title/Functions

a. Title and Functions of the Stated Clerk at the General Assembly

(1) The title of the Stated Clerk is “The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” and may be used by the incumbent until a successor is elected and takes office.

(2) The Stated Clerk is accountable, through the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, to the General Assembly for the performance of the duties of the office, and shall present to each meeting of the General Assembly a report on the state of the church.

(3) The Stated Clerk is responsible for all matters related to the sessions of the General Assembly and all other matters relative to and arising from the General Assembly for which no other assignment has been made.

(4) The Stated Clerk shall also be responsible for guidance of the procedures for candidates seeking the office of Moderator, and for supervision of the election of each Moderator.

(5) In accordance with directives from previous General Assemblies and in consultations with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and other General Assembly agencies, the Stated Clerk is authorized to decide on matters pertaining to facilities and special events that must be established before the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures.

(6) The Stated Clerk shall receive all reports, communications, overtures, and any other materials appropriate for General Assembly consideration. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, for presentation to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral, a referral of such items of business coming before the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.3.e.).

(7) The Stated Clerk shall prepare for consideration of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly a proposed docket for the General Assembly’s consideration of its business (Standing Rule C.4.a.). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall present the proposed docket to the first meeting of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures so that it may recommend a docket to the commissioners at the first business session. The docket presented to the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall provide a time early in the General Assembly for a report by the Stated Clerk on the state of the church, and for a report by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

(8) The Stated Clerk shall propose to the General Assembly the number of assembly committees and a name for each committee after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the appropriate General Assembly entity or entities (Standing Rule C.1.). The Stated Clerk shall present the committee structure to the General Assembly for ratification at the first business session. Each commissioner and advisory delegate shall be assigned by random selection to one assembly committee at least forty-five days before the opening date of the General Assembly (Standing Rule C.2.).

(9) The Stated Clerk shall provide opportunity for orienting the commissioners, advisory delegates, and others taking part in the session of the General Assembly. The use of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, sources of parliamentary advice, and the availability of resource persons and materials to facilitate their work should be part of the orientation.

(10) The Stated Clerk shall be the parliamentarian for the meetings of the General Assembly, or arrange for the service of a professional parliamentarian.

(11) The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the councils and agencies of the assembly, persons who presented business to the assembly, and others affected by the assembly's actions, a report on actions of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to their concerns. The Stated Clerk shall transmit to the presbyteries all assembly actions on which the presbyteries are requested to take action.

(12) As soon as practicable after the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall publish the assembly's proceedings and other documents as the assembly may direct in an appropriate format (i.e. print or electronic) to be determined by the Stated Clerk.

Election

b. Election of the Stated Clerk

(1) The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires the election of a Stated Clerk and the standing rules describe the procedures for the election. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected for a term of four years and is eligible for reelection to additional four-year terms. The Stated Clerk is accountable to the General Assembly for the performance of the assigned functions.

(2) The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall be elected in the manner described in this standing rule. No member of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly or other persons involved in this procedure as a member of the search committee or as a person providing staff services to the committee may be considered for nomination as Stated Clerk. The incumbent Stated Clerk may not participate in any way in the election process described in this standing rule. In the year there is an election of a Stated Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint a temporary Stated Clerk during the period of the election at the General Assembly.

(3) The General Assembly that meets prior to the end of the term of a Stated Clerk shall elect a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(a) The slate of nominees for the nomination committee shall consist of the following: three members of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (nominated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, one of whom shall serve as moderator of the committee), one member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (nominated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board), and five at-large members nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee in the following categories: one mid council stated clerk and four persons (two ruling elders and two teaching elders) from among commissioners who have attended an assembly in the past six years. The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall present to the assembly for election the slate of nominees for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. The slate presented shall reflect the denomination's commitment to inclusiveness.

(b) Nominations from the floor for the nomination committee shall be in order following the distribution of the printed list of proposed nominees by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and a declaration by the Moderator that the names are in nomination. Names placed in nomination from the floor shall be in opposition to a particular name of an at-large member placed in nomination by the General Assembly Nominating Committee, and must be in the same category (H.2.b.(3)(a)). More than one person may be placed in nomination from the floor in opposition to an at-large nominee.

(c) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for providing the nomination committee with an up-to-date position description.

(d) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly will ensure that an adequate budget for the nomination process is provided in the Office of the General Assembly and shall designate staff services for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(e) The nomination committee shall begin its work no later than 300 days before the start of the assembly that will elect the Stated Clerk.

(f) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall be responsible for conducting the end-of-term evaluation of the Stated Clerk.

(g) The nominating committee shall announce that persons seeking the position of Stated Clerk shall file a completed application form and a resume or personal information form (PIF) with the committee 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly.

If the incumbent wants to be considered, he or she will notify the committee in writing and submit a current resume or PIF 180 days before the opening of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall provide a copy of the end-of-term evaluation to the Stated Clerk Nominating Committee.

(h) Additional written material may be requested by the committee. No one may be nominated to serve as Stated Clerk who has not provided an application to the committee.

(i) The committee shall review and evaluate all applications to determine the constitutional eligibility of the candidates. Any candidate who is determined to not be eligible will be notified in writing within forty-five days of receipt of their resume or PIF.

(j) The committee shall interview all eligible candidates using the same methodology and select one as the committee's recommendation. All members of the committee shall ordinarily participate in the interview. The committee shall declare its nominee no later than sixty days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(k) Any of the applicants for the position of Stated Clerk, including the incumbent Stated Clerk if not the nominee of the committee, who wish to be placed in nomination against the nominee of the committee shall declare their intention to the committee to do so no later than forty-five days before the opening of the General Assembly.

(l) At the convening of the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly shall distribute to commissioners and advisory delegates an information packet containing the following material regarding each candidate for Stated Clerk who wishes to be included:

(i) A photograph, a biographical sketch, a personal statement by the candidate, including a statement regarding the candidate's sense of call to the ordered ministry,

(ii) The responses of the candidate to a questionnaire developed by the committee based upon issues that will be before the church as presented in business to be considered by the General Assembly.

(iii) The material submitted shall be typewritten on paper 8-1/2 x 11 inches in size. The layouts for the presentation under this standing rule (as outlined above) may be chosen by the candidates, but the copy submitted for each presentation shall be provided in one color on one side of one sheet. The material shall be submitted to the Office of the General Assembly no less than thirty days before the convening of the General Assembly for reproduction and distribution and shall be accompanied by a statement indicating the willingness of the candidate to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(m) The candidates may not distribute any other materials, print or electronic, including flyers, buttons, tokens or other objects that would denote a campaign for the office of Stated Clerk.

(n) Other organizations supporting the candidacy of a particular candidate may not distribute materials electronically, through the mail, or at the General Assembly with the knowledge, support, or permission of that candidate. Should a candidate discover that an organization is advocating or campaigning for him or her, it is expected that the candidate will request that organization to cease its activities. The same expectation will be true of organizations that are critical of a particular candidate for Stated Clerk.

(o) Each candidate will be provided a place to meet and talk with commissioners and advisory delegates two days before the election. Only information provided by the Office of the General Assembly may be distributed in those rooms. Other materials, apart from that packet, are not permitted. Each candidate for Stated Clerk will be allowed to post the times when he/she will be available for conversation in that room.

(p) Any questions concerning interpretation of the election process outlined in H.2.b. shall be determined by the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee.

(4) The General Assembly, by majority vote, shall elect the Stated Clerk in the following manner:

(a) Within forty-eight hours of the convening of the assembly, the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall place in nomination a single nominee.

(b) The Moderator shall then invite other nominations from those who have completed the nomination process. Only one speech, made by a commissioner or a member of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee not to exceed five minutes in length, shall be made to nominate each nominee. There shall be no speech seconding any nomination. Each person nominated from the floor shall reaffirm a willingness to serve as Stated Clerk, if elected.

(c) In the event there are no other nominations, the election shall proceed immediately as follows:

(i) The nominee for Stated Clerk shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.

(ii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. Time allocated shall not exceed fifteen minutes. The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominee for Stated Clerk. The time allocated should not exceed fifteen minutes, after which the voting shall take place.

(d) In the event there are other nominations, the election shall proceed as follows:

(i) The election of the Stated Clerk shall take place as the first order of business on the next to last day of the assembly's session.

(ii) Each nominee shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly for a time not to exceed five minutes, expressing the nominee's views regarding the functions and work of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. The nominees shall speak in the same order as the presentation of nominating speeches.

(iii) The Moderator shall inquire of commissioners whether there are questions to be asked of the nominees for Stated Clerk. The first question shall be addressed to the nominee who was nominated first and the same question shall then be put to the other nominees in the same order in which they were nominated. The second question shall be directed to the second nominee in this order and then to each of the other nominees in sequence. Each nominee shall be afforded an opportunity to answer each question. This process shall continue for a period not to exceed the number of nominees times fifteen minutes, or for one hour, whichever is shorter, unless terminated earlier by vote of the General Assembly, after which the voting shall take place.

(5) Should there be a vacancy in the office of the Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall propose to the assembly, if the assembly is in session, members for the Stated Clerk Nomination Committee, or shall propose to the Moderator for appointment, if the assembly is not in session, to a Stated Clerk Nomination Committee. This committee shall be composed of members as outlined in Standing Rule H.2.b. and begin the process of a search for a candidate for Stated Clerk. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an acting Stated Clerk until such time as a Stated Clerk is elected.

(6) The Stated Clerk Nomination Committee shall be dismissed at the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly at which the committee presents a nominee for Stated Clerk.

(7) A new Stated Clerk shall normally assume office thirty days after the adjournment of the assembly. A longer period of transition between Stated Clerks may be negotiated by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, but shall not exceed ninety days.

Acting Stated Clerk

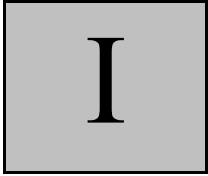
c. Acting Stated Clerk

In case of the incapacity, resignation, or death of the Stated Clerk, the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall designate an Acting Stated Clerk until such time as the Stated Clerk is able to resume the duties or the General Assembly elects a new Stated Clerk. The person so designated may be one of the Associate Stated Clerks or another person eligible for election as Stated Clerk.

Associate Stated Clerks

d. Associate Stated Clerks

The General Assembly may elect one or more Associate Stated Clerks as the General Assembly shall determine. The Stated Clerk shall nominate persons to fill each such office after consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. The term of office shall be four years, subject to reelection at the pleasure of the General Assembly.



General Assembly Arrangements

1. **Date and Place of Meeting**
 - a. Determining Date and Place
 - b. Presbytery Invitations
 - c. Criteria
 - d. Rotating the Place of the Meeting
 2. **Meeting Arrangements**
 - a. Arrangements and Housing
 - b. Assembly Assistants
 - c. Simultaneous Interpretation
 - d. Sponsorship of Events
 3. **Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses**
 - a. Reimbursement/Per Diem
 - b. Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner
 4. **Assembly Meeting Work Group**
 - a. Membership
 - b. Responsibilities
-

1. Date and Place of Meeting

Determining Date and Place

a. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall meet on the date and at the place fixed by the preceding General Assembly for a period, which shall be known as a session of the General Assembly, preferably between May 15 and July 31, subject to the possibility of change (see Standing Rule I.4.b.(10) and *Book of Order*, G-3.0503, for exceptions). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall recommend to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any necessary changes in dates and places of meetings previously set. Should action regarding date or place of meeting become necessary at a time when the General Assembly is not in session, this committee is empowered to fix a new date or place of meeting.

Presbytery Invitations

b. The host body for any session of the General Assembly shall be a presbytery(s) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Any presbytery that desires to invite the General Assembly to meet within its bounds shall forward an invitation to the Stated Clerk no later than May 1 of the year that is seven years prior to the earliest effective date of the invitation.

Criteria

c. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall determine the criteria that render a place an eligible site for a meeting of the General Assembly, including the requirement that all meeting arrangements shall be made to facilitate full participation by persons with disabilities. These criteria may be obtained from the Office of the General Assembly.

Rotating the Place of the Meeting

d. In order to distribute the benefits experienced from hosting a General Assembly meeting throughout the church, the place of meeting shall be rotated among the following four areas (unless prevented by financial or other practical considerations):

- Area A: Synod of Alaska/Northwest, Synod of the Pacific, Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Synod of the Southwest;
- Area B: Synod of the Sun, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Synod of Mid-America;
- Area C: Synod of Living Waters, Synod of Lincoln Trails, Synod of the Covenant;
- Area D: Synod of South Atlantic, Synod of Puerto Rico, Synod of the Northeast, Synod of the Trinity, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic.

2. Meeting Arrangements

Arrangements and Housing

a. The Stated Clerk shall oversee all arrangements for the meeting and housing of the General Assembly, including: the assignment of time and place for all special events and public meetings connected with or scheduled at the time of the General Assembly; the assignment of time and place for exhibits at the General Assembly; and the assignment of commissioners, advisory delegates, and others to hotels and other accommodations.

Assembly Assistants

b. The Stated Clerk shall appoint persons to serve as assembly assistants for the duration of the General Assembly. Persons appointed shall not be commissioners to the General Assembly or staff members of entities of the General Assembly. Assembly assistants shall be assigned to particular tasks to facilitate the work of the General Assembly. The appointments shall be made in accordance with *Book of Order*, F-1.0403.

Simultaneous Interpretation

c. The Stated Clerk shall arrange for the simultaneous interpretation of proceedings into Spanish and Korean languages for any participant during plenary meetings of the General Assembly. This service shall also be provided during assembly committee meetings, services of worship, and other events during the assembly for commissioners, advisory delegates, ecumenical guests, and, when possible, for other participants.

Sponsorship of Event

d. An event scheduled before, during, or immediately following a session of the General Assembly and extending an invitation to any or all participants of the assembly shall clearly identify the sponsor or sponsoring organization(s) in any invitations, announcements, or other publicity about the event.

3. Reimbursing Commissioner Expenses

Reimbursement/ Per Diem

a. The approved reimbursement for the travel expenses, food, lodging, and other approved expenses of commissioners at the sessions of the General Assembly shall be paid by the treasurer or the treasurer's designee. The treasurer shall have the authority to deposit funds for such purposes in a bank or trust company where the General Assembly is to be in session. Commissioners shall be reimbursed by means of individual checks upon receipt of a voucher on a form provided by the treasurer. The Stated Clerk shall recommend to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly the amount of any per diem. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall set the per diem, and the Stated Clerk shall publish such per diem in the materials (print or electronic) provided to the commissioners. The treasurer shall determine the manner in which such checks shall be distributed and shall announce the place or places where such checks may be cashed.

Reimbursement for Alternate Commissioner

b. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse an alternate commissioner for cost of meals (as specified in the per diem expenses for the particular session of the assembly to which the person is commissioned) during the period in which the alternate is actually seated as a commissioner. The total of the payments to the two persons shall not be larger than payment to a single commissioner attending the full assembly. The Office of the General Assembly shall reimburse either the original commissioner or the alternate who replaced the original commissioner for the costs of transportation and other approved expenses, but not both. It shall be the responsibility of the two individuals, with the assistance of the presbytery that elected them, to determine an appropriate division of the costs, whether reimbursement was in cash or a prepaid ticket was provided. Both persons shall be listed in the *Journal* as commissioners, with an indication of the period during which they served.

4. Assembly Meeting Work Group

Membership

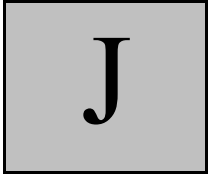
a. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall establish a work group on assembly arrangements to be composed of designated members from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The moderator of the Committee on Local Arrangements, and the moderator and vice moderator of the

Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures (when selected) shall be nonvoting members of the committee at all meetings in which matters will be considered that affect their particular work. This work group shall be assigned responsibilities (1) through (10) in this Standing Rule I.4.b.

Responsibilities

b. Responsibilities

- (1) Review the evaluation of each General Assembly session secured by the Stated Clerk.
- (2) Outline the programs for future General Assemblies sufficiently in advance to ensure an orderly progression of themes and emphases and to ensure the appointment of significant speakers and other program participants.
- (3) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed docket for the next session of the General Assembly.
- (4) Review and present to the Assembly Committee on Business Referral a recommendation regarding the Stated Clerk's proposed referral of each item of business to an appropriate assembly committee.
- (5) Assist the Moderator regarding the appointment of a commissioner to be the moderator of each assembly committee and a commissioner to serve as vice moderator of each assembly committee.
- (6) Consult with the Moderator regarding the planning of all worship at the General Assembly.
- (7) Coordinate the programmatic aspects of each General Assembly session, ensuring that adequate time is provided for the business that must be transacted.
- (8) Review requests from entities of the General Assembly, councils, other entities related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in any way, or coalitions in which this denomination or any of its entities participate to schedule meetings, briefings, hearings, or other events of any kind during those hours when the General Assembly or its committees are in session.
- (9) Prepare a report, including recommendations on the docket and the referral of assembly business, to be printed and distributed with other materials provided to commissioners.
- (10) Review and present to the General Assembly for its action the date and place of meeting six years hence and any changes in dates and places of meetings previously set.



Special Meetings of the General Assembly

1. Method of Calling

- a. Petition's Subject Matter
- b. Resolution Form
- c. Not Called for Discussion Only
- d. Resolved in 1 or 2 Days
- e. Full Text on Each Page of Petition
- f. Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures
- g. 120-day Requirement

2. Signatures

- a. Verification of PC(USA) Membership
- b. Verification of Signature
- c. Removal Request
- d. Failure to Reply
- e. Verification Process Report

3. Date and Location

- a. Report of Decision to Call Meeting
- b. COGA Sets Date and Place
- c. Expense Plan
- d. Letter of Notification

1. Method of Calling

The *Book of Order* permits the calling of special meetings of the General Assembly (G-3.0503). The method of calling a special meeting is the required number of commissioners submitting a petition with the full text of the resolution to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

Petition's Subject Matter

a. A special meeting may be called providing the petition's subject matter falls within the General Assembly's responsibilities. (G-3.0501).

Resolution Form

b. The urgent matter shall be brought in the form of a resolution or resolutions, stating the specific action proposed to be taken by the commissioners at the special meeting and shall include the reasons for proposing the decision to be made.

Not Called for Discussion Only

c. A special meeting may not be called for the purpose of discussion only.

Resolved in 1 or 2 Days

d. The matters should be able to be resolved in a session of one or two days.

Full Text on Each Page of Petition

e. The full text of the resolution shall appear on each page of the signed petitions.

Consult with Assembly Committee on Bills & Overtures

f. The Moderator may consult with the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution meets the criteria for a called meeting or concerning the specific actions in the proposed resolution. This may take place by conference call.

120-day Requirement

g. Resolutions requiring or proposing constitutional interpretation are subject to the 120-day requirement in G-6.02. The 120-day requirement begins upon receipt of the petition by the Moderator. The Moderator may consult with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) to determine any questions concerning whether the resolution requires a constitutional interpretation.

2. Signatures

The *Book of Order* establishes the minimum number of signatures to require a called meeting. The Moderator, upon receipt of the petition, shall ask the Stated Clerk to complete the following within thirty days:

Verification of PC(USA) Membership

a. Send each presbytery stated clerk or clerk of session a letter verifying the current Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) membership of the individual signatory to the petition.

Verification of Signature

b. Send each signatory to the petition a letter of verification asking the commissioner to verify the signature on the petition and if the commissioner concurs with the purpose of the request as stated in the resolution.

Removal Request

c. During the verification process, a commissioner may request removal of his or her name from the petition by notifying the Stated Clerk.

Failure to Reply

d. After all reasonable efforts to establish contact have been made, the name of a commissioner failing to reply to the letter of verification shall be removed from the petition.

Verification Process Report

e. The Stated Clerk shall report to the Moderator the results of the verification process.

3. Date and Location

The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly has the responsibility to fix the date and place of a meeting of the General Assembly when the General Assembly is not in session.

Report of Decision to Call Meeting

a. Upon receiving certification from the Stated Clerk that the petition has met the requirements of the *Book of Order* and the Standing Rules of the General Assembly, the Moderator shall report to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) the decision to call the meeting.

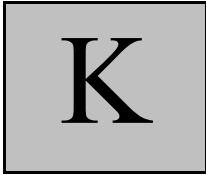
COGA Sets Date and Place Expense Plan

b. The COGA shall set the date and place of a called meeting.

c. The COGA shall submit to the called meeting a plan to pay for its expenses. This plan shall be considered to be part of the business of the special meeting.

Letter of Notification

d. The letter of notification of the called meeting will be mailed to the commissioners no later than sixty days before the start of the meeting.



Commissions, Special Committees, and Special Administrative Review

1. Commissions and Special Committees

- a. Purpose
- b. Considerations for Creating
- c. Appointed by Moderator
- d. Length of Existence and Reports
- e. Review
- f. Representation at General Assembly and Funding
- g. Coordination

2. Special Administrative Review of Synods

- a. Three Ways to Review
- b. Written Request for Review

1. Commissions and Special Committees

Purpose

a. The General Assembly may establish special committees and commissions to carry out decisions of the assembly or make recommendations to the assembly on matters that cannot be undertaken or accomplished by an existing entity. (*Book of Order*, G-3.0109)

Considerations for Creating

b. In considering the creation of a special committee or commission the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures shall hear from relevant agencies as well as from the assembly committee considering the proposal. Financial implications of special committees or commissions shall accompany any recommendation to the assembly.

Appointed by Moderator

c. The Moderator of the General Assembly appoints members of special committees or commissions, unless otherwise designated, in collaboration with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation. The Moderator is authorized to fill any vacancies that may occur. No person appointed may serve on more than one committee or commission unless otherwise designated by the assembly.

Length of Existence and Reports

d. Special committees or commissions shall normally complete their work within two years. Requests for an extension of work shall be referred to the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. An extension shall require a two-thirds vote of the assembly.

Review

e. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly shall review the work of each special committee or commission.

Representation at General Assembly and Funding

f. When the report of the special committee or commission is presented, its moderator shall serve as a corresponding member of the assembly and may be accompanied by one other member of the committee or commission. The expenses of these authorized representatives shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission's budget.

In the event of a minority report, a designated member of the minority shall also be invited to attend the assembly. The expenses of this member shall be reimbursed through the committee or commission's budget.

Other members of special committees or commissions may be reimbursed for attendance at the assembly only if they are required to be involved in hearings or for other official purposes.

Coordination

g. The Stated Clerk shall provide staff services and other assistance to special committees and commissions. The work of the special committees and commissions shall be funded through the per capita budget of the Office of the General Assembly.

2. Special Administrative Review of Synods

Three Ways to Review

a. The General Assembly has authority to undertake special administrative review of synods (*Book of Order*, G-3.0502c). There are three ways the General Assembly could be requested to consider such review:

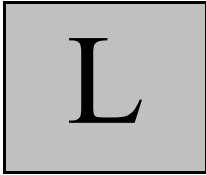
(1) by an overture from a presbytery or synod (G-3.0302d; G-3.0402; Standing Rule A.3.;

(2) by request from one of the General Assembly entities (Standing Rule A.2.);
or

(3) By a commissioners' resolution (Standing Rule A.6.). If such overture, request, or resolution is acted on favorably by the General Assembly, the General Assembly could undertake Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b) through commission or special committee as provided for in Standing Rule K.1. and G-3.0109.

Written Request for Review

b. Special administrative review of an alleged synod irregularity or delinquency may occur when a written request for such review is received by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly from another synod or a presbytery within the synod of the alleged irregularity or delinquency. If the request relates to an alleged delinquency, the request can only be filed with the Stated Clerk after the failure or refusal of the synod to cure the alleged delinquency at its next meeting, having been requested to do so in writing prior to the meeting. When the request for special administrative review is received, the Stated Clerk shall convene a meeting of the Moderator of the General Assembly, the moderator of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the moderator of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. If the request is in order and all the moderators agree that for the good of the church the special administrative review needs to be undertaken before the next meeting of the General Assembly (when the request could be considered by the whole General Assembly), the Moderator of the General Assembly shall appoint a special committee (Standing Rule K.1.) to conduct a special administrative review in accordance with G-3.0108b and report its findings and recommendations to the next General Assembly.



Amendment or Suspension of the Standing Rules

1. **Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules**
 2. **Amending the Standing Rules**
 3. **Suspending the Standing Rules**
-

Recommending Amendments to the Standing Rules

1. In consultation with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk shall recommend to the next session of the General Assembly any changes in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly deemed necessary. The Stated Clerk shall consult with the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly before proposing to the General Assembly any amendment to the standing rules.

Amending the Standing Rules

2. The Standing Rules of the General Assembly may be amended by a majority vote of the commissioners present and voting. A motion to amend the rules is debatable.

Suspending the Standing Rules

3. A motion to suspend the standing rules is not debatable and shall require a two-thirds vote of the total enrollment of the commissioners.

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838–1869

A—SUCCESSION OF MODERATORS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1789–1837

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1789	*John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1789	*John Rodgers, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1790	*Robert Smith, D.D.	New Castle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1791	*John Woodhull, D.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1792	*John King, D.D.	Carlisle	Carlisle, Pa.
1793	*James Latta, D.D.	New Castle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1794	*Alexander McWhorter, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1795	*John McKnight, D.D.	New York	Carlisle, Pa.
1796	*Robert Davidson, D.D.	Carlisle	Philadelphia, Pa.
1797	*William Mackay Tennent, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1798	*John Blair Smith, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1799	*S. Stanhope Smith, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Winchester, Va.
1800	*Joseph Clark, D.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1801	*Nathaniel Irwin	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1802	*Azel Roe, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1803	*James Hall, D.D.	Concord	Philadelphia, Pa.
804	*James Francis Armstrong	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1805	*James Richards, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1806	*Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1807	*Archibald Alexander, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1808	*Philip Milledoler, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1809	*Drury Lacy	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1810	*John Brodhead Romeyn, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1811	*Eliphalet Nott, D.D., LL.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1812	*Andrew Flinn, D.D.	Harmony	Philadelphia, Pa.
1813	*Samuel Blatchford, D.D.	Columbia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1814	*James Inglis, D.D.	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1815	*William Neill, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1816	*James Blythe, D.D.	W. Lexington	Philadelphia, Pa.
1817	*Jonas Coe, D.D.	Columbia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1818	*Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1819	*John Holt Rice, D.D.	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1820	*John McDowell, D.D.	Jersey	Philadelphia, Pa.
1821	*William Hill, D.D.	Winchester	Philadelphia, Pa.
1822	*Obadiah Jennings, D.D.	Steubenville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1823	*John Chester, D.D.	Albany	Philadelphia, Pa.
1824	*Ashbel Green, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1825	*Stephen N. Rowan, D.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1826	*Thomas McAuley, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1827	*Francis Herron, D.D.	Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.
1828	*Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1829	*Benjamin Holt Rice, D.D.	Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1830	*Ezra Fisk, D.D.	Hudson	Philadelphia, Pa.
1831	*Nathan S.S. Beman, D.D., LL.D.	Troy	Philadelphia, Pa.
1832	*James Hoge, D.D.	Columbus	Philadelphia, Pa.
1833	*William Anderson McDowell, D.D.	Charleston	Philadelphia, Pa.
1834	*Philip Lindsley, D.D.	W. Tennessee	Philadelphia, Pa.
1835	*William Wirt Phillips, D.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1836	*John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.	Harmony	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1837	*David Elliott, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1838	*Wm. Swan Plumer, D.D., LL.D.	East Hanover	Philadelphia, Pa.
1839	*Joshua Lacy Wilson, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	*William Morrison Engles, D.D.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1841	*Robt. J. Breckenridge, DD, LLD	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1842	*John Todd Edgar, D.D.	Nashville	Philadelphia, Pa.
1843	*Gardiner Spring, D.D., LL.D.	New York	Philadelphia, Pa.
1844	*George Junkin, D.D., LL.D.	Oxford	Louisville, Ky.
1845	*John Michael Krebs, D.D.	New York	Cincinnati, Ohio
1846	*Charles Hodge, D.D., LL.D.	New Brunswick	Philadelphia, Pa.
1847	*Jas. H. Thornwell, D.D., LL.D.	Charleston	Richmond, Va.
1848	*Alexander T. McGill, DD, L&D	Ohio	Baltimore, Md.
1849	*Nicholas Murray, D.D.	Elizabethtown	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1850	*Aaron W. Leland, D.D.	Charleston	Cincinnati, Ohio
1851	*Edward P. Humphrey, D.D., LL.D.	Louisville	St. Louis, Mo.
1852	*John Chase Lord, D.D.	Buffalo City	Charleston, S.C.
1853	*John Clark Young, D.D.	Transylvania	Philadelphia, Pa.
1854	*Henry Augustus Boardman, D.D.	Philadelphia	Buffalo, N.Y.
1855	*Nathan Lewis Rice, D.D.	St. Louis	Nashville, Tenn.
1856	*Francis McFarland, D.D.	Lexington	New York, N.Y.
1857	*Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D.	Burlington	Lexington, Ky.
1858	*Wm. Anderson Scott, D.D., LL.D.	California	New Orleans, La.
1859	*William L. Breckenridge, D.D.	Louisville	Indianapolis, Ind.
1860	*John Williams Yeomans, D.D.	Northumberland	Rochester, N.Y.
1861	*Jno. Chester Backus, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Philadelphia, Pa.
1862	*Charles C. Beatty, D.D., LL.D.	Steubenville	Columbus, Ohio
1863	*John Hunter Morrison, D.D.	Lodiana	Peoria, Ill.
1864	*James Wood, D.D.	Madison	Newark, N.J.
1865	*John Cameron Lowrie, D.D.	New York	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1866	*Robert Livingstone Stanton, D.D.	Chillicothe	St. Louis, Mo.
1867	*Phineas Densmore Gurley, D.D.	Potomac	Cincinnati, Ohio
1868	*George W. Musgrave, D.D., LL.D.	Phila. Central	Albany, N.Y.
1869	*M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio	New York, N.Y.
1869	*M.W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D.	Ohio (Nov. 12)	Pittsburgh, Pa.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838	*Samuel Fisher, D.D.	Newark	Philadelphia, Pa.
1839	*Baster Dickinson, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	*William Wisner, D.D.	Cincinnati	Philadelphia, Pa.
1843	*Ansel Doan Eddy, D.D.	Newark	Philadelphia, Pa.
1846	*Samuel Hanson Cox, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn	Philadelphia, Pa.
1849	*Philip Courtlandt Hay, D.D.	Tioga	Philadelphia, Pa.
1850	*David H. Riddle, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Detroit, Mich.
1851	*Albert Barnes	Philadelphia, 4th	Utica, N.Y.
1852	*William Adams, D.D., LL.D.	New York, 4th	Washington, D.C.
1853	*Diarca Howe Allen, D.D.	Cincinnati	Buffalo, N.Y.
1854	*Thomas H. Skinner, D.D., LL.D.	New York, 3rd	Philadelphia, Pa.
1855	*William Carpenter Wisner, D.D.	Niagara	St. Louis, Mo.
1856	*Laurens P. Hickok, D.D., LL.D.	Troy	New York, N.Y.
1857	*Samuel W. Fisher, D.D., LL.D.	Cincinnati	Cleveland, Ohio
1858	*Matthew L. P. Thompson, D.D.	Buffalo	Chicago, Ill.
1859	*Robert Wilson Patterson, D.D.	Chicago	Wilmington, Del.
1860	*Thornton Anthony Mills, D.D.	Indianapolis	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1861	*Jonathan Bailey Condit, D.D.	Cayuga	Syracuse, N.Y.
1862	*George Duffield, D.D.	Detroit	Cincinnati, Ohio
1863	*Henry B. Smith, D.D., LL.D.	N. York, 4th	Philadelphia, Pa.
1864	*Thomas Brainerd, D.D.	Philadelphia, 4th	Dayton, Ohio
1865	*James Boylan Shaw, D.D.	Rochester	Brooklyn, N.Y.

* Deceased
 † Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE	A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1866	*Samuel Miles Hopkins, D.D.	Cayuga	St. Louis, Mo.	1926	*William O. Thompson, D.D., LL.D.	Columbus	Baltimore, Md.
1867	*Henry Addison Nelson, D.D.	St. Louis	Rochester, N.Y.	1927	‡*Robert E. Speer, D.D., LL.D.	Jersey City	San Francisco, Calif.
1868	*Jonathan French Stearns, D.D.	Newark	Harrisburg, Pa.	1928	*Hugh Kelso Walker, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	Tulsa, Okla.
1869	*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D.D.	Utica	New York, N.Y.	1929	*Cleland Boyd McAfee, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	St. Paul, Minn.
1869	*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D.D.	Utica (Nov. 12)	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1930	*Hugh Thomson Kerr, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Cincinnati, Ohio
				1931	*Lewis Seymour Mudge, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
				1932	*Charles William Kerr, D.D.	Tulsa	Denver, Co.
				1933	*John McDowell, D.D., LL.D.	Baltimore	Columbus, Ohio
				1934	*William Chalmers Covert, D.D., LL.D.		Chicago Cleveland, Ohio
				1935	*Joseph Anderson Vance, D.D., LL.D.	Detroit	Cincinnati, Ohio
				1936	*Henry Buck Master, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.	Fort Wayne	Syracuse, N.Y.
				1937	*William Hiram Foulkes, D.D., LL.D.	Newark	Columbus, Ohio
				1938	*Charles Whitefield Welch, D.D.	Louisville	Philadelphia, Pa.
				1939	‡*Sam Higginbottom, LL.D., Philan.D.	Cleveland	Cleveland, Ohio
				1940	*William Lindsay Young, D.D., LL.D.	Kansas City	Rochester, N.Y.
				1941	*Herbert Booth Smith, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	St. Louis, Mo.
				1942	*Stuart Nye Hutchison, D.D., LL.D.	Pittsburgh	Milwaukee, Wis.
				1943	*Henry Sloane Coffin, D.D., Litt.D., LL.D.	New York	Detroit, Mich.
				1944	*Roy Ewing Vale, D.D., LL.D.	Indianapolis	Chicago, Ill.
				1945	*William Blakeman Lampe, D.D.	St. Louis	Minneapolis, Minn.
				1946	*Frederick W. Evans, D.D.	Troy	Atlantic City, N.J.
				1947	‡*Wilbur LaRoe Jr., LL.D.	Washington City	Grand Rapids, Mich.
				1948	*Jese Hays Baird, D.D., LL.D.	San Francisco	Seattle, Wash.
				1949	*Clifford E. Barbour, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.		Union Buffalo, N.Y.
				1950	*Hugh Ivans Evans, D.D., S.T.D.	Dayton	Cincinnati, Ohio
				1951	*H. Ray Anderson, S.T.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cincinnati, Ohio
				1952	*Hermann Nelson Morse, D.D., LL.D.	Brooklyn-Nassau	New York, N.Y.
				1953	*John Alexander Mackay, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., L.H.D.	New Brunswick	Minneapolis, Minn.
				1954	*Ralph Waldo Lloyd, DD, LLD, Litt.D.		Union Detroit, Mich.
				1955	*Paul S. Wright, D.D., L.H.D.	Portland	Los Angeles, Calif.
				1956	‡*David W. Proffitt, LL.D.	Union	Philadelphia, Pa.
				1957	*Harold R. Martin, D.D., LL.D.	Bloomington	Omaha, Neb.
				1958	*Harold R. Martin, D.D., LL.D.	Bloomington	Pittsburgh, Pa.

REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS

1870-1958

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1829-1906

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1851	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Kentucky	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1852	*David Lowry	Chapman	Nashville, Tenn.
1853	*H.S. Porter, D.D.	Memphis	Princeton, Ky.
1854	*Isaac Shook	Elk	Memphis, Tenn.
1855	*M.H. Bone, D.D.	Nashville	Lebanon, Tenn.
1856	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Princeton	Louisville, Ky.
1857	*Carson P. Reed	Richland	Lexington, Mo.
1858	*Felix Johnson, D.D.	McGready	Huntsville, Ala.
1859	*T.B. Wilson	Marshall	Evansville, Ind.
1860	*S.G. Burney, D.D.	Oxford	Nashville, Tenn.
1861	*A.E. Cooper	Hopewell	St. Louis, Mo.
1862	*P.G. Rea	New Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1863	*Milton Bird, D.D.	Morgan	Alton, Ill.
1864	*Jesse Anderson	Ohio	Lebanon, Ohio
1865	*Hiram Douglass	Georgia	Evansville, Ind.
1866	*Richard Beard, D.D.	Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1867	*J.B. Mitchell, D.D.	McGee	Memphis, Tenn.
1868	*G.W. Mitchell	Richland	Lincoln, Ill.
1869	*S.T. Anderson, D.D.	Miami	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
1870	*J.C. Provine, D.D.	Nashville	Warrensburg, Mo.
1871	*J.B. Logan, D.D.	Vandalia	Nashville, Tenn.
1872	*C.H. Bell, D.D.	Oxford	Evansville, Ind.
1873	*J.W. Poindexter, D.D.	Ohio	Huntsville, Ala.
1874	*T.C. Blake, D.D.	Nashville	Springfield, Mo.
1875	*W.S. Campbell, D.D.	Rushville	Jefferson, Tex.
1876	*J.M. Gill, D.D.	Davis	Bowling Green, Ky.
1877	*A.B. Miller, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Lincoln, Ill.
1878	*D.E. Bushnell, D.D.	California	Lebanon, Tenn.
1879	*J.S. Grider, D.D.	Logan	Memphis, Tenn.
1880	*A. Templeton, D.D.	Kirkpatrick	Evansville, Ind.
1881	*W.J. Darby, D.D., LL.D.	Indiana	Austin, Tex.
1882	*S.H. Buchanan, D.D.	Searcy	Huntsville, Ala.
1883	*A.J. McGlumphy, D.D.	Mackinaw	Nashville, Tenn.
1884	‡*John Frizzell	Lebanon	McKeesport, Pa.
1885	*G.T. Stainback, D.D.	McMinnville	Bentonville, Ark.
1886	*E.B. Crisman, D.D.	Kirkpatrick	Sedalia, Mo.
1887	‡*Nathan Green	Lebanon	Covington, Ohio
1888	*W.H. Black, D.D., LL.D.	St. Louis	Waco, Tex.
1889	*J.M. Hubbard, D.D.	Lebanon	Kansas City, Mo.
1890	*E.G. McLean, D.D.	Walla Walla	Union City, Tenn.
1891	‡*E.E. Beard	Lebanon	Owensboro, Ky.
1892	*W.S. Danley, D.D.	Mackinaw	Memphis, Tenn.
1893	*W.T. Ferguson, D.D.	Sangamon	Little Rock, Ark.
1894	*F.R. Earle, D.D.	Arkansas	Eugene, Ore.
1895	*M.B. DeWitt, D.D.	Springfield	Meridian, Miss.
1896	*A.W. Hawkins	Decatur	Birmingham, Ala.
1897	*H.S. Williams, D.D.	Memphis	Chicago, Ill.
1898	‡*H.H. Norman	McMinnville	Marshall, Mo.
1899	*J.M. Halsell, D.D.	San Jacinto	Denver, Colo.
1900	*H.C. Bird, D.D.	Union	Chattanooga, Tenn.
1901	*E.E. Morris, D.D.	New Lebanon	West Point, Miss.
1902	*S.M. Templeton, D.D.	Red River	Springfield, Mo.
1903	*R.M. Tinnon, D.D.	Rocky Mtn.	Nashville, Tenn.
1904	‡*W.E. Settle	Logan	Dallas, Tex.
1905	*J.B. Hail, D.D.	Pennsylvania	Fresno, Calif.
1906	*Ira Landrith, D.D., LL.D.	Lebanon	Decatur, Ill.

**CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1869-1920**

1869	*William Hughes	Racine, Wis.	Columbus, Ohio
1870	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1871	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	New York, N.Y.
1873	*Howell Powell	Cincinnati, Ohio	Racine, Wis.
1875	*William Roberts	Scranton, Pa.	Hyde Park, Pa.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1877	*Rees Evans	Cambria, Wis.	Chicago, Ill.
1880	*Thomas Roberts	Newark, Ohio	Utica, N.Y.
1883	*G.H. Humphrey	Humphreys, NY	Oak Hill, Ohio
1886	*T.J. Phillips	Plymouth, Pa.	Milwaukee, Wis.
1889	*T.C. Davis	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
1892	*Joseph Roberts	Minneapolis, Minn.	Utica, N.Y.
1895	*J.R. Daniel	Engedi, Wis.	Minneapolis, Minn.
1899	*John R. Jones	Columbus, Wis.	Columbus, Ohio
1901	*Hugh Davis	Scranton, Pa.	Cambria, Wis.
1904	*W.R. Evans	Peniel, Ohio	Venedocia, Ohio
1907	*Daniel Thomas	Wild Rose, Wis.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
1910	‡*T. Solomon Griffith	Utica, N.Y.	Cotter, Iowa
1913	*John C. Jones	Chicago, Ill.	Utica, N.Y.
1916	*W.E. Evans	Mankato, Minn.	Lake Crystal, Minn.
1919	*John Hammond	Scranton, Pa.	Racine, Wis.
1920	*John Hammond	Scranton, Pa.	Columbus, Ohio

**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
1858-1958**

1858	*John T. Pressly, D.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1859	*Peter Bullions, D.D.	Albany	Xenia, Ohio
1860	*Joseph Clokey, D.D.	Xenia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1861	*R.D. Harper, D.D.	Xenia	Monmouth, Ill.
1862	*J.T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1863	*A. Young, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Xenia, Ohio
1864	*D.A. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Philadelphia, Pa.
1865	*John B. Clark, D.D.	Allegheny	Washington, Iowa
1866	*David R. Kerr, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Allegheny, Pa.
1867	*John B. Dales, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Xenia, Ohio
1868	*James Harper, D.D., LL.D.	First N.Y.	Argyle, N.Y.
1869	*R.A. Browne, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Monmouth, Ill.
1870	*T.S. Kendall, D.D.	Oregon	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1871	*R.A. McAyeal, D.D.	Des Moines	Xenia, Ohio
1872	*John S. Easton, D.D.	Westmoreland	Washington, Iowa
1873	*John Y. Scouler, D.D.	First Ohio	Philadelphia, Pa.
1874	*John G. Brown, D.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1875	*W.W. Barr, D.D.	Philadelphia	Wooster, Ohio
1876	*James Brown, D.D.	Keokuk	Philadelphia, Pa.
1877	*Robert B. Ewing, D.D.	Monongahela	Sparta, Ill.
1878	*S.G. Irvine, D.D.	Oregon	Cambridge, Ohio
1879	*William Bruce, D.D.	Xenia	New Wilmington, Pa.
1880	*E.T. Jeffers, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Xenia, Ohio
1881	*David W. Carson, D.D.	Frankfort	Allegheny, Pa.
1882	*David Paul, D.D.	Muskingum	Monmouth, Ill.
1883	*W.H. McMilan, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1884	*William H. French, D.D.	First Ohio	St. Louis, Mo.
1885	*William Johnston, D.D.	College Springs	Topeka, Kans.
1886	*John T. Brownlee, D.D.	Chartiers	Hamilton, Ohio
1887	*Matthew M. Gibson, D.D.	San Francisco	Philadelphia, Pa.
1888	*Wm. T. Meloy, D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Cedar Rapids, Iowa
1889	*E.S. McKittrick, D.D.	Allegheny	Springfield, Ohio
1890	*Andrew Watson, D.D., LL.D.	Egypt	Buffalo, N.Y.
1891	*Thos. J. Kennedy, D.D.	College Springs	Princeton, Ind.
1892	*David MacDill, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	Allegheny, Pa.
1893	*James Bruce, D.D.	Delaware	Monmouth, Ill.
1894	*John A. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Mansfield	Albany, Oreg.
1895	*J.B. McMichael, D.D.	Monmouth	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1896	*James White, D.D.	Kansas City	Xenia, Ohio
1897	*Thomas H. Hanna, D.D.	Monmouth	Rock Island, Ill.
1898	*R.G. Ferguson, D.D., LL.D.	Mercer	Omaha, Nebr.

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1899	*Wm. J. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Philadelphia, Pa.
1900	*James P. Sankey, D.D.	Caledonia	Chicago, Ill.
1901	*J.A. Thompson, L.H.D., D.D., LL.D.	College Springs	Des Moines, Iowa
1902	*James C. Wilson, D.D., LL.D.	Lake	Allegheny, Pa.
1903	*James P. Cowan, D.D.	Indiana	Tarkio, Mo.
1904	*James W. Witherspoon, D.D.	Allegheny	Greenville, Pa.
1905	*Wm. C. Williamson, D.D., LL.D.	Keokuk	Washington, Iowa
1906	*J.K. McClurkin, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Richmond, Ind.
1907	*William T. Campbell, D.D.	Monmouth	Denver, Colo.
1908	*James G. Carson, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1909	*D.A. McClenahan, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Knoxville, Tenn.
1910	*James D. Rankin, D.D., LL.D.	Colorado	Philadelphia, Pa.
1911	*John C. Scouller, D.D.	Philadelphia	Washington, Pa.
1912	*Hugh H. Bell, D.D.	San Francisco	Seattle, Wash.
1913	*R.M. Russell, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Atlanta, Ga.
1914	*Joseph Kyle, D.D., LL.D.	Xenia	New Castle, Pa.
1915	*T.H. McMichael, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Loveland, Colo.
1916	*W.B. Smiley, D.D.	Chartiers	Cleveland, Ohio
1917	*W.E. McCulloch, D.D.	Monongahela	Boston, Mass.
1918	*W.M. Anderson, D.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1919	*James T. McCrory, D.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1920	*F.M. Spencer, D.D., LL.D.	Ark. Valley	Sterling, Kans.
1921	*A.F. Kirkpatrick, D.D.	Puget Sound	Philadelphia, Pa.
1922	*J. Kelly Giffen, D.D.	The Sudan	Cambridge, Ohio
1923	*W.R. Sawhill, D.D.	Puget Sound	Buffalo, N.Y.
1924	*Charles H. Robinson, D.D.	Wheeling	Richmond, Ind.
1925	*W.I. Wishart, D.D.	Allegheny	Topeka, Kans.
1926	*R.A. Hutchison, D.D., LL.D.	Conemaugh	Sharon, Pa.
1927	*M.G. Kyle, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Washington, D.C.
1928	*Wm. A. Spalding, D.D.	Oregon	St. Louis, Mo.
1929	*John McNaugher, DD, LLD, Litt.D.	Allegheny	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1930	*T.C. Atchison, D.D.	Boston	Des Moines, Iowa
1931	*J. Knox Montgomery, DD, LL.D.	Muskingum	Youngstown, Ohio
1932	*Chas. S. Cleland, D.D.	Philadelphia	Beaver, Pa.
1933	*W.B. Anderson, D.D., LL.D.	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1934	*J. Alvin Orr, D.D., LL.D.	Allegheny	Oxford, Ohio
1935	*E.C. McCown, D.D.	Monongahela	Akron, Ohio
1936	*Robert W. Thompson, DD, LL.D.	Wisconsin	Pittsburg, Kans.
1937	*A.R. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.	Monongahela	Oak Park, Ill.
1938	*Ralph Atkinson, D.D.	Los Angeles	Cleveland, Ohio
1939	‡*Hon. H. Walton Mitchell, LL.D.	Monongahela	Philadelphia, Pa.
1940	*Homer B. Henderson, D.D.	Butler	Buffalo, N.Y.
1941	*R.L. Lanning, D.D., LL.D.	Beaver Valley	Indianapolis, Ind.
1942	*Thomas C. Pollock, D.D.	Philadelphia	Colombus, Ohio
1943	*W. Bruce Wilson, D.D.	Monongahela	New Wilmington, Pa.
1944	*James H. Grier, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	New Concord, Ohio
1945	*James M. Ferguson, D.D.	Allegheny	Monmouth, Ill.
1946	*Lytle Rodgers Free, D.D.	Philadelphia	Tarkio, Mo.
1947	‡*Samuel A. Fulton, LL.D.	Wisconsin	Sterling, Kans.
1948	*Albert H. Baldinger, D.D.	Butler	New Wilmington, Pa.
1949	‡*Tim J. Campbell, LL.D.	Des Moines	Buck Hill Falls, Pa.
1950	*J. Lowrie Anderson, D.D.	Upper Nile	New Concord, Ohio
1951	‡*W. Kyle George, LL.D.	Cleveland	Des Moines, Iowa
1952	*James Leon Kelso, D.D., ThD., LL.D.	Monongahela	Albany, Oregon
1953	*Samuel C. Weir, D.D.	Detroit	Carlisle, Pa.
1954	*Albert E. Kelly, D.D., LL.D.	Los Angeles	Akron, Ohio
1955	*George A. Long, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.	Monongahela	Monmouth, Ill.
1956	*Robert W. Gibson, D.D., LL.D.	Monmouth	Knoxville, Tenn.
1957	*Robert N. Montgomery, D.D., LL.D.	Muskingum	New Concord, Ohio
1958	*Robert N. Montgomery, D.D., LL.D.	Muskingum	Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

1958	*Theophilus M. Taylor, PhD., D.D.	Vermont	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1959	*Arthur L. Miller, D.D., LL.D.	Denver	Indianapolis, Ind.

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1960	*Herman Lee Turner, D.D., LL.D.	Chattanooga	Cleveland, Ohio
1961	‡*Paul D. McKelvey	Los Angeles	Buffalo, N.Y.
1962	*Marshal L. Scott, Ed.D., D.D., LL.D.	Chicago	Denver, Colo.
1963	*Silas G. Kessler, D.D., LL.D.	Platte	Des Moines, Iowa
1964	*Edler G. Hawkins, D.D.	New York City	Oklahoma City, Okla.
1965	‡William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.	Wichita	Columbus, Ohio
1966	*Ganse Little, D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.	Los Angeles	Boston, Mass.
1967	*Eugene Smathers, D.D.	St. Andrew	Portland, Ore.
1968	*John Coventry Smith, D.D.	Pittsburgh	Minneapolis, Minn.
1969	*George E. Sweazey, Ph.D.	St. Louis	San Antonio, Tex.
1970	*William R. Laws Jr., D.D.	Indianapolis	Chicago, Ill.
1971	‡*Lois H. Stair, L.H.D.	Milwaukee	Rochester, N.Y.
1972	‡C. Willard Heckel, LL.D.	Newark	Denver, Colo.
1973	Clinton M. Marsh, D.D.	Omaha	Omaha, Nebr.
1974	Robert C. Lamar, D.D.	Albany	Louisville, Ky.
1975	*William F. Keesecker, D.D., LL.D.	Southern Kansas	Cincinnati, Ohio
1976	‡Thelma C.D. Adair, Ed.D.	New York City	Baltimore, Md.
1977	*John T. Conner	Cascades	Philadelphia, Pa.
1978	*William P. Lytle, D.D.	Alamo	San Diego, Calif.
1979	*Howard L. Rice Jr.	San Francisco	Kansas City, Mo.
1980	Charles A. Hammond, D.D.	Wabash Valley	Detroit, Mich.
1981	*Robert M. Davidson	New York City	Houston, Tex.
1982	James H. Costen, D.D.	Georgia	Hartford, Conn.
1983	James H. Costen, D.D.	Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1861-1983

1861	*Benj. M. Palmer	New Orleans	Augusta
1862	*J.L. Kirkpatrick	Concord	Montgomery
1863	*James A. Lyon	Tombeckbee	Columbia
1864	*John S. Wilson	Flint River	Charlotte
1865	*George Howe	Charleston	Macon
1866	*Andrew Hart Kerr	Memphis	Memphis
1867	*Thos. Verner Moore	East Hanover	Nashville
1868	*John N. Waddel	Chickasaw	Baltimore
1869	*Stuart Robinson	Louisville	Mobile
1870	*Robert L. Dabney	West Hanover	Louisville
1871	*William S. Plumer	Harmony	Huntsville, Ala.
1872	*Thomas R. Welch	Arkansas	Richmond
1873	*Henry Martyn Smith	New Orleans	Little Rock
1874	*John L. Girardeau	Charleston	Columbus, Miss.
1875	*Moses D. Hoge	East Hanover	St. Louis
1876	*Benjamin M. Smith	West Hanover	Savannah
1877	*C.A. Stillman	Tuscaloosa	New Orleans
1878	*T.E. Peck	Roanoke	Knoxville
1879	*Joseph R. Wilson	Wilmington	Louisville
1880	*T.A. Hoyt	Nashville	Charleston, S.C.
1881	*Robert P. Farris	St. Louis	Staunton
1882	*R.K. Smoot	Central Texas	Atlanta
1883	*T. Pryor	East Hanover	Lexington, Ky.
1884	*T.D. Witherspoon	Louisville	Vicksburg
1885	*H.R. Raymond	Tuscaloosa	Houston
1886	*J.H. Bryson	N. Alabama	Augusta
1887	*G.B. Strickler	Atlanta	St. Louis
1888	*J.J. Bullock	Maryland	Baltimore
1889	*H.G. Hill	Fayetteville	Chattanooga
1890	*James Park	Knoxville	Asheville
1891	*Hampden C. DuBose	Pee Dee	Birmingham
1892	*Samuel A. King	Central Texas	Hot Springs
1893	‡*J.W. Lapsley	N. Alabama	Macon

* Deceased

‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE	A.D.	NAME	PRESBYTERY	PLACE
1894	*James R. Graham	Winchester	Nashville	1963	*William H. McCorkle	Holston	Huntington
1895	*C.R. Hemphill	Louisville	Dallas	1964	*Felix B. Gear, Ph.D.	Westminster	Montreat
1896	*R.Q. Mallard	New Orleans	Memphis	1965	‡*Samuel J. Patterson	John Knox	Montreat
1897	*Geo. T. Goetchius	Cherokee	Charlotte	1966	*F.H. Caldwell, Ph.D.	Louisville	Montreat
1898	*E.M. Green	Transylvania	New Orleans	1967	*Marshall C. Dendy	St. Johns	Bristol
1899	*John F. Cannon	St. Louis	Richmond	1968	*P.D. Miller	Atlanta	Montreat
1900	‡*Jos. W. Martin	Arkansas	Atlanta	1969	*R. Matthew Lynn	The Southwest	Mobile, Ala.
1901	*Neander M. Woods	Memphis	Little Rock	1970	*William A. Benfield Jr.	Kanawha	Memphis, Tenn.
1902	*William T. Hall	Bethel	Jackson, Miss.	1971	*Ben Lacy Rose	Wilmington	Massanetta Springs, Va.
1903	*Abner C. Hopkins	Winchester	Lexington, Va.	1972	‡*L. Nelson Bell	Asheville	Montreat, N.C.
1904	*S.M. Neel	Upper Missouri	Mobile	1973	*Charles E.S. Kraemer	Mecklenburg	Fort Worth, Tex.
1905	*J.T. Plunkett	Augusta	Fort Worth	1974	*Lawrence W. Bottoms	Atlanta	Louisville, Ky.
1906	‡*Allen G. Hall	Nashville	Greenville, S.C.	1975	*Paul M. Edris	St. Johns	Charlotte, N.C.
1907	*J.R. Howerton	Asheville	Birmingham	1976	‡Jule C. Spach	Concord	Tuscaloosa, Ala.
1908	*W.M. Moore	West Hanover	Greensboro	1977	*Harvard A. Anderson	St. Johns	Nashville, Tenn.
1909	*William E. Boggs	Suwannee	Savannah	1978	‡*Sara Bernice Moseley	Covenant	Shreveport, La.
1910	*J.W. Bachman	Knoxville	Lewisburg, W. Va.	1979	*Albert C. Winn	Hanover	Kansas City, Mo.
1911	*Russell Cecil	East Hanover	Louisville	1980	*David L. Stitt	Brazos	MyrtleBeach, SC
1912	*Thos. S. Clyde	Dallas	Bristol	1981	‡*Dorothy G. Barnard	Southeast Missouri	Houston, Tex.
1913	*J.S. Lyons	Louisville	Atlanta	1982	*John F. Anderson Jr., D.D.	Grace Union	Columbus, Ga.
1914	‡*W.J. Martin	Concord	Kansas City	1983	*John F. Anderson Jr., D.D.	Grace Union	Atlanta, Ga.
1915	*W. McF. Alexander	New Orleans	Newport News				
1916	*C.W. Grafton	Mississippi	Orlando				
1917	*Jno. M. Wills, Ph.D.	Wilmington	Birmingham				
1918	*Jas. I. Vance	Nashville	Durant				
1919	*A.M. Fraser	Lexington	New Orleans	1983	*J. Randolph Taylor, DD, LL.D., Ph.d.	Mecklenburg	Atlanta, Ga.
1920	*W.L. Lingle	Concord	Charlotte	1984	‡Harriet Nelson, L.H.D.	Redwoods	Phoenix, Ariz.
1921	*A.B. Curry	Memphis	St. Louis	1985	‡William H. Wilson	Mission	Indianapolis, Ind.
1922	*R.C. Reed	Atlanta	Charleston, W. Va.	1986	Benjamin M. Weir	San Francisco	Minneapolis, Minn.
1923	*Alexander Spunt	Charleston	Montreat	1987	‡Isabel Wood Rogers	Hanover	Biloxi, Miss.
1924	*Thornton Whaling	N. Alabama	San Antonio	1988	C. Kenneth Hall	Beaver-Butler	St. Louis, Mo.
1925	*Georgia Summey	New Orleans	Lexington, Ky.	1989	Joan SalmonCampbell	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1926	*J.W. Skinner	West Texas	Pensacola	1990	‡Price H. Gwynn III	Charlotte	Salt Lake City, Utah
1927	*R.F. Campbell	Asheville	El Dorado	1991	Herbert D. Valentine	Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
1928	*Harris E. Kirk	Potomac	Atlanta	1992	John M. Fife	de Cristo	Milwaukee, Wis.
1929	*W.R. Dobyns	Birmingham	Montreat	1993	David Lee Dobler	Yukon	Orlando, Fla.
1930	*Thos. W. Currie	Central Texas	Charlottesville	1994	Robert Wayne Bohl	Grace	Wichita, Kans.
1931	‡*R.A. Dunn	Mecklenburg	Montreat	1995	‡Marj Carpenter	Tres Rios	Cincinnati, Ohio
1932	*William Crowe	St. Louis	Montreat	1996	John M. Buchanan	Chicago	Albuquerque, N.Mex.
1933	*Ernest Thompson	Kanawha	Montreat	1997	‡Patricia G. Brown	Cincinnati	Syracuse, N.Y.
1934	‡*Samuel Hale Sibley	Cherokee	Montreat	1998	Douglas W. Oldenburg	Greater Atlta	Charlotte, N.C.
1935	*Henry H. Sweets	Louisville	Montreat	1999	‡Freda Gardner	New Brunswick	Fort Worth, Tex.
1936	*P. Frank Price	Montgomery	Augusta	2000	*Syngman Rhee	Atl. Kor. Amer.	Long Beach, Calif.
1937	*D. Clay Lilly	Winston-Salem	Montreat	2001	Jack Rogers	San Gabriel	Louisville, Ky.
1938	‡*Willis M. Everett	Atlanta	Meridian	2002	Fahed Abu-Akel	Greater Atlanta	Columbus, Ohio
1939	*Edward Mack, Ph.D.	East Hanover	Montreat	2003	Susan R. Andrews	National Calpital	Denver, Colo.
1940	*Frank C. Brown	Dallas	Chattanooga	2004	‡ Rick Ufford-Chase	De Christo	Richmond, Va.
1941	*Chas. E. Diehl	Nashville	Montreat	2006	Joan S. Gray	Greater Atlanta	Birmingham, Ala.
1942	‡*Chas. G. Rose	Fayetteville	Knoxville	2008	Bruce Reyes-Chow	San Francisco	San Jose, Calif.
1943	*Donald W. Richardson	Asheville	Montreat	2010	‡*Cynthia Bolbach	National Capital	Minneapolis, Minn.
1944	*Charles L. King	Brazos	Montreat	2012	Neal D. Presa	Elizabeth	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1945	*Thomas K. Young	Memphis	Montreat	2014	‡Heath K. Rada	West. N. Carolina	Detroit, Mich.
1946	*J.B. Green	Meridian	Montreat	2016	§Denise Anderson	National Capital	Portland, Oreg.
1947	*John R. Cunningham	Winston-Salem	Montreat	2016	§Jan Edmiston	Chicago	Portland, Oreg.
1948	*C. Darby Fulton	Enoree	Atlanta				
1949	‡*W.E. Price	Mecklenburg	Montreat				
1950	*Ben R. Lacy Jr.	Granville	Massanetta				
1951	‡*James Ross McCain, Ph.D.	Atlanta	Orlando				
1952	*W.A. Alexander Jr.	Red River	Charleston, W. Va.				
1953	*Frank W. Price, Ph.D.	Lexington	Montreat				
1954	*Wade H. Boggs	Red River	Montreat				
1955	*J. McDowell Richards	Atlanta	Richmond				
1956	*W. Taliaferro Thompson	Orange	Montreat				
1957	*W.M. Elliott Jr., Ph.D.	Dallas	Birmingham				
1958	‡*Philip F. Howerton	Mecklenburg	Charlotte				
1959	*Ernest Trice Thompson	Hanover	Atlanta				
1960	Marion A. Boggs	Washburn	Jacksonville				
1961	*Wallace M. Alston, Th.D.	Atlanta	Dallas				
1962	‡*Edward D. Grant	Louisiana	Winston-Salem				

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

1983—

1983	*J. Randolph Taylor, DD, LL.D., Ph.d.	Mecklenburg	Atlanta, Ga.
1984	‡Harriet Nelson, L.H.D.	Redwoods	Phoenix, Ariz.
1985	‡William H. Wilson	Mission	Indianapolis, Ind.
1986	Benjamin M. Weir	San Francisco	Minneapolis, Minn.
1987	‡Isabel Wood Rogers	Hanover	Biloxi, Miss.
1988	C. Kenneth Hall	Beaver-Butler	St. Louis, Mo.
1989	Joan SalmonCampbell	Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.
1990	‡Price H. Gwynn III	Charlotte	Salt Lake City, Utah
1991	Herbert D. Valentine	Baltimore	Baltimore, Md.
1992	John M. Fife	de Cristo	Milwaukee, Wis.
1993	David Lee Dobler	Yukon	Orlando, Fla.
1994	Robert Wayne Bohl	Grace	Wichita, Kans.
1995	‡Marj Carpenter	Tres Rios	Cincinnati, Ohio
1996	John M. Buchanan	Chicago	Albuquerque, N.Mex.
1997	‡Patricia G. Brown	Cincinnati	Syracuse, N.Y.
1998	Douglas W. Oldenburg	Greater Atlta	Charlotte, N.C.
1999	‡Freda Gardner	New Brunswick	Fort Worth, Tex.
2000	*Syngman Rhee	Atl. Kor. Amer.	Long Beach, Calif.
2001	Jack Rogers	San Gabriel	Louisville, Ky.
2002	Fahed Abu-Akel	Greater Atlanta	Columbus, Ohio
2003	Susan R. Andrews	National Calpital	Denver, Colo.
2004	‡ Rick Ufford-Chase	De Christo	Richmond, Va.
2006	Joan S. Gray	Greater Atlanta	Birmingham, Ala.
2008	Bruce Reyes-Chow	San Francisco	San Jose, Calif.
2010	‡*Cynthia Bolbach	National Capital	Minneapolis, Minn.
2012	Neal D. Presa	Elizabeth	Pittsburgh, Pa.
2014	‡Heath K. Rada	West. N. Carolina	Detroit, Mich.
2016	§Denise Anderson	National Capital	Portland, Oreg.
2016	§Jan Edmiston	Chicago	Portland, Oreg.

B—SUCCESSION OF STATED CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1789—1837

A.D.	NAME
1789	*George Duffield, D.D.
1790	*Ashbel Green, D.D., LL.D.
1803	*Philip Milledoler, D.D.

§ Co-Moderator

* Deceased

‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

A.D. NAME

1806 *Nathaniel Irwin
1807 *Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.
1817 *William Neill, D.D.
1825 *Ezra Stiles Ely, D.D.
1836 *John McDowell, D.D.

1839–1869

1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *John McDowell, D.D.
1840 *Wm. Morrison Engels, D.D.
1846 *Willis Lord, D.D., LL.D.
1850 *John Leyburn, D.D.
1862 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

1838 *Erskine Mason, D.D.
1846 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.

(REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS)

1870–1958

1870 *Edwin Francis Hatfield, D.D.
1884 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
1921 *Lewis S. Mudge, D.D., LL.D.
1938 *William Barrow Pugh, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.
1951 *Eugene Carson Blake, D.D. HH.D., LL.D., Litt.,D., D.Cn.L.

CLERKS

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1829–1906

1829 *F.R. Cossitt
1834 *James Smith
1841 *C.G. McPherson
1850 *Milton Bird
1872 ‡*John Frizzell
1883 *T.C. Blake, D.D.
1896 *J.M. Hubbert, D.D.

CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH

IN THE UNITED STATES

1869–1920

1869 *M.A. Ellis
1870 *J.P. Morgan
1871 ‡*T.L. Hughes
1873 *M.A. Ellis
1875 *M.A. Ellis
1877 *T.C. Davis
1880 *James Jarrett
1883 *H.P. Howell
1886 *W. Machno Jones

A.D. NAME

1889 *John R. Jones
1892 *Edward Roberts
1895 *John Hammond
1898 *David Edwards
1901 *Joshua T. Evans
1904 *J.R. Johns
1907 *W.E. Evans
1910 *John E. Jones
1913 *W.O. Williams
1916 *R.E. Williams
1919 *J.O. Parry
1920 *J.O. Parry

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

1858–1958

1858 *Samuel Wilson, D.D.
1859 *James Prestley, D.D.
1863 *Jos. T. Cooper, D.D., LL.D.
1875 *Wm. J. Reid, D.D., LL.D.
1903 *David F. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
1931 *O.H. Milligan, D.D., LL.D.
1954 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1958–1983

1958 *Eugene Carson Blake, DD., HH.D., LL.D., Litt.D., D.Cn.L.
1966 ‡*William P. Thompson, J.D., J.C.D., LL.D.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

1861–1983

1861 *John N. Waddel
1865 *Joseph R. Wilson
1898 *William A. Alexander
1910 *Thos. H. Law
1922 *J.D. Leslie
1935 *E.C. Scott (Acting 1935B36)
1959 *James A. Millard Jr., Th.D.
1973 *James E. Andrews

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

1983–

1983 ‡*William P. Thompson (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
*James E. Andrews (Interim Co-Stated Clerk)
1984 *James E. Andrews
1988 *James E. Andrews
1992 *James E. Andrews
1996 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2000 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2004 Clifton Kirkpatrick
2008 Gradye Parsons
2012 Gradye Parsons
2016 Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II
* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

C—SUCCESSION OF
ASSOCIATE STATED CLERKS

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1958–1983

A.D. Name

- 1958 †*Henry Barraclough, LL.D. (Emeritus, 1961)
- 1958 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D. (Emeritus, 1974)
- 1972 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
- 1972 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
- 1973 *Robert Pierre Johnson, D.D.
- 1975 Robert T. Newbold Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

- 1974 †*Donald A. Speck
- 1978 Flynn V. Long Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

- 1983 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
- 1983 Flynn V. Long Jr.
- 1983 Robert T. Newbold Jr.
- 1983 Robert F. Stevenson
- 1987 Margrethe B.J. Brown
- 1988 William B. Miller
- 1989 †Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
- 1993 *C. Fred Jenkins
- 1993 J. Scott Schaefer
- 1993 Eugene G. Turner
- 1997 †Frederick J. Heuser
- 1997 Janet M. De Vries
- 2001 †Loyda Puig Aja
- 2001 Kerry Clements
- 2001 Gradye Parsons
- 2001 Mark Tammen
- 2001 Gary Torrens
- 2001 Robina Winbush
- 2008 Jill Hudson
- 2008 Marcia Myers
- 2010 Thomas Hay
- 2012 Andrew Black
- 2014 Sue Davis Krummel
- 2014 Joyce Lieberman
- 2014 Kerry Rice
- 2016 Beth Hessel

D—SUCCESSION OF
ASSISTANT STATED CLERKS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1907–1921, 1953–1958

- 1907 †*James M. Hubbert, D.D.
- 1953 †*Henry Barraclough, LL.D.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
1868–1913, 1952–1958

- 1868 —
- 1913 *A.G. Wallace, D.D., LL.D.
- 1914 Office discontinued

A.D. Name

- 1952 *Samuel W. Shane, D.D.
- 1954 *John M. Bald, Ph.D.
- 1956 *J.Y. Jackson, D.D.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1967–1972, 1981–1983

- 1967 †Otto K. Finkbeiner
- 1967 Robert F. Stevenson, D.D.
- 1981 †Mildred L. Wager

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983

- 1930 *E.C. Scott
- 1949 P.J. Garrison Jr.
- 1979 Joyce C. Tucker
- 1975 Flynn V. Long Jr.
- 1980 Ms. Lucille Scott Hicks
- 1980 Ms. Catherine M. Shipley
- 1982 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
1983–

- 1983 Ms. Lucille S. Hicks
- 1983 †Ms. Catherine McCorquodale Phillippe
- 1983 †Ms. Mildred L. Wager
- 1983 Eugene D. Witherspoon Jr.
- 1987 Mrs. Juanita H. Granady
- 1990 Paul M. Thompson
- 1995 Ms. Maggie Houston
- 1995 Ms. Deborah Davies
- 1995 Kerry Clements
- 2001 Zane Buxton
- 2001 Dennis Cobb
- 2001 Jerry Houchens
- 2001 Carlos Malavé
- 2001 †Joan Richardson
- 2001 †Margery Sly
- 2001 †Valerie Small
- 2002 †C. Laurie Griffith
- 2002 †Doska Ross Radebaugh
- 2003 Lesley A. Davies
- 2006 †Chris Nicholas
- 2006 Julia Thorne
- 2006 Sharon Youngs
- 2007 †Kerry Rice
- 2008 Evelyn Hwang
- 2008 †Jewel McRae
- 2008 Joyce Lieberman
- 2008 †Martha Miller
- 2012 Molly Casteel
- 2012 Kay Moore
- 2012 Kris Valerius
- 2014 SanDawna G. Ashley
- 2014 Timothy Cargal
- 2014 Melissa G. Davis
- 2014 Toya Richards
- 2014 Teresa Waggener

MODERATORS AND CLERKS

E—SUCCESSION OF
PERMANENT CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1789–1837**

- 1802 *Nathaniel Irwin
- 1807 *John Ewing Latta
- 1825 *John McDowell, D.D.
- 1837 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.

**1. (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH)
1838–1869**

A.D. Name

- 1838 *John Michael Krebs, D.D.
- 1845 *Robert Davidson, D.D.
- 1850 *Alex T. McGill, D.D., LL.D.
- 1862 *Wm. Edward Schenck, D.D.

2. (NEW SCHOOL BRANCH)

- 1838 *Eliphalet W. Gilbert, D.D.
- 1854 *Henry Darling, D.D., LL.D.
- 1864 *J. Glentworth Butler, D.D.

**REUNITED OLD AND NEW SCHOOLS
1870–1921**

- 1870 *Cyrus Dickson, D.D.
- 1882 *Wm. H. Roberts, D.D., LL.D.
- 1884 *Wm. Eves Moore, D.D., LL.D.
- 1900 *Wm. Brown Noble, D.D., LL.D.
- 1916 *Edward Leroy Warren, D.D.

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
1861–1983**

- 1861 *Joseph R. Wilson
- 1866 *William Brown
- 1885 *Robert P. Farris
- 1905 *Thomas H. Law
- 1910 *J.D. Leslie

F—SUCCESSION OF
RECORDING CLERKS

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

- 1951 ‡*Henry Barraclough, L.L.D.
(Elected for this one General Assembly)

* Deceased
‡ Ruling Elder

Persons Serving on General Assembly Level Entities as of September 20, 2016

Key for column following members name: first letter is racial and ethnic identification followed by gender and ordi

Racial Ethnic Designation:

A-Asian American
 B-African American
 H-Hispanic/Latinx
 M-Middle Eastern
 N-Native American
 O-Other or Mulitracial
 W-Caucasian

Gender and Ordination designation:

FT-Female Teaching Elder
 FR-Female Ruling Elder
 FL-Female Church Member
 FC-Female Minister (Non-Presbyterian)
 MT-Male Teaching Elder
 MR-Male Ruling Elder
 ML-Male Church Member
 MC-Male Minister (Non-Presbyterian)

Last Column: Synod

ANW-Alaska-Northwest	NE-Northeast
BPR-Borinquen de Puerto Rico	PAC-Pacific
COV-Covenant	ROC-Rocky Mountains
LAK-Lakes and Prairies	SA-South Atlantic
LIN-Lincoln Trails	SCH-Southern California and Hawaii
LW-Living Waters	SUN-Sun
MAM-Mid America	SW-Southwest
MAT-Mid-Atlantic	TRI-Trinity

Advisory Committee on Litigation

Class of 2018	Matthew R. Hall	WML	St. Andrews	LW
	Beth Law	BFR	National Capital	MAT
Class of 2020	Robin W. Hadfield	WFR	Homestead	LAK
	Barry McDonald	WML	San Fernando	SCH
Class of 2022	Jeana Lungwitz	WFR	Mission	SUN
	Michael E. Williams	WMR	San Diego	SCH

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Class of 2017	Mary Jorgenson	WFR	Heartland	MAM
Class of 2018	Jean Demmler	WFR	Denver	ROC
	Linda Mary Eastwood	WFT	Western Reserve	COV
	Raymond R. Roberts	WMT	Elizabeth	NE
	Noelle Royers	WFR	Seattle	ANW
Class of 2020	Steven B. Webb	WMR	National Capital	MAT
	Beverley Brewster	WFT	Redwoods	PAC

Rachel Eggebeen	WFL	deCristo	SW
Kevin Johnson	BMT	Detroit	COV
Sylvia Thorson-Smith	WFR	deCristo	SW
Gloria Tuma	MFR	Cascades	PAC

Advisory Committee on the Constitution

Class of 2018	Daryl Fisher-Ogden	WFT	Santa Barbara	SCH
	Daniel Saperstein	WMT	Lake Huron	COV
	Daniel Williams	WMT	Central Florida	SA
Class of 2020	Alyson Janke	WFR	John Knox	LAK
	Moon Lee	AMR	Eastern Korean	NE
	Michael E. Williams	WMR	San Diego	SCH
Class of 2022	Forrest Klaussen	WMT	Los Ranchos	SCH
	Catherine Ulrich	WFT	Denver	ROC
	Judy Wood	WFR	Whitewater Valley	LIN

Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns

Class of 2018	José Luis Casal	HMT	Tres Rios	SUN
	Nahida Halaby Gordon	W/MFR	Muskingum Valley	COV
	Gwendolyn D. Magby	BFTD	Tropical Florida	SA
	Buddy Monahan	NMT	Tres Rios	SUN
Class of 2020	Holly Haile Davis	NFT	Long Island	NE
	Victorius Adventius Hamel	AMT	National Capital	MAT
	Thomas H. Priest, Jr.	BMT	Detroit	COV
	Jessica Vazquez-Torres	HFL	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Raafat Labib Zaki	MMT	Grace	SUN

Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

Class of 2018	Kerri Allen	OFT	Chicago	LIN
	Jeanne Choy Tate	WFR	San Francisco	PAC
	Joann Haejong Lee	AFT	San Francisco	PAC
	Joyce Rarumangkay Rompas	AFR	National Capital	MAT
	Floretta L. Watkins	BFT	Charlotte	MAT
Class of 2020	Terry Alexander	WMT	Western North Carolina	MAT
	John Forbes	WMT	Northeast Georgia	SA
	Mary M. Fulkerson	WFT	New Hope	MAT
	Destini Hodges	BFR	Carlisle	TRI
	Susan Wiggins	WFR	Arkansas	SUN

Audit Committee

Class of 2018	Stephanie Anthony	WFT	Blackhawk	LIN
	Steven Asher	WMR	Mackinac	COV
	Marvin L. Brangan	WMR	Eastern Virginia	MAT
	Ellen Pearre Cason	WFR	New York City	NE
	Thomas O. Fleming, Jr	WMR	Pacific	SCH
	Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz	FR	Philadelphia	TRI
	Kathy Maurer	FR	Lake Huron	COV
	Kathy Terpstra	FR	Minnesota Valleys	LAK
Board of Pensions				
Class of 2018	Philip D. Amoa	BML	Philadelphia	TRI
	Wendy S. Bailey	WFT	New Brunswick	NE
	Fredric Joseph Bold, Jr.	WML	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Jesse Butler	BMR	Heartland	MAM
	Richard R. Clark	WMR	Milwaukee	LAK
	Lindley DeGarmo	WMT	Baltimore	MAT
	Bradley Fowler	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	John Hamm	WMR	Grace	SUN
	John A. Huffman	WMT	Los Ranchos	SCH
	Jacqueline Jenkins	WFR	Newark	NE
	Peter Kalan	WML	Denver	ROC
	Claude C. Lilly	WML	Trinity	SA
	Angelica Michail	AFR	San Gabriel	SCH
	John D. Mitchell	WML	Grace	SUN
	Roger L. Myers	WML	Detroit	COV
	Paul Vikner	WML	Lehigh	TRI
	Class of 2020	Mary (Molly) C. Baskin	WFR	Chicago	LIN
Adam Ceteznic		WMR	Seattle	ANW
Harold Doak		WMR	Mission	SUN
Fairfax Fair		WFT	Detroit	COV
Amy Williams Fowler		WFT	Genessee Valley	NE
Margaret Fox		WFO	Mid-Kentucky	LW
Arlene W. Gordon		BFT	Tropical Florida	SA
Mark S. Lu		AML	Los Ranchos	SCH
Kathy Lueckert		WFR(D)	Heartland	MAM
David McBride		WMO	New Castle	MAT
Linda Patrick Wood		WFL	Middle Tennessee	LW
Suzanne Welsh		WFR	Philadelphia	TRI
Floyd White		BMT	West Jersey	NE

Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment

Class of 2017	John Hougen	WMT	East Iowa	LAK
	Joseph Kinard	BMR	Middle Tennessee	LW
Class of 2018	Kerri Allen	OFT	Chicago	LIN
	Elizabeth Dunning	WFR	Utah	ROC
	Roger Gench	WMT	National Capital	MAT
	William H. Levering	WMT	Albany	NE
	George Philips	AMR	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM
	Steven B. Webb	WMR	National Capital	MAT
	Richard H. White	WMT	New Brunswick	NE
	Raafat Labib Zaki	MMT	Grace	SUN
Class of 2020	Sharon M. Davison	BFR	New York City	NE
	Joseph Morrow	BMT	Chicago	LIN

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly

Class of 2018	T. Denise Anderson	BFT	National Capital	MAT
	Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo	HMT	Mission	SUN
	Wilson Kennedy	WMD	St. Augustine	SA
	Nigel Leon Lovell-Martin	BMT	Tropical Florida	SA
	Kathleen Matsushima	WFT	Chicago	LIN
	Carol McDonald	WFT	Wabash Valley	LIN
	Marcia Mount Shoop	WFT	Western North Carolina	MAT
	Alejandra Spir-Haddad	OFR	Ohio Valley	LIN
Class of 2020	Stephanie Anthony	WFT	Blackhawk	LIN
	Mark Boyd	WMT	Beaver-Butler	TRI
	Margaret Elliott	WFR	Salem	MAT
	Barbara J. Gaddis	WFR	North Central Iowa	LAK
	Lynn Hargrove	WFT	New Covenant	SUN
	Clayton (Andy) James	WMT	New Hope	MAT
Eliana Maxim	HFT	Seattle	ANW	

Committee on Theological Education

Class of 2018	Alan Bancroft	WMT	Middle Tennessee	LW
	Matthew Miles	WMT	Tres Rios	SUN
	Mary Elva Smith	WFR	San Diego	SCH
	Sandra Tracy	WFR	Ohio Valley	LIN
	Tom M. Trinidad	AMT	Pueblo	ROC
Class of 2020	Jodi Craiglow	WFR	Chicago	IL
	Garnett Foster	WFT	Chicago	LIN
	Annie Vanessa Hawkins	BFT	San Francisco	PAC

Katherine Smith	WFT	Middle Tennessee	LW
Amaury Tañon Santos	H/BMT	Elizabeth	NE
Michael Williams	WMT	New Castle	MAT

Educator Certification Committee

Class of 2018	Jenna Campbell	WFR	Indian Nations	SUN
	Craig Foster	WMT	Foothills	SA
	Donald Griggs	WMT	San Francisco	PAC
Class of 2020	Jonathan H. Reinink	WMT	Whitewater Valley	LIN
	Hugh Anderson	WMT	Cascades	PAC
	Mary Marcotte	WFR	New Covenant	SUN
	Gordon Mikoski	WMT	New Brunswick	NE
	Susan Sharp Campbell	WFT	West Virginia	TRI
	Lita Simpson	HFR	Mission	SUN

Finance Committee

Class of 2018	Mary (Molly) Baskin	WFL	Chicago	LIN
	Chad Herring	WMT	Heartland	MAM
	John Hinkle	WMR	Western North Carolina	MAT
	Jeffrey C. Joe	AMR	Kendall	PAC
	Charles (Chip) Low	WMT	Hudson River	NE
	Rafael Medina	HMR	Suroeste	BPR
	Conrad Rocha	HMR	Santa Fe	SW
	Raul Felipe Santiago-Rivera	HMR	San Juan	BPR
	Wendy S. Tajima	AFT	Pacific	SCH

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relation

Class of 2018	Amantha L. Barbee	BFT	Charlotte	MAT
	Heidi Hadsell de Nascimento	WFL	Chicago	LIN
	Gun Ho Lee	AMT	New Hope	MAT
	Sophie Mathonnet-VanderWell	FC	Reformed Church in America	
	Kathleen Matsushima	WFT	Chicago	LIN
	Christopher D. Olkiewicz	MC	Evangelical Church in America	
	Robert C. Reynolds	WMT	Chicago	LIN
	Jeremiah Rosario	HMR	New York City	NE
	John Vertigan	MC	United Church of Christ	
	Anne Weirich	WFT	Muskingum Valley	COV
Class of 2020	Randall C. Bailey	BMC	Progressive National Baptist Con	
	Anne Bond	WFR	Denver	ROC

Laura Brekke	WFT	San Jose	PAC
Jack Felch	WMR	Lehigh	TRI
Cynthia Holder-Rich	WFT	Maumee Valley	COV
Stephen J. Pointon	WMR	Homestead	LAK
Y. Dianna Wright	B FR	Salem	MAT

General Assembly Committee on Representation

Class of 2018	Larissa Kwong Abazia	AFT	New York City	NE
	Clover T. Bailey	OFTD	Stockton	PAC
	Maribeth Culpepper	W/NFRD	Santa Fe	SW
	Michael Hauser	WMR	Southern Kansas	MAM
	Chris Hopp	WML	Homestead	LAK
	Marvella C. Lambright	BFR	Miami Valley	COV
	Martha Ross-Mockaitis	WFTD	Chicago	LIN
Class of 2020	Edward (Byron) Elam	BML	Mid-South	LW
	Aida Faris	MFR	Mission	SUN
	Rubén Ortiz-Rodriguez	HMT	Suroeste	BPR
	Treena Parvello	NFL	deCristo	SW
	Evelyn Pugh	A/WFL	San Francisco	PAC
	Paula Sanders	WFT	Twin Cities Area	LAK

General Assembly Nominating Committee

Class of 2018	Steve Aeschbacher	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	Yena Hwang	AFT	National Capital	MAT
	Judy Lussie	AFRD	San Francisco	PAC
	Danny C. Murphy, Sr.	BMT	Trinity	SA
	Judith Trabue	BFR	Whitewater Valley	LIN
	John M. Willingham	WMT	Philadelphia	TRI
Class of 2020	Lindsey Anderson	B/W/NFT	Detroit	COV
	Eva O. Carter	BFR	Sheppards & Lapsley	LW
	Mary Paik	AFT	Pacific	SCH
	Marta T. Rodriguez-Fonseca	HFR	San Juan	BPR
	Gene Wilson	NMT	Eastern Oklahoma	SUN
Class of 2022	Gregory G. Bolt	WMT	Homestead	LAK
	Douglas Howard	BMR	New York City	NE
	Mary Lynn Walters	WFR	Grand Canyon	SW
	Will Zandler	WMD	Plains and Peaks	ROC

General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission

Class of 2018	Terry Epling	WMT	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM
---------------	--------------	-----	------------------	-----

	Helen R. Heffington	WFT	Peace River	SA
	Julia Henderson	WFR	Denver	ROC
	Robin Roberts	WMR	Mississippi	LW
	Sarah Thornburg	WFR	Western North Carolina	MAT
Class of 2020	Maurice Caskey	WMR	San Diego	SCH
	Deborah Little Cohn	WFR	John Knox	LAK
	Ruth Goldthwaite	WFT	Boise	PAC
	William Myers	WMT	Mackinac	COV
	Kevin L. Nollette	WMT	Seattle	ANW
	Floretta N. Velez-Diaz	HFR	Noroeste	BPR
Class of 2022	Paula Hooker	WMT	New Covenant	SUN
	Jean Kennedy	BFR	Pittsburgh	TRI
	Craig Lindsey	WMT	Cayuga-Syracuse	NE
	June Lorenzo	NFR	Santa Fe	SW
	Susan McGhee	WFT	Ohio Valley	LIN

Mission Development Resources Committee

Class of 2018	Robert H. Baker	WMRD	Western Reserve	COV
	Maryann Farnsworth	WFT	Heartland	MAM
	David Grachek	WMT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	David Hicks	WMT	Grand Canyon	SW
	Calik (Tito) Rivera	HMR	Kendall	PAC
	David Zimmerman	WMR	San Francisco	PAC
	Marie Zupka-Ludder	WFR	Long Island	NE
Class of 2020	Arthur Canada	BMT	Charlotte	MAT
	Frances Lin	AFR	San Diego	SCH
	Cecilia Moran	AFR	Stockton	PAC
	Perzavia Praylow	BFL	Trinity	SA
	Donald A. Wingate	WMR	Central Florida	SCH

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

Class of 2018	Harry Bartel	WMR	Grace	SUN
	Steven Bass	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	Elizabeth Dunning	WFR	Utah	ROC
	Marilee K. Hopkins	WFL	Chicago	LIN
	John M. Nelsen	WMT	Tres Rios	SUN
	Robert Olcott	WML	National Capital	MAT
	Terry Allison Rappuhn	WFR	Middle Tennessee	LW
	Ruth F. Santana-Grace	HFT	Philadelphia	TRI
	David Zimmerman	WMR	San Francisco	PAC

Class of 2020	Wonjae Choi	AFT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Bridget-Anne Hamden	BFL	Charlotte	MAT
	Stephen Kelly	WMR	Transylvania	LW
	Eustacia Moffett Marshall	BFT	Charlotte	MAT
	Michelle Minter	BFR	New Brunswick	NE
	Malcolm Nimick	WMR	Pittsburgh	TRI
	Jihyun Oh	AFT	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Eric Osborne	WMR	Mid-South	LW
	Neal Presa	AMT	San Diego	SCH
Paul Roberts	BMT	Greater Atlanta	SA	

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People

Class of 2018	John Etheredge	BMR	New Hope	MAT
	Joseph L. Johnson	WMT	South Alabama	LW
	Lisa Leverette	BFL	Detroit	COV
	Johnnie Monroe	BMT	Pittsburgh	TRI
	Sarah Jane Moore	WFR	Chicago	LIN
	John Osoinach	WMR	Palo Duro	SUN
	Shavon Starling-Louis	BFT	Indian Nations	SUN
	Sharon Louise Ware	BFL	Scioto Valley	COV
	Wesley Woo	AMT	San Francisco	PAC
Class of 2020	Karen Brown	BFT	Baltimore	MAT
	Susan Dobkins	WFO	Tacoma, Washington	NP
	Phyllis Edwards	BFL	Detroit, Michigan	NP
	Laura Krauss	WFT	Pacific	SCH
	Lawrence Low	AMT	Seattle	ANW
	Rebecca Reyes	HFT	New Hope	MAT
	James Steele	WMR	Central Florida	SA

Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel

Class of 2018	Andrew Hart	WMT	Long Island	NE
	Leslie R. Hyder	WMT	San Joaquin	PAC
	Josephine Laury	BFR	Miami Valley	COV
	Sidney Leak	WMT	South Alabama	LW
	Bill Nisbet	WMT	Greater Atlanta	SA
Class of 2020	Michael Gillespie	WMT	Cascades	PAC
	Sung-Joo Park	AMT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Kelly Wadsworth	WFT	Seattle	ANW
	Don Yancey	WMT	St. Andrew	LW

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Advisory Committee

Class of 2018	John R. Buchanan	WMR	Chicago	LIN
	Sally Campbell-Evans	WFT	Florida	SA
	Zandra L. Maffett	BFR	Philadelphia	TRI
Class of 2020	Stephanie Fritts	WFL	Olympia	ANW
	Kathy Faye Lee	AFL	South Louisiana	SUN
	Kenneth G. Page	WMT	Grand Canyon	SW

Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee

Class of 2018	Eric Dillenbeck	WMT	Western Reserve	COV
	Lucy Janjigian	MFR	San Jose	PAC
	Jeff Kackley	WMT	Charleston-Atlantic	SA
	Abigail Mohaupt	WFT	San Jose	PAC
	Alexander A. Peterson	WML	Central Nebraska	LAK
Class of 2020	Neddy Astudillo	HFT	Milwaukee	LAK
	Sung Yeon Choi-Morrow	AFT	Chicago	LIN
	Betty J. Griffin	BFT	Hudson River	NE

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program Board

Class of 2018	Linda Bailey	WFR	Grand Canyon	SW
	Margaret Jorgenson	WFT	Mid-South	LW
	Terry Nall	WMR	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Linda D. Scholl	WFR	Mid-South	LW
	Joyce Smith	BFR	Scioto Valley	COV
	Richard H. White	WMR	New Brunswick	NE
Class of 2020	Steven Bass	WMR	Seattle	ANW
	David Ezekiel	WMT	Chicago	LIN
	Chad Herring	WMT	Heartland	MAM
	Thomas McNeill	BMR	Southern New England	NE
	Manley Olson	WMR	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Josephene Stewart	WFR	Charlotte	MAT
	In Yang	AMT	Riverside	SCH

Presbyterian Mission Agency Board

Class of 2018	Marsha Zell Anson	WFR	Glacier	ROC
	Mary (Molly) Baskin	WFL	Chicago	LIN
	Marvin L. Brangan	WMR	Eastern Virginia	MAT
	Gregory L. Chan	AMT	San Francisco	PAC
	Jason Chavez	NMR	deCristo	SW
	James R. Ephraim, Jr.	BMT	Sheppards & Lapsley	LW

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

	Thomas O. Fleming, Jr	WMR	Pacific	SCH
	James E. Foucher	BMC	UCC	
	Vicki Garer	WFC	ELCA	
	Chad Herring	WMT	Heartland	MAM
	Susan Osoinach	WFR	Palo Duro	SUN
	Heath K. Rada	WMR	Western North Carolina	MAT
	Nancy Ramsay	WFT	Grace	SUN
	David Shinn	AMT	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Wendy S. Tajima	AFT	Pacific	SCH
	Carol Winkler	WFR	Cincinnati	COV
Class of 2020	Mark S. Brainerd	WMT	Salem	MAT
	Cecil Corbett	NMT	Inland Northwest	ANW
	Jan Edmiston	WFT	Chicago	LIN
	David Ezekiel	WMT	Chicago/LIN	ROC
	Marcella Glass	WFTD	Boise	PAC
	Lindsay Harren-Lewis	WFT	Lehigh	TRI
	Jeffrey C. Joe	AMR	Kendall	PAC
	Rafael Medina	HMR	Suroeste	BPR
	Regina Meester	WFR	Homestead	LAK
	Joseph L. Morrow	BMT	Chicago	LIN
	Alice Ridgill	BFT	Trinity	SA
	Melinda Lawrence Sanders	WFR	Middle Tennessee	LW
	Kathy Terpstra	WFR	Minnesota Valleys	LAK
	Shannan Vance-Ocampo	WFT	Albany	NE
Class of 2022	Adolfo (Bong) Bringas	AMR	San Gabriel	SCH
	Kenneth H. Godshall	WMT	Western Kentucky	LW
	Sinthia Hernandez-Diaz	HFR	Philadelphia	TRI
	Warren Lesane	BMT	Charlotte	MAT
	Charles (Chip) Low	WMT	Hudson River	NE
	Kathy Maurer	WFR	Lake Huron	COV
	James Parks	BMR	Baltimore	MAT
	Conrad Rocha	HMR	Santa Fe	SW
	Patsy Smith	BFR	Indian Nations	SUN
	Brenton Thompson	WMT	Philadelphia	TRI
	Tamara Williams	BFR	Charlotte	MAT
	K. Nicholas Yoda	AMT	Cincinnati	COV
Presbyterian Mortgage Corporation				
Class of 2018	Margaret Jorgenson	WFT	Mid-South	LW
	Linda D. Scholl	WFR	Mid-South	LW

	J. Jay Wilkinson	WMR	Twin Cities Area	LAK
	Cynthia M. Campbell	WFT	Mid-Kentucky	LW
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation				
Class of 2018	Christine Chakoian	W/MFTD	Chicago	LIN
	Jesse G. Hite, Jr.	WMR	Charlotte	MAT
	LaVert W. Jones	BMR	Cherokee	SA
	Cynthia L. Rigby	WFT	Cimarron	SUN
	Olivia Hudson Smith	BFR	Denver	ROC
Class of 2020	Mary Gene Boteler	WFT	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM
	Rebecca Davis	WFR	National Capital	MAT
	Robert Holben	WMR	Chicago	LIN
	Sunghee (Joanna) Kim	A/HFL	Grace	SUN
	Rubén Rosario Rodriguez	HMT	Giddings-Lovejoy	MAM
Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Exams				
Class of 2018	Clayton F. Allard	WMT	Grace	SUN
	Trent Hancock	WMT	Pittsburgh	TRI
	Paul Junggap Huh	AMT	Greater Atlanta	SA
	Randon Jackson	WMT	Florida	SA
	Sam Y. Kim	AMT	Atlantic Korean	MAT
	Sandra Luciano-Andujar	HFT	Central Florida	SA
Class of 2020	Margaret Cowan	WFR	East Tennessee	LW
	James Davis	WMT	Albany	NE
	Sylvia Karcher	WFT	Riverside	SCH
	Carmen Rosario	HFT	New York City	NE
	Leeann Scarbrough	WFT	Sheppards and Lapsley	LW
Review Committee on the Whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)				
Class of 2018	Debra Avery	WFT	San Francisco	PAC
	Eric Beene	WMT	Savannah	SA
	Deborah A. Block	WFT	Milwaukee	LAK
	David A. Davis	WMT	New Brunswick	NE
	Marco Grimaldo	HMR	National Capital	MAT
	Rachel Mihee Kim-Kort	AFT	Whitewater Valley	LIN
	Christopher Mason	WMR	New York City	NE
	James B Rea	OML	Pacific	SCH
	Claire Rhodes	BFR	Arkansas	SUN
	Kelly Shriver	WFT	Detroit	COV
	James Tse	AMR	New York City	NE

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ELECTED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Madison VanVeelen
James Wilson

HFT
WMR

Whitewater Valley
Scioto Valley

LIN
COV

INDEX

INDEX

- 1001 Worshipping Communities Report, 73**
- 2020 Vision Team, Co-Moderators to Name, to Develop a Guiding Statement for the Denomination and Make a Plan for Implementation, 40, 257**

A

- Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End-of-Life Decisions, Resolution on 21, 94, 1018**
- Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence, Resolution to Extend Time Limits on, 52, 378**
- Achieving a 5:1 Salary Ratio Between Highest-Paid and Lowest-Paid Employees of PMA, 44, 617**
- Adjournment of Assembly, 74**
- Administrative Personnel Association Approved as National Certifying Body, 52, 376**
- Admission and Apology for Harms Done to LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends, 54, 702**
- Advisory Committee on Litigation,**
agency summary, 417
cases joined (2014–2016), 418
disposition of cases reported in 2012–2014, 417
GANC nominations approved, 81
members of entities elected by GA, 1135
- Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy,**
agency summary, 845
end-of-life issues, ACSWP directed to appoint team to study, 21, 94, 1018
final responses to referrals, 93
GANC nominations, 81,
members of entities elected by GA, 1135
minutes approved, 59, 836
recommendations,
Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance, 56, 722
Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision, Recommendations Regarding, 57, 108, 738
Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs, 59, 801
Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale, 57, 742
Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, 61, 469
New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento,” 68, 94, 905
Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End-of-Life Decisions, 21, 94, 1018
Risking Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations, 67, 73, 867
Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age, 113
referral in progress, 91

- Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, Presbyterian Ministry to the UN, and MRTI to Study and Consider Actions to Bring Justice to Disputed Territory of Western Sahara, Final Response to Referral, 115, 116**

- Advisory Committee on the Constitution,**
agency summary, 419
GANC nominations approved, 81
members of entities elected by GA, 1136
recommendations/requests,
constitutional interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c, 34, 288, 289
constitutional interpretation of resolving tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, F-3.0202, 35, 298

- Advisory Delegates, Commissioning of Commissioners and, 1**

- Advisory Delegates, List of, 1070**

- Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns,**
agency summary, 850
GANC nominations approved, 12, 78, 81
members of entities elected by GA, 1136
recommendations, cultural proficiency and creating a climate for change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a review of efforts regarding, 57, 735
Resolution to Recognize the Commitment of the PC(USA) to Making Just Immigration a Reality, 105
review process, recommendations regarding, 57, 737, 738
self-study report, 59, 836

- Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns,**

- agency summary, 843
final response to referral, 94
GANC nominations approved, 82
members of entities elected by GA, 1136
recommendations,
Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen, 44, 94, 614
Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA), 34, 290
Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed Via Third Party Contractors, 44, 615
Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence, 52, 378
Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies, 34, 292

- Affirmation: Faithful Living at the End-of-Life, 1018**

- Affirmation, Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs, 802**

- Affirmation of Creation, 21, 1015**

- Affirmation of Cuban and U.S. Presbyterian Mission Achievements and Goals for the Future, 68, 905**
- Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity AA/EEO Annual Report of Progress, 632**
- Affirmative Action, Proposed Revisions to, Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and, 43, 124, 591**
- African American Male, Taking Specific Action to Address Worsening Plight of, 42, 570**
- Agency Summaries,**
- Advisory Committee on Litigation, 417
 - Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, 845
 - Advisory Committee on the Constitution, 419
 - Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, 850
 - Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, 843
 - Committee on Theological Education, 1049
 - General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, 450
 - General Assembly Committee on Representation, 189
 - General Assembly Nominating Committee, 2, 204
 - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, 964
 - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., 966
 - Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary, 960
- AIDS Sunday, World, 942**
- Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, Apology to Native Americans, 54, 711**
- Allen, Kelly S., Special Remembrance of, 7**
- Amendments to *Book of Order* (see *Book of Order*)**
- Antiracism and Antisexism Trainings in Mid Councils Report, Implementation of Cultural Competency, 129**
- Antiracism Policy, Resolution to Develop a Churchwide, 108, 125**
- Antiracism Training, 790**
- Antiracism Training Report, Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Current Churchwide, 125**
- Apportionment Rate, Per Capita, 71, 72, 179**
- Annual Statistical Report from Congregations to Include New Category, "Multiracial" (Greater Atlanta), 29, 165**
- Annual Statistical Report to Include New Category, "Partners in Ministry," 29, 166**
- Apatiki, Lucy, Women of Faith Award Winner, 629**
- Apology for Harms Done to LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends, Admission and, 54, 702**
- Apology to LGBTQ/Q Family, Statement on, 54, 703**
- Apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, 54, 711**
- Armenian Genocide, Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the, 115**
- Articles of Agreement, Amending Section 8.2 to Add "Pacific Islander," 3, 141**
- Assembly Committee Meeting Process and Moderator's Election, Direct COGA to Bring Proposals to 2018 Assembly, 28, 163**
- Assembly Committees,**
- approval of structure, 2, 77
 - Bills & Overtures,
 - docket, 7, 25, 31, 37, 47, 49, 60, 70, 156
 - minutes examined, 7, 11, 70, 155, 158
 - referrals of business, 10
 - reports of, 7, 8, 16, 25, 31, 36, 37, 47, 49, 60, 155
 - protests, 70
 - Board of Pensions, PILP, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation and Foundation,
 - new business, 13, 28, 30
 - referrals of business, 3, 139, 151
 - report of, 25, 955
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 14
 - Business Referrals, 2
 - docket, 2
 - late business, 2
 - referrals of business to assembly committees, 127, 131
 - report of, 2, 3, 89
 - suspension of Standing Rule A.2.a., 3
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 12
 - Church Polity and Ordered Ministry,
 - dissent, 52
 - referrals of business, 3, 134, 145
 - report of, 48, 49, 349
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 13
 - Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations,
 - dissent, 24
 - protests, 71
 - referrals of business, 3, 135, 146
 - report of, 23, 439
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 13
 - General Assembly Procedures,
 - dissent, 72
 - financial implications update, 11, 27, 48, 71
 - new business, 13, 28, 30
 - referrals of business, 3, 131, 142
 - report of, 24, 27, 71, 159
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 12
 - Immigration and Environmental Issues,
 - protests, 71
 - referrals of business, 3, 136, 147
 - report, 62, 511
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 13

Assembly Committees (continued)

- Mid Councils,
 - late business, 153
 - referrals of business, 3, 133, 144
 - report, 30, 32, 279
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 13
- Middle East Issues,
 - dissents, 62
 - referrals of business, 3, 135, 146
 - report, 59, 60, 453
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 13
- Mission Coordination,
 - dissent, 46
 - financial implications update, 11, 27, 48, 72
 - new business, 44, 629
 - protests, 70
 - referrals of business, 3, 136, 148
 - report, 41, 72, 567
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 13
- Peacemaking and International Issues,
 - dissents, 70
 - referrals of business, 3, 139, 150
 - report, 66, 853
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 14
- Plenary, referrals of business, 3, 12, 77, 153
 - report, 3, 77
- Social Justice Issues,
 - dissents, 59
 - late business, 153
 - referrals of business, 3, 137, 149
 - report of, 46, 53, 691
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 14
- structure of approved, 2, 77
- Theological Issues and Institutions,
 - protests, 71
 - dissent, 22
 - late business, 153
 - referrals of business, 3, 140, 152
 - report of, 14, 16, 971
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 14
- Way Forward, The,
 - new business, 37, 40–41
 - referrals of business, 3, 132, 143
 - report of, 37, 211
 - Wednesday Consent Agenda items, 12

Assembly Site, Accept Invitation from Presbytery of Scioto Valley for 225th GA (2022) to meet in Columbus, Ohio, June 25–July 2, 29, 169

Associate Stated Clerk, Approval of, 29, 169

Audit, 46, 632, 658

Audit Committee, GANC Nomination Approved, 82, 1136

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)

Authoritative Interpretations, Nongeographic Presbyteries, Interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c, 34, 286, 288, 289

Award for Excellence in Theological Education, 20, 1013

B

Belhar Confession, Final Approval to Include in *Book of Confessions*, 23, 439

Benchmarks for OGA and PMA, 29, 170, 171

Bible Study at General Assembly, 5, 6

Bible Study, Presentation of GA, 5

Big Tent 2017, 36

Bills and Overtures, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)

Board of Pensions,

- 300th Anniversary, 6
- disability benefits, extend to same-gender spouses and domestic partners, final response to referral, 95
- environmental stewardship, collaborative agenda on, 65, 550
- final responses to referrals, 94
- GANC nominations approved, 82
- members of entities elected by the GA, 1137
- minutes approved, 27, 959
- relief of conscience, GA statement on support of BOP and request for interim progress report from BOP, 94, 95
- supplier diversity, compliance, 94

Board of Pensions, PILP, PPC, and Foundation, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees, BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation)

***Book of Confessions*, Final Approval to Include Confession of Belhar in, 23, 439**

***Book of Order*,**

- amendments approved to be sent to presbyteries,
 - amend *Book of Order* to Clarify Titles to Ordered Ministry, 51, 359
- Directory for Worship, revised, 17, 104, 978
- F-3.0202, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 359
- G-1.0304 amend by adding “Caring for God’s Creation,” 65, 556
- G-2.0102, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 359
- G-2.0301, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 359
- G-2.05 and G-2.0501, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 359

*Book of Order (continued)**amendments approved to be sent to presbyteries (continued)*

- G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to clarify relationship to the PC(USA) of a person who has renounced jurisdiction of the church (Twin Cities Area), 51, 365
- G-2.0701, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 360
- G-2.1101, forms of certified church service and approve national certifying bodies, 52, 375
- G-3.0106 re. child protection policy, 34, 291
- G-3.0109 regarding parity in committees of councils above the session, 50, 354
- G-3.0307, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 360
- G-2.1001, forms of certified church service in the *Book of Order* and also approve national certifying bodies, 52, 375, 376
- W-4.4001a, clarify titles to ordered ministry, 51, 360
- W-2.4011 regarding who can access Lord's Supper, 17, 976
- Revised Directory for Worship, 17, 104, 978

amendments disapproved,

- G-2.0509, (delete recently added language dealing with renunciation of jurisdiction), 50, 51, 349, 358
- G-2.0607c (to add training in evangelism), 50, 351
- G-2.1001 (to clarify discretion given presbyteries to utilize commissioned ruling elders), 52, 373
- G-2.1104, (adding section on Administrative Personnel Association), 51, 355
- G-3.0104 to clarify role of ecclesiastical officers (Detroit), 51, 369
- G-3.0105c (permit presbytery to abstain on constitutional changes), 38, 220
- G-3.0106 (require all councils to adopt dependent care policy), 33, 282
- G-3.0203 (allow for virtual attendance in sessions meeting when appropriate technology is available), 50, 353
- G-3.05 (on the review of the *Manual of the General Assembly*), 38, 223
- G-3.0503 and G-6.04 (meetings of the General Assembly and amending the constitution), 37, 211
- G-6.02 (concerning the role of the ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by the General Assembly), 52, 371
- G-6.04 and G-3.0503 (meetings of the General Assembly and amending the constitution), 37, 211
- G-6.04e (concerning role of ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by the General Assembly), 40, 256
- G-6.04e (regarding requiring a two-thirds majority vote to amend the constitution), 38, 40, 217, 236
- W-4.9000 (church's role in legal marriage and services of Christian covenant), 16, 971

*Book of Order (continued)**amendments disapproved (continued)*

- amendment referred,
 - G-2.0301, "ruling elder defined," to allow for individually commissioned ruling elders (Twin Cities area), 51, 363
- amendments to the Constitution, votes of presbyteries on, 421, 422
- Articles of Agreement, amending Section 8.2 to add "Pacific Islander," 3, 141
- authoritative interpretations requested, 34, 286, 288, 289
- constitutional interpretation of resolving tensions between F-1.0403, F-1.0404, F-3.0202, 35, 298
- creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force charged with revising the Rules of Discipline, 52, 374
- Directory for Worship, revised, 17, 104, 978
- Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Making Use of The, 22, 1047
- interpretation of, 34, 286, 288
- report of votes of presbyteries on proposed amendments to the Constitution, 421, 422

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for, 62, 504**Boycott of All HP Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Enterprise Products, 61, 453****Budget Considerations, Report on, 2****Budget, Per Capita, 29, 71, 179****"Budget and Procedures, General Assembly Mission" Replace with "Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy," 43, 578****Budgetary and Financial Concerns of the Church, Recommendations Regarding, 44, 623, 624, 625, 626****Business Referrals, General Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)****C****Camino de Vida, Sam and Helen Walton Award Recipient, 46, 632****Campaign Finance, Election Protection and Integrity in, 56, 722****Celebrating a Significant Social Witness Anniversary, 55, 715****Central African Republic, Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114**

- Certified Ministry Training Programs to Prepare Racial Ethnic and Immigrant Church Members to Serve Worshiping Communities, 121**
- Charleston Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church Massacre, Moment of Remembrance, 1**
- Child Nutrition Over 1,000 Days, Affirming Importance of Maternal and, 111**
- Child Presentation, Educate a, 14**
- Child Protection Policy Model, on Developing a National, 34, 285**
- Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of, 24, 290**
- Child, Transform the World, Educate a, 120**
- Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, 29, 30, 34, 181, 188, 290**
- OGA directed to form a task force made up of representatives from mid councils and local governing bodies to work with congregations on implementing policies, 28, 30, 188
- Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine, Reaffirming the Rights of, 106**
- Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25, 53, 700**
- Christian Clergy Letter, 974**
- Christian Education in the 21st Century, Recommendation to Create Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of, 20, 1014**
- Christmas Joy Offering (see also Special Offering Review Task Force), 603**
- Church as an Employer, Privilege, Power, and Policy, 91, 93**
- Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25, Choosing to Be a, 53, 700**
- Church Growth Consultation Committee Report, Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant, 96, 121, 122**
- Church Polity and Ordered Ministry, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)**
- Church Property, Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding, 52, 379**
- Church Statistics, Racial Ethnic Composition Component of Session Annual Report of, 28, 161**
- Churchwide Antiracism Policy, Resolution to Develop, 108, 125**
- Churchwide Antiracism Trainings Report, Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Current , 125**
- Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Report, 57, 787–91**
- Churchwide Gifts Program, 26, 956**
- Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Proposed Revisions to, 43, 124, 591**
- City Churches: Convictions, Conversations, and Call to Action, 738**
- Civil and Human Rights of Immigrants in Our Communities, Recognizing Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to Affirm and Promote the, 102**
- Civil Rights Movement, Reconciliation and Engagement in a New, 55, 717**
- Clergy Letter Project, Endorsing, 16, 974**
- Clergywomen, Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our, 44, 94, 614**
- Climate Change, Faithful Response to, 63, 530**
- Climate Change, On Faithful Engagement with Issue of, 63, 525**
- Coalition, Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive, 62, 506**
- Collaborative Agenda on Environmental Stewardship, 65, 550**
- Collegiate Ministries Progress Report, 92**
- Columbia Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)**
- Commissioner Orientation, 2, 11**
- Commissioners and Advisory Delegates, Commissioning of, 1**
- Commissioners, List of, at 222nd General Assembly (2016), 1061**
- Commissioners' Resolutions,**
- 2014 Commissioners' Resolutions,
 - Concern, Prayer, and Action for Syria and Iraq, 119
 - Declaring That *Zionism Unsettled* Does Not Represent Views of PC(USA), 103, 123
 - Encouraging Parental Leave Policy, 103
 - Iran, 119
 - Reaffirming the Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine, 106
 - Requesting the Release from Prison of Mr. Oscar Lopez Rivera, 113
 - Studying the Effectiveness of Mid Council to Mid Council Reference Checks and Clearance Procedures, 97
 - 2016 Commissioners' Resolutions,
 - church property, seeking support for settlements of disputes regarding, 52, 379
 - displaced persons/refugees, affirming the principles of sanctuary in response to global escalation in number of, 69, 946
 - Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Making Use of The, 22, 1047

*Commissioners' Resolutions (continued)**2016 Commissioners' Resolutions (continued)*

Korean Peninsula, peace, justice, and reunification in, 69, 951

“Prayer for the Persecuted Church,” 23, 440

Protestant Reformation, Recognition of 500th Anniversary, 24, 441

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, to withdraw from, 44, 626

sanctuary in response to global escalation in number of displaced persons/refugees, affirming the principles of, 69, 946

sanctuary, reaffirming the ministry of, by congregations, 69, 944

Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and GA Restrictions on Administration of Jarvie Service, 26, 957

Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition, 62, 506

referral of, to assembly committees, 7, 16, 155

Commissioning of Commissioners and Advisory Delegates, 1

Commissioning of New Missionaries, 31

Commitment to Prayer for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, 106

Committee for the Presbyterian Historical Society, Minutes of (see Presbyterian Historical Society, Minutes Approved)

Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (see General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations)

Committee on Local Arrangements, 1, 73

Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (see Mission Responsibility Through Investment, MRTI)

Committee on Representation, General Assembly (see General Assembly Committee on Representation)

Committee on Social Witness Policy, Advisory (see Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy)

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (see General Assembly Committee on the Office of the General Assembly; see also Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency)

Committee on Theological Education,

agency summary, 1049

final responses to referrals, 95

GANC nominations approved, 83

members of entities elected by GA, 1138

minutes approved, 22, 1049

Committee on Theological Education (continued)

recommendations,

Award for Excellence in Theological Education Given to the Reverend Craig Dykstra and the Reverend Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, 20, 1013

Covenant Between the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, 20, 1007

docket time for brief meditation in memory of Steven Hayner, late president of Columbia Theological Seminary, 20, 1012

docket time in plenary session for Van Dyk and Esterline (new presidents of Columbia and Pittsburgh Seminaries), 20, 1005

docket time to celebrate Award for Excellence in Theological Education, 20, 1013

Esterline, David, approved as president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 20, 1005

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in 2015–2016, permission granted to theological institutions to celebrate, 20, 1007

trustees elected by PC(USA) theological institutions in 2014–2016, 20, 1004

Van Dyke, Leanne, approved as president of Columbia Theological Seminary, 20, 1005

Committee Structure for the Assembly, 2, 77

Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly, Report of, 40, 249–50

Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Report of the, 40, 237

Co-Moderators,

2020 Vision Team, Co-Moderators to Name, to Develop a Guiding Statement for the Denomination and Make a Plan for Implementation, 40, 257

Co-Moderators election, 4

installation of newly elected, 4

presentation to, 7, 73

YAAD presentation to, 73

Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church, Neither Poverty Nor Riches, Final Response to Referral, 95

Compensation Practices for Those Employed Via Third Party Contractors, Resolution to Ensure Just, 44, 615

Compliance with Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions, Mid Council Statements of, 392

Confession of Belhar, Amending the *Book of Confessions* to Include, Final Approval of, 23, 439

Congo, Recommendations Regarding, 67, 858

Consent Agenda, Wednesday (Item 02-WCA), 11

Constitution, Advisory Committee on the (see Advisory Committee on the Constitution)

Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (see *Book of Order*; see also *Book of Confessions*)

- Constitutional Amendment to G-6.04e Regarding Requiring a Two-Thirds Majority Vote to Amend the Constitution, 38, 40, 217, 236**
- Constitutional Changes, Amend G-3.0105c to Permit Presbytery to Abstain on, 38, 220**
- Constitutional Changes, Amend Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) to Require Two-Thirds Vote on, 40, 236**
- Constitutional Interpretation (see Advisory Committee on the Constitution; recommendations/requests; see also Authoritative Interpretations)**
- Constitutional Questions Are Considered by the General Assembly, Amending G-6.04e Concerning Role of ACC and PJC When, 40, 256**
- Convening of the Assembly, 1**
- Corresponding Members at General Assembly**
list of, 1071
seating of, 1
- Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, Revised, 20, 1007**
- Corporal Punishment in Homes, Schools, and Child Care Facilities, Calling for an End to the Practice of, Referral in Progress, 92**
- Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Review of Efforts Regarding Cultural Proficiency and, 57, 93, 103, 735**
- Creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew Practice of Our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century, 40, 235**
- Creation, Affirmation of, 21, 1015**
- Cuba,**
lifting all travel restrictions for U.S. Citizens traveling to, 114, 115
removing from list of state sponsors of terrorism, 114
- Cuban-American Relations: A “Nuevo Momento,” New Hopes and Realities in, 68, 94, 905**
- Cuban and U.S. Presbyterian Mission Achievements and Goals for the Future, Affirmation of, 68, 905**
- Cultural Competency, Antiracism and Antisexism Trainings in Mid Councils Report, Implementation of, 129**
- Cultural Proficiency and Creating a Climate for Change in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Review of Efforts Regarding, 57, 93, 97, 103, 735**
- Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees, Report of PMA on, 642**
- Democratic Republic of the Congo, Helping to Remedy the Tragic Conditions in, 117, 118**
- Dependent Care Policy, PMA Directed to Develop Resources for Councils of All Levels to Provide for, 34, 282**
- Designated Mission Giving, Transition Direct Mission Support and Extra Commitment Opportunities into Funding for Specific Mission, 122**
- Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision, Recommendations Regarding The Gospel from, 57, 108, 738**
- Directory for Worship, Analysis in Evaluating Influence and Effectiveness, Final Response to Referral (see also *Book of Order*), 104**
- Discipline, Rules of (see *Book of Order*)**
- Discrimination and Violence Against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 68, 938**
- Discrimination, Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and, 68, 938**
- Displaced Persons/Refugees, Affirming the Principles of Sanctuary in Response to Global Escalation in Number of, 69, 946**
- Dissents, 22, 24, 46, 52, 59, 72**
- Divestment and/or Proscription of Investment Ownership, For-Profit Prisons, Jail, and/or Detention Centers Be Added to the List of Companies for, 109**
- Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies, Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report, 65, 543**
- Divestment on Fossil Fuel Industry, On an Alternative to, 63, 521**
- Divestment, On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel, 63, 511**
- Docket, 2, 7, 25, 31, 37, 47, 49, 60, 156**
- Doctrine of Discovery, Reviewing the, 56, 732, 791**
- Dominicans of Haitian Descent and any Others Impacted by Decision 168/13 of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic, Resolution on Behalf of, 116**
- Drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), Use of, 116, 117**
- Drones, War and Surveillance, Resolution on, 116, 117**
- Drug Policies, Two-Year Study to Discern How to Advocate for Effective, 109, 110**
- Drugs, Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on, 59, 801**
- Dwight Funds, John C. Lord and Edmund P., 45, 625**
- Dykstra, Craig, Award for Excellence in Theological Education Given to, 20, 1013**

D

Declaring That *Zionism Unsettled* Does Not Represent Views of PC(USA), 103, 123

E

Economic Crisis in Puerto Rico, 59, 833

Ecumenical Advisory Delegates,
 approval of for 223rd General Assembly (2018), 23, 439
 list of, 1070

Ecumenical and Interfaith Greetings, 1, 3, 5, 16, 25, 47, 60

Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, General Assembly Committee on (see General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations)

Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, General Assembly Committee on (see General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations)

Ecumenical Delegates, Invitation to 223rd General Assembly (2018), 23, 439

Ecumenical Representatives, 1075

Ecumenical Service of Worship, 7

Educate a Child, Presentation, 14

Educational Institutions (see Theological Schools)

Educator Certification Committee,
 approved as national certifying body, 52, 376
 members of entities elected by GA, 83, 1139

EEOC v. Ambercrombie & Fitch, 419

Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114

El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, Revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and, 20, 355

Election of Moderator's Process and Assembly Committee Meeting Process, Direct COGA to Bring Proposals to 2018 Assembly, 28, 163

Election of Co-Moderators, 4

Election of Stated Clerk, 48

Election Protection and Integrity in Campaign Finance, 56, 722

Electoral Process, Statement of Concerns for the U.S., 722

Employer, Privilege, Power, and Policy: The Church as an, (Referral in Progress), 91, 93

"Empowered and Hopeful," Women of Color Consultation Report, 44, 611

Encyclical "Laudato Si," On Communicating Gratitude for and Study of, 63, 535

End-of-Life, Affirmation: Faithful Living at the, 1018

End-of-Life Decisions, Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in 21, 94, 1018

Endorsing Clergy Letter Project, 16, 974

Enrollment and Quorum of General Assembly, 1

Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of Natural Resources, Witnessing Against, 65, 541

Environmental Stewardship, Collaborative Agenda on, 65, 550

Episcopal Church, et al v. Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, et al, Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas, et al v. Robert Masterson, et al, 418

Episcopal Church Cases, 417
 Holt v. Hobbs, 418
 Town of Greece v. Susan Galloway and Linda Stephens, 418
 Virginia Supreme Court, 417

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Annual Report of Progress, 632

Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Proposed Revisions to, Churchwide Plan for, 43, 124, 591

Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with HIV/AIDS, 56, 729

Essential Documents, Distribute in Multiple Languages, 104

Esterline, David, Approved as President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 20, 1005

Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Report, Churchwide Conversation on Race, 57, 787-91

Euthanasia, 1018

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Current Churchwide Antiracism Trainings Report, 125

Expenditure Budget Recommendations, 624

F

Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, 57, 719, 770

Factory Farming, Advocacy Against, 65, 562

Fairness in Ministerial Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity, 102, 124

Faithful Living at the End-of-Life, Affirmation, 1018

Family Leave Policy, Resolution to Require and Expand, 34, 292

Farming, Advocacy Against Factory, 65, 562

Fellowship Place, The, Sam and Helen Walton Award Recipient, 46, 632

Final Responses to Referrals,

- Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, 93
- Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, 94
- approval of by assembly, 93
- Board of Pensions, 94
- Committee on Theological Education, 95
- Office of the General Assembly, 97
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation, 103
- Presbyterian Mission Agency, 104

Finance Committee, GANC Nominations, 83, 1139**Financial and Political Reform, Advocating for, 110, 111****Financial Implications Update, 11, 27, 48****First Thai-Laotian Presbyterian Church, Sam and Helen Walton Award Recipient, 46, 632****“Forming Social Policy,” Setting Aside at the Next Three General Assemblies, 53, 695****For-Profit Prisons, Jail, and/or Detention Centers Be Added to the List of Companies for Divestment and/or Proscription of Investment Ownership, 109****Fossil Fuel Companies, Mission Responsibility Through Investment Report, Divestment from, 65, 543****Fossil Fuel Divestment, On PC(USA), 63, 511****Fossil Fuel Industry, On an Alternative to Divestment from, 63, 521****Foundation, Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, PILP, PPC, and (see Assembly Committees, BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation)****Foundation (see Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation)****Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Making Use of, 22, 1047****Funding Christ's Mission Throughout the PC(USA), 122****Funds, Committed/Reserved/Unrestricted, 625****G****Gender Identity, On Therapies Purporting to Change, Sexual Orientation or, 57, 785****General Assembly,**

- adjournment, 74
- advisory delegates, list of, 1070
- assembly committees,
 - approval of structure, 2, 77
 - reports of (see Assembly Committees)
- Bible Study at General Assembly, 5, 6
- Bible study, presentation of GA, 5

General Assembly (continued)

- budget considerations, report, 2
- Business Meeting I, 1
- Business Meeting II, 3
- Business Meeting III, 5
- Business Meeting IV, 7
- Business Meeting V, 16
- Business Meeting VI, 25
- Business Meeting VII, 30
- Business Meeting VIII, 36
- Business Meeting IX, 47
- Business Meeting X, 49
- Business Meeting XI, 60
- Business Meeting XII, 70
- commissioner orientation, 2, 11
- commissioners, list of, 1061
- commissioning of commissioners and advisory delegates, 1
- commissioning of new missionaries, 31
- Committee on Local Arrangements, 1, 73
- committee structure approved, 2, 77
- Co-Moderators election, 4
- Co-Moderators, special presentation to, 7
- Consent Agenda, Wednesday (Item 02-WCA), 11
- convening, 1
- corresponding members, list of, 1071
- corresponding members, seating of, 1
- dissents, 22, 24, 46, 52, 59, 72
- docket, 2, 7, 25, 31, 37, 47, 49, 60, 156
- ecumenical advisory delegates, 23, 439, 1070
- ecumenical and interfaith greetings, 1, 3, 5, 16, 25, 47, 60
- ecumenical representatives, 1075
- ecumenical service of worship, 7
- election of Co-Moderators, 4
- election of Stated Clerk, 48
- enrollment and quorum, 1
- financial implications, 11, 27, 48
- former Moderators in attendance, 4, 1072
- greetings, ecumenical and interfaith, 1, 3, 5, 16, 25, 47, 60
- greetings from 2018 Committee on Local Arrangements, 73
- installation of newly elected Co-Moderators, 4
- interfaith representatives, 1075
- late business received, 153
- list of business, 3
- members of entities elected by GA, 1135
- memorial minute, 31
- Minutes of, approval of, 7, 11, 70, 155, 158
- missionaries, commissioning of new, 31
- missionary advisory delegates, list of, 1070
- Moderator, presentation to retiring, 5
- Moderator, report of retiring, 2
- Moderator's election, 4
- Moderators, former, in attendance, 4

General Assembly (continued)

Moderators of earlier assemblies, 1127
 moment of remembrance, 1
 new business generated, 13, 28, 30, 45, 629
 opening worship, 1
 orientation for commissioners, 2, 11
 prayer, 3, 6, 7, 15, 25, 30, 36, 47, 49, 60, 70
 protests, 70
 quorum and enrollment, 1
 recognition of former Moderators, 4
 referrals of business to assembly committees, 3, 131, 141
 roll of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), 1061
 seating of corresponding members, 1
 site selection, 29, 169
 six agencies video presentation, 3
 speak-out, 7, 16
 special presentation to newly elected Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson II, 48
 Spirit of GA video, 3, 6, 15, 36
 Standing Rule A.2.a., suspend, 3
 Standing Rules, amendments to the (see Standing Rules of the *Manual of the General Assembly*)
 Stated Clerk (see Stated Clerk)
 synod executives, list of, 1071
 suspension of Standing Rule A.2.a., 3
 thanks to committee on local arrangements, 73
 thanks to staff and volunteers, 73
 theological student advisory delegates, list of, 1070
 volunteers assisting the Stated Clerk, list of, 1072
 Wednesday Consent Agenda (Item 01-WCA), 11
 worship at, 1, 7, 30, 74
 young adult advisory delegates, list of, 1061

General Assembly Agencies, Co-Moderators to Name Way Forward Commission to Study and Identify a Vision for the Structure and Function of the, 38, 40, 224, 226

General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (GACEIR),

agency summary, 450
 GANC nominations approved, 83
 members of entities elected by GA, 1139
 minutes approved, 24, 449
 recommendations,
 ecumenical advisory delegates, invitation to churches to send, 23, 439
 World Communion of Reformed Churches, approval of delegation to General Council of, 23, 439
 Self-Study, 24, 442

General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR),

agency summary, 189
 GANC nominations approved, 11, 48, 84, 87
 General Assembly Committee on Representation Report on the AAEEO and Supplier Diversity Achievements of the Six Agencies, 2014–2016, 191

General Assembly Committee on Representation (continued)

members of entities elected by GA, 1140
 minutes approved, 30, 189
 recommendations,
 approve standard definition of supplier diversity, 29, 175
 benchmarks for OGA and PMA, 29, 170, 171
 GACOR directed to convene a table to develop a standard definition of supplier diversity for the PC(USA), 91
 referrals in progress, 2, 3, 91

General Assembly Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (see also Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency),

Benchmark goals for OGA should be discussed, reviewed, approved, and reported upon afterwards at COGA meetings, 250
 GANC nominations approved, 83
 Initiate a conversation with leadership from the other five agencies to discuss business amended in assembly committees and to formulate a collaborative response for presentation in plenary, 250
 instructed to conduct regular assessment on progress of response to recommendations in Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly, 249
 instructed to consult with other GA agencies on strategic alignment for certain departments that might service more than one agency, 249
 instructed to strengthen its long-range planning process and document a three- to five-year plan, 249
 Joint report with PMA (see Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency)
 members of entities elected by GA, 1138
 minutes approved, 30, 188
 periodic reviews of the Stated Clerk to be conducted and reported upon in COGA minutes, 250
 prioritizing staffing and resourcing of the Mid Council Relations Office, 250
 recommendations,
 adding a new Standing Rule B.5.b. regarding assembly committee moderators, 29, 167
 amend G-2.1101, forms of certified church service and approve national certifying bodies, 52, 375, 376
 amend Standing Rule B.3.a. (regarding Presbyterian Women), 29, 167
 Associate Stated Clerk, approve appointment and term of Beth Hessel, 29, 169
 Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, 29, 30, 181, 188
 proposed docket, 2, 7, 25, 89
 Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century, recommendation to create, 20, 1014
 “Standards of Ethics for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly,” 13

- General Assembly Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (continued)*
 Recommendations from the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly, 249
 Stated Clerk, presentation to Gradye Parsons, 37
 When We Gather at the Table, 41, 259
- General Assembly Local Arrangements Committee (see also General Assembly), 1, 73**
- General Assembly Minutes, 7, 11, 70, 155, 158**
- “General Assembly Mission Program Budget and Procedures,” Replace with “Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy,” 43, 578**
- General Assembly Nominating Committee, 2, 11, 48, 87**
 agency summary, 204
 GANC nominations approved, 12, 78, 87
 members of entities elected by GA, 1140
 Moderator’s nominations to, 11, 12, 87
 recommendation, 11, 12, 78
 GANC nominations approved, 12, 78
 report at General Assembly, 2, 48, 87
- General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (see Permanent Judicial Commission)**
- General Assembly Procedures, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)**
- General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew Practice of Our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century, Creating a, 40, 235**
- Genocide, Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian, 115**
- Global Escalation in Number of Displaced Persons/ Refugees, Affirming the Principles of Sanctuary in Response to, 69, 946**
- Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church’s Urban Vision, The, Recommendations Regarding, 57, 108, 738**
- Greetings, Ecumenical and Interfaith, 1, 3, 5, 16, 25, 47, 60**
- Growing in Grace and Gratitude* Presentation, Presbyterian Mission Agency, 49**
- Guidelines for Minutes, OGA to Review, 45, 629**
- Guiding Statement for the Denomination and Make a Plan for Implementation, Co-Moderators to Name a 2020 Vision Team to Develop a, 40, 257**
- Gun Violence Prevention, 111**
- H**
- Haitian Descent and any Others Impacted by Decision 168/13 of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic, Resolution on Behalf of Dominicans of, 116**
- Hayner, Steven, Late President of Columbia Theological Seminary, Brief Meditation in Memory of, 20, 1012**
- Healing Before Punishment: Why Presbyterians Seek to End the War on Drugs, 59, 801**
- Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen, Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive and a, 44, 94, 614**
- Health Insurance Companies and Possible Divestment of Same, Mission Responsibility Through Investment Instructed to Study and Report Corporate Practices of, Final Response to Referral, 105**
- Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of, 109**
- Hewlett-Packard Enterprise Products, Boycott of All HP Inc. and, 61, 453**
- Hispanics, Taking Specific Action to Address Worsening Plight of, 42, 570**
- Historical Society, Presbyterian (see Presbyterian Historical Society, Minutes Approved)**
- Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREIs), Maintain Funding for, 607**
- HIV/AIDS Epidemic, Committing to Play an Active Part in Global Response to the, 69, 941**
- HIV/AIDS, Equipping and Mobilizing Member Congregations to Better Serve Those Living with, 56, 729**
- Homicide Victims, Providing a Trauma Crisis Counseling Consultation to Train in Best Practices in Caring for Survivors of, 111**
- Hotel and Hospitality Workers Through the Adoption of Just Policies in the PC(USA), Resolution to Support, 123**
- Housing and the Mortgage Crisis, Statement on the, 105**
- Human Oppression, Affirming Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against, 67, 860**
- Human Rights, Discrimination and Violence Against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for, 68, 938**
- Human Rights of Immigrants in Our Communities, Recognizing Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to Affirm and Promote the Civil and, 102**
- Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from Violence and Discrimination, Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for, 68, 938**
- Human Rights Update, Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A, 118**
- Human Trafficking and Human Rights: Children of God, Not for Sale, 57, 742**

Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue, Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on, 118

Human Trafficking, Statement of Concern: The Many Faces of, 742

I

Immigration,

Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee, Racial Ethnic & New Church, 121

Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to affirm and promote the civil and human rights of immigrants in our communities, recognizing, 102

Resolution to Recognize the Commitment of the PC(USA) to Making Just Immigration a Reality, 105

Immigration and Environmental Issues, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees, Immigration and Environmental Issues)

Implementation of Cultural Competency, Antiracism and Antisexism Trainings in Mid Councils Report, 129

Intercultural Ministries Presentation, 32

Interfaith Greetings, Ecumenical and, 1, 3, 5, 16, 25, 47, 60

Interfaith Representatives in Attendance at GA, 1075

Internally Displaced, Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are Refugees or, 64, 538

Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 93, 107, 108

Investment Portfolio, Request for BOP, Foundation, and PILP to Consider Increasingly More Diversified Energy Sector in Overall, 511

Iran, Commissioners' Resolution on, 119

Iraq, Concern, Prayer, and Action for Syria and, 119

Iraq, Iran, Israel, India, Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114

Israel

advocating for the safety and well-being of children of Palestine and Israel, 61, 458

calling for RE/MAX Corporation to cease selling property in West Bank Settlements, 61, 465

Commitment to Prayer for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, 106

Egypt and other parts of the world, on turning attention to the plight of the church that is suffering due to sectarian violence and persecution in, 106, 114

Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, 61, 469

Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine, Reaffirming the, 106

J

Jarvie Service, Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and GA Restrictions on Administration of, 26, 957

John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds, 45, 625

John Knox, on Celebrating the 500th Birthday of, 120

Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)

Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,

recommendations,
budget proposals, 29, 179
per capita, 71, 72, 179

Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed Via Third Party Contractors, Resolution to Ensure, 44, 615

Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, Commitment to Prayer for Peace, 106

K

Knox, on Celebrating the 500th Birthday of John, 120

Korean Civilians in July 1950, Acknowledging and Reconciling for Killing, 66, 853

Korean Peninsula, Peace, Justice, and Reunification in, 69, 951

Korean Peninsula, Statement on Peace and Reunification of the, 951

Korean Presbytery, Western Synods Strongly Advised to Form a Nongeographic, 34, 294

Korean-Speaking Congregations, Task Force on, 6, 35, 294

L

Languages, Essential Documents, Distribute in Multiple, 104

Late Business Received at Assembly, 153

Lewis, Marc, Board of Directors of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Recommends Election for Third Term as President and Publisher of PPC, 26, 955

LGBTQ/Q Family, Statement on Apology to, 54, 703

LGBTQ/Q Members of the PC(USA), Family and Friends, Admission and Apology for Harms Done to (New York City), 54, 702

Litigation, Advisory Committee on (see Advisory Committee on Litigation)

Living Missionally, 44, 124, 613

Local Arrangements, Committee, 1, 73

Lopez Rivera, Requesting the Release from Prison of Mr. Oscar, 113

Lord, John C., and Edmund P. Dwight Funds, 45, 625

Lord's Supper, Amend W-2.4011 Regarding Who Can Access, 17, 976

Lord's Supper, Celebration of, Theological Schools Granted Permission, 20, 1007

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (See Theological Institutions)

M

Manual of Operations, Changes in, 43, 575, 643

Manual of the General Assembly (see Standing Rules of the *Manual of the General Assembly*)

Marriage, Amend W-4.9000, Marriage Ceremonies, 16, 971

Maternal and Child Nutrition Over 1,000 Days, Affirming Importance of, 111

McCormick Theological Seminary, (See Theological Institutions)

Measure for Measure: Assessing the Effectiveness of Hearing and Singing New Songs to God, 109

Meetings of the General Assembly and Amending the Constitution, Recommendation to Amend G-3.0503 and G-6.04, 37, 211

Members of Entities Elected by GA, 1135

Memorial Minute for Syngman Rhee, 31

Merging Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, 38, 40, 224, 226, 232

Merging Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast, 35, 304

Mid Councils, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees, Mid Councils)

Mid Council Ministries Area, in Consultation with Racial Ethnic Caucuses of the Church and with Presbytery Leaders, directed to Develop List of Resource Persons for Assistance with Cultural Proficiency, 97, 103

Mid Council Staff and Stated Clerks in Attendance at the Assembly, 1072

Mid Council to Mid Council Reference Checks and Clearance Procedures, Studying the Effectiveness of, 97

Mid Councils Report, Implementation of Cultural Competency, Antiracism and Antisexism Trainings in, 129

Middle East Issues, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees, Middle East Issues)

Middle East and in the United States, Upholding Peoples and Partners in the, 61, 463

Middle East Peacemaking, Supporting, 94, 103, 106

Ministerial Compensation: Incentives and Solidarity, Fairness in, 102, 124

Minutes of Synods Approved, 36, 306

Minutes of the General Assembly, 1
 approval of, 7, 11, 70, 155, 158
 Business Meeting I, 1
 Business Meeting II, 3
 Business Meeting III, 5
 Business Meeting IV, 7
 Business Meeting V, 16
 Business Meeting VI, 25
 Business Meeting VII, 30
 Business Meeting VIII, 36
 Business Meeting IX, 47
 Business Meeting X, 49
 Business Meeting XI, 60
 Business Meeting XII, 70

Minutes, OGA to Review Guidelines for 45, 629

Mission Coordination, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees, Mission Coordination)

Mission Development Resources Committee, GANC Nomination Approved, 84, 1141

“Mission Program Budget and Procedures, General Assembly” Replace with “Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy,” 43, 578

Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI),
 Committee on MRTI GANC nominations approved, directed to pursue its focused engagement process on climate change issues with all corporations, 511
 GANC nominations approved, 84
 health insurance companies and possible divestment of same, Mission Responsibility Through Investment instructed to study and report corporate practices of, 105
 members of entities elected by GA, 1138
 prisons, instructing MRTI to report to GAMC on corporate practices of publicly traded corporations that operate for-profit, final response to referral, 109
 report on divestment from fossil fuel companies, 65, 543

Missionaries, Commissioning of New, 31

Missionary Advisory Delegates, List of, 1070

Moderator of the General Assembly,
 election of Co-Moderators, 4
 former Moderators in attendance at GA, 4, 1072
 installation of newly elected Co-Moderators, 4
 Moderator's election and assembly committee meeting process, direct COGA to bring proposals to 2018 assembly (Presbytery of St. Andrew), 28, 163
 nominations for election to GANC,
 presentation to retiring Moderator, 5
 recognition of former Moderators, 4
 report of retiring Moderator, 1, 1055

Moment of Remembrance, 1

Mortgage Crisis, Statement on the Housing and the, 105

Mountain Retreat Association, Inc., Board of Directors, Recommendation to Approve Nominee for, 20, 1004

N

National Certifying Bodies (Administrative Personnel Association, Educator Certification Committee, and Presbyterian Association of Musicians), 52, 376

National Committee on Self-Development of People (see Self-Development of People, National Committee on)

National Council of Presbyterian Men (see Presbyterian Men)

National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force, 112

Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, Apology to, 54, 711

Native Americans, Taking Specific Action to Address Worsening Plight of, 42, 570

Natural Resources, Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good Stewardship of, 65, 541

Neither Poverty Nor Riches: Compensation, Equity, and the Unity of the Church, Final Response to Referral, 95

New Business Generated by the Assembly, 13, 28, 30, 45, 629

New Covenant Trust Company, N.A.,

directors approved, 26, 955

report of the, 966

utilize for the benefit of churches, church organizations, and individuals who wish to make gifts as an expression of Christian Faith and Stewardship, 956

New Hopes and Realities in Cuban-American Relations: A "Nuevo Momento," 68, 94, 905

New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report, Racial Ethnic &, 96, 121

Nobel-Moag, Sarah, Women of Faith Award Winner, 629–30

No Gun Ri, Statement to the Republic of Korea with Apology and Regret for Actions of U.S. Troops at, 66, 853

Nominating Committee, General Assembly (see General Assembly Nominating Committee)

North Korea, Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114

Northland Village Church, Sam and Helen Walton Award Recipient, 46, 632

Nutrition Over 1,000 Days, Affirming Importance of Maternal and Child, 111

O

Office of the General Assembly,

Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) (see General Assembly Committee on the Office of the General Assembly)

Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly, Report of, 40, 249–50

Directed to create permanent staff position to support and nurture healthy, connectional Korean-language congregations and presbyteries and second-generation Korean congregations, 294

directed to review programs and procedures used by, or available to, presbyteries to prepare, equip, credential, and deploy pastoral leadership, 98

environmental stewardship, collaborative agenda on, 65, 550

final responses to referrals, 97

instructed to strengthen long-range planning process and document a three- to five-year plan, 249

Manual of the General Assembly (see Standing Rules of the *Manual of the General Assembly*)

merging Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, 38, 40, 224, 226, 232

Minutes of the General Assembly (see General Assembly)

minutes, OGA to review guidelines for 45, 629

OGA directed to form a task force made up of representatives from mid councils and local governing bodies to work with congregations on implementing policies, 28, 30, 188

Permanent Judicial Commission (see Permanent Judicial Commission)

Review Committee on the Office of the General Assembly, GANC nominations,

Stated Clerk (see Stated Clerk)

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (see also Special Offerings Review Task Force Report), 603

Opening Worship and Service of Holy Communion, 1

Oppression, Affirming Nonviolent Means of Resistance Against Human, 67, 860

Organization for Mission Amendments, 43, 589

Orientation for Commissioners, 2, 11

Overtures,

2012 Overtures

corporal punishment in homes, schools, and child care facilities, calling for an end to practice of (Item 11-05, Presbytery of Grace), 92

health insurance companies and possible divestment of same, Mission Responsibility Through Investment instructed to study & report corporate practices of (Item 21-01, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky), 105

Housing and the Mortgage Crisis, Statement on the (Item 11-20, Presbytery of San Francisco), 105

Mission Responsibility Through Investment instructed to study & report corporate practices of health insurance companies and possible divestment of same (Item 21-01, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky), 105

Mortgage Crisis, Statement on the Housing and the (Item 11-20, Presbytery of San Francisco), 105

2014 Overtures

Armenian genocide, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the (Los Ranchos, Item 11-07), 115

civil and human rights of immigrants in our communities, recognizing Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to affirm and promote the (Central Florida, Item 15-04), 102

Cuba, lifting all travel restrictions for U.S. citizens traveling to (St. Augustine, Item 11-05), 114, 115

Cuba, removing from list of state sponsors of terrorism (Long Island, Item 11-03), 114

Democratic Republic of the Congo, helping to remedy the tragic conditions in (Boston, Item 11-12), 117, 118

drug policies, two-year study to discern how to advocate for effective (San Francisco, Item 09-05), 109, 110

Egypt and other parts of the world, on turning attention to the plight of the church that is suffering due to sectarian violence and persecution in (Pittsburgh, Item 11-02), 114

end-of-life issues, study of (Synod of the Covenant, Item 09-10), 21, 94, 1018

financial and political reform, advocating for (Santa Fe, Item 09-06), 110, 111

Overtures (continued)

2014 Overtures (continued)

genocide, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Armenian (Los Ranchos, Item 11-07), 115

gun violence prevention (Hudson River, Item 09-07), 111

homicide victims, providing a trauma crisis counseling consultation to train in best practices in caring for survivors of (Nevada, Item 09-12), 111

human rights of immigrants in our communities, recognizing Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to affirm and promote the civil and (Central Florida, Item 15-04), 102

John Knox, on celebrating the 500th birthday of (Eastern Korean Presbytery, Item 13-08), 120

maternal and child nutrition over 1,000 days, affirming importance of (National Capital, Item 09-11), 111

Middle East peacemaking, supporting (New Covenant, Item 04-04), 103, 106

nutrition over 1,000 days, affirming importance of maternal and child (National Capital, Item 09-11), 111

Palestine, affirming occupation-free investment in (Mackinac, Item 04-06), 103

political reform, advocating for financial and (Santa Fe, Item 09-06), 110, 111

precautionary principle, affirming the importance of sustainable development and the (Southern New England, Item 15-02), 91

Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to affirm and promote the civil and human rights of immigrants in our communities, recognizing (Central Florida, Item 15-04), 102

relief of conscience churches, publishing current list of churches certified as (National Capital, Item 12-03), 94, 95

sectarian violence and persecution in Egypt and other parts of the world, on turning attention to the plight of the church that is suffering due to (Pittsburgh, Item 11-02), 114

sustainable development and the precautionary principle, affirming the importance of (Southern New England, Item 15-02), 91

terrorism, removing Cuba from list of state sponsors of (Long Island, Item 11-03), 114

trauma crisis counseling consultation to train in best practices in caring for survivors of homicide victims, providing a (Nevada, Item 09-12), 111

travel restrictions for U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba, lifting all (St. Augustine, Item 11-05), 114, 115

violence prevention, gun (Hudson River, Item 09-07), 111

Overtures (continued)

2016 Overtures

- achieving a 5:1 salary ratio between highest-paid and lowest-paid employees of PMA (Newton), 44, 617
- adding G-2.1104, Administrative Personnel Association (Central Nebraska), 51, 355
- adding category of “Multiracial” to Listing of Racial Classifications in Annual Statistical Report from Congregations (Greater Atlanta), 29, 165
- admission and apology for harms done to LGBTQ/Q members of the PC(USA), family and friends (New York City), 54, 702
- advocating for the safety and well-being of children of Palestine and Israel (Synod of the Covenant), 61, 458
- Affirmation of Creation (Boston), 21, 1015
- African American male, taking specific action to address worsening plight of (Pittsburgh), 42, 570
- amend D-10.0401 and G-2.0509 to clarify relationship to the PC(USA) of a person who has renounced jurisdiction of the church (Twin Cities Area), 51, 365
- amend G-1.0304 by adding “Caring for God’s Creation” (New Castle), 65, 556
- amend G-2.0301, “ruling elder defined,” to allow for individually commissioned ruling elders (Twin Cities Area and Synod of the Northeast), 51, 359, 363
- amend G-2.0509, delete recently added language dealing with renunciation of jurisdiction (New Covenant, Greater Atlanta), 50, 51, 349, 358
- amend G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to clarify relationship to the PC(USA) of a person who has renounced jurisdiction of the church (Twin Cities Area), 51, 365
- amend G-2.0607c to add training in evangelism (Tampa Bay), 50, 351
- amend G-2.1001 to clarify discretion given presbyteries to utilize commissioned ruling elders (de Cristo), 52, 373
- amend G-2.1104, adding section on Administrative Personnel Association (Central Nebraska), 51, 355
- amend G-3.0104 to clarify role of ecclesiastical officers (Detroit), 51, 369
- amend G-3.0105c, permit presbytery to abstain on constitutional changes (Foothills), 38, 220
- amend G-3.0109, regarding parity in committees of councils above the session (St. Andrews), 50, 354
- amend G-3.0203, allow for virtual attendance in sessions meeting when appropriate technology is available (Lake Erie), 50, 353
- amend G-3.05 on the review of the *Manual of the General Assembly* (Foothills), 38, 223

Overtures (continued)

2016 Overtures (continued)

- amend G-3.0503 and G-6.04 regarding meetings of the General Assembly and amending the constitution (Foothills), 37, 211
- amend G-6.02, concerning the role of the ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by the General Assembly (Grand Canyon), 52, 371
- amend G-6.04e concerning role of ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by the General Assembly (Grand Canyon), 40, 256
- amend G-6.04e, regarding requiring a two-thirds majority vote to amend the constitution (Foothills and de Cristo), 38, 40, 217, 236
- amend W-2.4011 regarding who can access Lord’s Supper (Southeastern Illinois), 17, 976
- amend W-4.9000 regarding marriage (Kiskiminetas), 16, 971
- amend *Book of Order* to Clarify Titles to Ordered Ministry (Great Rivers), 51, 359
- amend constitutional interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c concerning nongeographic presbyteries (Eastern Korean), 34, 286, 288, 289
- amend Standing Rules B.4. and F.5.d., role of ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by General Assembly (Grand Canyon), 29, 174
- amend Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) and E.2.f.(3) regarding resource material & oral presentations to assembly committees, (Central Florida), 28, 159
- amend Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) to require two-thirds vote on constitutional changes (de Cristo), 40, 236
- amend Standing Rule F.5.c. regarding social witness policy statements or resolutions at the General Assembly (Foothills), 53, 691
- Annual Statistical Report from Congregations to include new category, “Multiracial” (Greater Atlanta), 29, 165
- Annual Statistical Report to include new category, “Partners in Ministry” (Arkansas), 29, 166
- apology for harms done to LGBTQ/Q members of the PC(USA), family and friends, admission and (New York City), 54, 702
- apology to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (Baltimore), 54, 711
- Assembly committee meeting process and Moderator’s election, direct COGA to bring proposals to 2018 assembly (Presbytery of St. Andrew), 28, 163
- authoritative interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c, amend current (Eastern Korean), 34, 286, 288, 289
- boycott of all HP Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Enterprise Products (Synod of the Covenant), 61, 453

*Overtures (continued)**2016 Overtures (continued)*

calling for RE/MAX Corporation to cease selling property in West Bank Settlements (The Redwoods), 61, 465

celebrating a significant Social Witness Anniversary (Chicago), 55, 715

child protection policy model, on developing a national (Susquehanna Valley), 34, 285

choosing to be a church committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25 (Cascades), 53, 700

civil rights movement, reconciliation and engagement in a new (Giddings-Lovejoy), 55, 717

Clergy Letter Project, endorsing (The Cascades), 16, 974

climate change, faithful response to (New Covenant), 63, 530

climate change, on faithful engagement with issue of (New Covenant), 63, 525

Congo, recommendations regarding (Chicago), 67, 858

constitutional interpretation of G-3.0301a and G-3.0403c concerning nongeographic presbyteries, amending (Eastern Korean), 34, 286, 288, 289

creating a General Assembly Reform Coordinating Committee to Renew Practice of Our Reformed Polity for the 21st Century (Foothills), 40, 235

creating a Rules of Discipline Task Force charged with revising the Rules of Discipline (Chicago), 52, 374

Creation, Affirmation of (Boston), 21, 1015

dependent care policy, amend G-3.0106 to require all councils to adopt (Great Rivers), 33, 282

discrimination, supporting the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding protecting individuals from violence and (Synod of the Covenant), 68, 938

divestment from fossil fuel industry, on an alternative to (New Covenant), 63, 521

Divestment, On PC(USA) Fossil Fuel, (San Francisco), 63, 511

Doctrine of Discovery, reviewing the (National Capital), 56, 732

economic crisis in Puerto Rico (Del Noroeste), 59, 833

Encyclical “Laudato Si,” on communicating gratitude for and study of (Santa Fe), 63, 535

endorsing the Clergy Letter Project (The Cascades), 16, 974

environmental degradation and affirming public policy to support good stewardship of natural resources, witnessing against (Seattle), 65, 541

equipping and mobilizing member congregations to better serve those living with HIV/AIDS (National Capital), 56, 729

*Overtures (continued)**2016 Overtures (continued)*

eradicate slavery from the supply chains of vendors and other businesses that the PC(USA) and its various bodies do business (Newark), 42, 567

factory farming, advocacy against (Monmouth), 65, 562

“Forming Social Policy,” setting aside at the next three General Assemblies (Foothills), 53, 695

Fossil Fuel Divestment, On PC(USA), (San Francisco), 63, 511

fossil fuel industry, on an alternative to divestment from (New Covenant), 63, 521

Hewlett-Packard Enterprise products, boycott of all HP Inc. and (Covenant), 61, 453

hiring a consultant to assess relationship of OGA and PMA and the need for their continued existence as two separate entities (St. Andrew), 40, 232

HIV/AIDS epidemic, committing to play an active part in global response to the (Southern New England), 69, 941

HIV/AIDS, equipping and mobilizing member congregations to better serve those living with (National Capital), 56, 729

human oppression, affirming nonviolent means of resistance against (Muskingum Valley), 67, 860

Human Rights regarding protecting individuals from violence and discrimination, supporting the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for (Synod of the Covenant), 68, 938

Israel, advocating for the safety and well-being of children of Palestine and (Synod of the Covenant), 61, 458

Korean civilians in July 1950, acknowledging and reconciling for killing (Cayuga-Syracuse), 66, 853

Lord’s Supper, amend W-2.4011 regarding who can access (Southeastern Illinois), 17, 976

merging Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly (Santa Fe, St. Andrew), 38, 40, 224, 226, 232

merging Presbyteries of Central Washington and Northwest Coast (Synod of Alaska), 35, 304

Moderator’s election and assembly committee meeting process, direct COGA to bring proposals to 2018 assembly (St. Andrew), 28, 163

natural resources, witnessing against, environmental degradation and affirming public policy to support good stewardship of (Seattle), 65, 541

oppression, affirming nonviolent means of resistance against human (Muskingum Valley), 67, 860

Palestine and Israel, advocating for the safety and well-being of children of (Synod of the Covenant), 61, 458

*Overtures (continued)**2016 Overtures (continued)*

peacemaking, celebrating the completion of the six-year discernment on (Mission), 67, 857

prayerfully studying the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) (New Hope), 62, 504

“Presbyter Advisory Delegates,” Amend Standing Rule B.2.b. to Add the Category (Foothills), 38, 216

Puerto Rico, economic crisis in (del Noroeste), 59, 833

Racial Ethnic Composition Component of Session Annual Report of Church Statistics (Elizabeth), 28, 161

racism within our denomination and the larger society, on the PC(USA) continuing its efforts to dismantle (Baltimore), 56, 719

reconciliation and engagement in a new civil rights movement (Giddings-Lovejoy), 55, 717

refugees or internally displaced, responding to our sisters and brothers who are (New York City), 64, 538

RE/MAX Corporation to cease selling property in West Bank Settlements, calling for (The Redwoods), 61, 465

resources for learning, reflection, and reconciliation (John Knox), 54, 708

restoring boundaries of Presbytery of the Pacific to its status prior to 2012 Revisions (Synod of Southern California & Hawaii), 33, 281

reviewing the Doctrine of Discovery (National Capital), 56, 732

Rules of Discipline Task Force charged with revising the Rules of Discipline, creating a (Chicago), 52, 374

Sessions’ Annual Report of Church Statistics, appoint task force to revise survey instrument (Elizabeth,), 28, 161

sexual orientation or gender identity, on therapies purporting to change (Synod of the Covenant), 57, 785

slavery, on seeking to eradicate from the supply chains of vendors and other businesses that the PC(USA) and its various bodies do business (Newark), 42, 567

Social Witness Anniversary, celebrating a significant (Chicago), 55, 715

Standing Rule B.4. and F.5.d., role of ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by General Assembly (Grand Canyon), 29, 174

Standing Rule E.2.d.(2) and E.2.f.(3) regarding resource material & oral presentation to assembly committees (Central Florida), 28, 159

Standing Rule L.2., identifying the right of presbyteries and synods to submit overtures changing the Standing Rules (Foothills), 38, 221

statistical report to include new category, “Partners in Ministry,” annual (Arkansas), 29, 166

*Overtures (continued)**2016 Overtures (continued)*

stewardship of natural resources, witnessing against, environmental degradation and affirming public policy to support good (Seattle), 65, 541

synod boundaries, rescinding the actions of the 221st General Assembly (2014) that directed establishment of new configuration of (Santa Fe), 33, 279

synods, requesting exemption on any action the assembly might take to reduce number of (Synod of Alaska-Northwest), 36, 305

slavery, on seeking to eradicate from the supply chains of vendors and other businesses that the PC(USA) and its various bodies do business (Newark), 42, 567

upholding peoples and partners in the Middle East and in the United States (New York City), 61, 463

violence and discrimination, supporting the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding protecting individuals from (Synod of the Covenant), 68, 938

West Bank Settlements, calling for RE/MAX Corporation to cease selling property in (The Redwoods), 61, 465

P**“Pacific Islander,” Articles of Agreement, Amending Section 8.2 to Add, 3, 141****Pakistan, Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114****Palestine**

advocating for the safety and well-being of children of Palestine and Israel, 61, 458

affirming occupation-free investment in, 103

Commitment to Prayer for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, 106

Egypt and other parts of the world, on turning attention to the plight of the church that is suffering due to sectarian violence and persecution in, 114

Israel/Palestine: For Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace, 61, 469

Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), 62, 504

Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine, Reaffirming the, 106

Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition, 62, 506

- Parental Leave Policy, Encouraging, 103**
- PC(USA) Fossil Fuel Divestment, On, 63, 511**
- Peace and Global Witness Offering (see also Special Offerings Review Task Force Report), 603**
- Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, Statement on, 951**
- Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations, Risking, 67, 73, 867**
- Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, Commitment to Prayer for, 106**
- Peace, Justice, and Reunification in Korean Peninsula, 69, 951**
- Peacemaking and International Issues, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)**
- Peacemaking, Celebrating the Completion of the Six-Year Discernment on, 67, 857**
- Peacemaking, Supporting Middle East, 94, 103, 106**
- Pensions, Board of (see Board of Pensions)**
- Pentecost Offering (see also Special Offerings Review Task Force Report), 603**
- Per Capita,**
- per capita apportionment rate, 72, 179
 - per capita budget, recommendations pertaining to, 71, 72, 179
 - charts, 206
- Permanent Judicial Commission,**
- Compliance with Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions, Mid Council Statements of, 392
 - final decisions of, 395
 - members of entities elected by GA, 1140
 - GANC nomination approved, 84
 - report of, 394
 - roster of former members, 394
- Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and, 114**
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)**
- Political Reform, Advocating for Financial and, 110, 111**
- Poor Communities, Taking Specific Action to Address Worsening Plight of, 42, 570**
- Prayer at General Assembly, 3, 6, 7, 15, 25, 30, 36, 47, 49, 60, 70**
- Prayer for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, Commitment to, 106**
- “Prayer for the Persecuted Church,” 23, 440**
- Prayerfully Studying the Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), 62, 504**
- Precautionary Principle, Affirming the Importance of Sustainable Development and the, 91**
- Preparation for Ministry Process and Standard Ordination Exams, Special Committee to Review the, 97**
- “Presbyter Advisory Delegates,” Amend Standing Rule B.2.b. to Add the Category, 38, 216**
- Presbyterian Association of Musicians Approved as National Certifying Body, 52, 376**
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, Minutes Approved, 45, 631**
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Board of Pensions (see Board of Pensions)**
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation,**
- agency summary, 964
 - final responses to referrals, 103
 - GANC nominations approved, 85
 - members of entities elected by GA, 1141
 - minutes approved, 27, 960
 - recommendations,
 - churchwide gifts program to be continued, 26, 956
 - environmental stewardship, collaborative agenda on, 65, 550
 - New Covenant Funds Trust Company, N.A., confirm directors of, 26, 955
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.,**
- Assembly Committee on Board of Pensions, PILP, PPC, and Foundation (see Assembly Committees, BOP, PILP, PPC, and Foundation)
 - board of directors, nominations confirmed, 26, 956
 - environmental stewardship, collaborative agenda on, 65, 550
 - members of entities elected by GA, 1143
 - minutes approved, 27, 960
 - report to 222nd General Assembly (2016), 966
 - Rissler, James approved as president of PILP, Inc., 26, 957
- Presbyterian Committee for the Self-Development of People, GANC Nominations Approved, 85, 1142**
- Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel, GANC Nominations, 85, 1142**
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, GANC Nomination Approved, 85, 1143**
- Presbyterian Foundation (see Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation)**
- Presbyterian Historical Society, Minutes Approved, 30, 189**

Presbyterian Hunger Program Advisory Committee, GANC Nomination Approved, 86, 1143

Presbyterian Immigrant Defense Initiative to Affirm and Promote the Civil and Human Rights of Immigrants in Our Communities, Recognizing, 102

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (see Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.)

Presbyterian Men, GANC Nominations Approved,

Presbyterian Women, Amend Standing Rule B.3.a. Regarding, 29, 167

Presbyterian Mission Agency (see also Joint Report of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency),

1001 Worshipping Communities Report, 73

achieving a 5:1 salary ratio between highest-paid and lowest-paid employees of PMA (Newton), 44, 617

Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (see Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy)

Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Annual Report of Progress, 632

budget, 73, 624

Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Report of, 37, 237

Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees, Report of the Presbyterian Mission Agency on, 642

directed to develop resources for councils of all levels to provide for dependent-care policies, 33, 282

directed to review programs and procedures used by, or available to, presbyteries to prepare, equip, credential, and deploy pastoral leadership, 98

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Annual Report of Progress, report of, 632

final responses to referrals, 104

GANC nominations approved,

Growing in Grace and Gratitude Presentation, Presbyterian Mission Agency, 49

John C. Lord and Edmund P. Dwight Funds, 45, 625

Living Missionally, 44, 124, 613

Manual of Operations, changes in, 43, 575, 643

merging Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly, 38, 40, 224, 226, 232

recommendations,

budget, 44, 623, 624, 625, 626

budgetary and financial concerns of the church, recommendations regarding, 44, 623, 624, 625, 626

Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentricity Report, 57, 787–91

Churchwide Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, proposed revisions to, 43, 124, 591

Presbyterian Mission Agency (continued)

recommendations (continued)

environmental stewardship, collaborative agenda on, 65, 550

Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, 57, 719, 770

Manual of Operations amendments, 43, 575, 643

Mission Program Budget, 73, 624

Mission Responsibility Through Investment report on divestment from fossil fuel companies, 65, 543

PILP board of directors, nominations confirmed, 26, 956

Special Offerings recommendations, 44, 603

Walton Awards, Sam and Helen, 46, 632

Women of Faith awards, 45, 629

Work Plan, Presbyterian Mission Agency, 44, 621

referrals in progress, 92

report of changes in *Manual of Operations*, 43, 575, 643

Review Committee on the Presbyterian Mission Agency, GANC nominations,

recommendations from GACEIR regarding the Interreligious Stance of the PC(USA), 93, 107, 108

special offerings, 44, 45, 124, 125, 603, 626

Work Plan, 6, 44, 621

Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,

Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Report of the, 40, 237

GANC nominations approved, 11, 48, 86, 88

members of entities elected by GA, 1143

recommendations,

Directory for Worship, revised, 17, 104, 978

“General Assembly Mission Program Budget and Procedures,” Replace with “Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy,” 43, 578

Living Missionally, 44, 124, 613

Manual of Operations changes, 43, 575, 643

Mountain Retreat Association, Inc., Board of Directors, recommendation to approve nominee for, 20, 1004

Organization for Mission amendments, 43, 589

PILP Board of Directors confirmed, 26, 956

Revised Directory for Worship, 17, 104, 978

Special Offerings Review Task Force, Report of, 44, 124, 125, 603

Walton Awards, Sam and Helen, 46, 632

Women of Faith Awards, 45, 629

Presbyterian Mission Agency Budget, 73, 624, 649

“Presbyterian Mission Agency Reserve Policy,” to Replace “General Assembly Mission Budget Policy and Procedures,” 43, 578

Presbyterian Mission Agency Work Plan, 6, 44, 621

Presbyterian Mortgage Corp., Members of, Elected by GA, 1144

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation,
 agency summary, 960
 Assembly Committee on BOP, PILP, PPC, and
 Foundation (see Assembly Committees, BOP,
 PILP, PPC, and Foundation)
 environmental stewardship, collaborative agenda on, 65,
 550
 GANC nominations approved, 86
 members of entities elected by GA, 1145
 minutes, approval of, 27, 960
 recommendation from board of directors to reaffirm
 election of Marc Lewis to third term as president
 and publisher of PPC, 26, 955

Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates,
 directed to consult with ACREC for comment on
 cross-cultural accessibility of standard ordination
 exams, 97
 directed to include more culturally diverse resources
 and references in its instructions to and preparation
 of readers of examinations, 98
 GANC nominations approved, 87
 members of entities elected by GA, 1145
 Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations
 for Candidates Self-Study, 52, 382

Presbytery of the Pacific to Its Status Prior to 2012 Revisions, Restoring Boundaries of (Synod of Southern California & Hawaii), 33, 281

Presentation, Young Adult Volunteer, 5

Princeton Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)

Privilege, Power, and Policy: The Church as an Employer, Referral in Progress, 91, 93

Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen, Resolution to Contribute to a, 44, 94, 614

Programmatic Advocacy, PMA Directed to Uphold, 113

Progress Reports

BOP relief of conscience, 95
 Collegiate Ministries, 92
 supplier diversity report from PMA, 93

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (see *Book of Order*)

Proposed Docket (see Assembly Committees, Business Referrals; see also Assembly Committees, Bills and Overtures; see also General Assembly)

Proposed Expenditure Budget, 73, 624

Protecting Communities and Police Act, PC(USA) Urged to Demand U.S. Congress Enact, 717

Protestant Reformation, Recognition of 500th Anniversary, 24, 441

Protests (see also General Assembly), 70

Puerto Rico,

economic crisis in Puerto Rico, 59, 833
 Revised Covenant Between the General Assembly of the PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, 20, 1007

Q

Quorum, Enrollment and, 1

R

Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Church Growth Consultation Committee Report, 121, 122

Racial Ethnic and Immigrant Church Members to Serve Worshiping Communities, Certified Ministry Training Programs to Prepare, 121, 122

Racial Ethnic Caucuses of the Church and with Presbytery Leaders, Directed to Develop List of Resource Persons for Assistance with Cultural Proficiency, Mid Council Ministries Area, in Consultation with, 103

Racial Ethnic Composition Component of Session Annual Report of Church Statistics, 28, 161

Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREIs), Maintain Funding for Historically Presbyterian, 607

Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges, Resolution to Define and Interpret Standards for PC(USA), 108

Racial Ethnic Terminology, More Appropriate, 789

Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, Facing, 57, 719, 770

Racism, and Ethnocentricity Report, Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, 57, 787–91

Racism Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the PC(USA), 719

Racism within Our Denomination and the Larger Society, On the PC(USA) Continuing Its Efforts to Dismantle, 56, 719

Reconciliation and Engagement in a New Civil Rights Movement, 55, 717

Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, Commitment to Prayer for Peace, Justice, and, 106

Reconciliation, Resources for Learning, Reflection, and, 54, 708

Reconfiguration of Synod Boundaries, 33, 279

Referrals in Progress, 2, 3, 91

- Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, 91 approval of, by assembly, 2, 3, 91
- General Assembly Committee on Representation, 91
- Presbyterian Mission Agency, 92

Referrals of Business, 3, 131, 141**Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century, Recommendation to Create Special Committee to Study the, 20, 1014****Refugee Ministry Response Update, 27****Refugees, Affirming the Principles of Sanctuary in Response to Global Escalation in Number of Displaced Persons/, 69, 946****Refugees or Internally Displaced, Responding to Our Sisters and Brothers Who Are, 64, 538****Relief of Conscience Churches, Publishing Current List of Churches Certified as, 94, 95****Relief of Conscience, General Assembly Statement on Support of Board of Pensions (BOP) and Request for Interim Progress Report from BOP, 94, 95****Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, to Withdraw from, 44, 626****RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in West Bank Settlements, Calling for, 61, 465****Renounced Jurisdiction of the Church, Amend G-2.0509 and D-10.0401 to Clarify Relationship to the PC(USA) of a Person Who Has, 51, 365****Reports Without Recommendations,**

- Advisory Committee on Litigation Agency Summary, 417
- Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy Agency Summary, 845
- Advisory Committee on the Constitution Agency Summary, 419
- Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns Agency Summary, 850
- Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns Agency Summary, 843
- Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Report of Progress, 632
- Audit, 46, 632, 658
- Committee on Theological Education Agency Summary, 1049
- General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, 450
- General Assembly Committee on Representation Agency Summary, 189
- General Assembly Committee on Representation Report on the AAEEO and Supplier Diversity Achievements of the Six Agencies, 2014–2016, 191
- General Assembly Nominating Committee Agency Summary, 204

Reports Without Recommendations (continued)

- Moderator's report, 1, 1055
- New Covenant Trust Company, N.A., 966
- Permanent Judicial Commission, Mid Council Statements of Compliance with Decisions, 392
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation Agency Summary, 964
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc., 966
- Presbyterian Mission Agency report on changes to *Manual of Operations*, 43, 575, 643
- Presbyterian Mission Agency Report on Current Task Forces, Work Groups, and Ad Hoc Committees, 642
- Presbyterian Publishing Corporation Agency Summary, 960

Representation, General Assembly Committee on (GACOR) (see General Assembly Committee on Representation)**Reproductive Choice, to Withdraw from Religious Coalition for, 44, 626****Resolution on Abiding Presence: Living Faithfully in End-of-Life Decisions, 21, 94, 1018****Resolution on Behalf of Dominicans of Haitian Descent and any Others Impacted by Decision 168/13 of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic, 116****Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue, 118****Resolution on Drones, War and Surveillance, 116, 117****Resolution on Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update, 118****Resolution to Address Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 34, 93, 290****Resolution to Contribute to a Proactive, Health-Giving Ministry to and Relationship with Our Clergywomen, 44, 94, 614****Resolution to Define and Interpret Standards for PC(USA) Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges, 108****Resolution to Develop a Churchwide Antiracism Policy, 108, 125****Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent Voter Suppression, 93, 112, 113****Resolution to Ensure Adoption and Implementation of Child/Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the PC(USA), 34, 93, 290****Resolution to Ensure Just Compensation Practices for Those Employed Via Third Party Contractors, 44, 615****Resolution to Extend Time Limits on Abuse Reporting in Instances of Gross Negligence, 52, 378**

Resolution to Recognize the Commitment of the PC(USA) to Making Just Immigration a Reality, 105

Resolution to Require and Expand Family Leave Policies, 34, 292

Resolution to Support Hotel and Hospitality Workers Through the Adoption of Just Policies in the PC(USA), 123

Resources for Learning, Reflection, and Reconciliation, 54, 708

Responses to Referrals, Final (see Final Responses to Referrals)

Review Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (see Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly)

Review Committee on the Presbyterian Mission Agency (see Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency)

Review Committee on the Whole PC(USA) (All Agency Review) GANC Nominations, 11, 48, 88, 1145

Review of Synod Minutes, 36, 306

Reviewing the Doctrine of Discovery, 56, 732

Rhee, Memorial Minute for Syngman, 31

Rights of Children and Attention to Violence Against Children in Israel and Palestine, Reaffirming the, 106

Risking Peace in a Violent World, 117

Risking Peace in a Violent World: Five New Peacemaking Affirmations, 67, 73, 867

Rissler, James, Confirm Election as President of PILP, Inc., 26, 957

Rivera, Requesting the Release from Prison of Mr. Oscar Lopez, 113

Roll of the General Assembly, 1061

Rules of Discipline (see *Book of Order*)

Rules of Discipline Task Force Charged with Revising the Rules of Discipline, Creating a, 52, 374

S

Sacrament of Holy Communion (see Lord's Supper, Celebration of, Theological Schools Granted Permission)

Sakenfeld, Katharine, Award for Excellence in Theological Education Given to, 20, 1013

Salary Ratio Between Highest-Paid and Lowest-Paid Employees of PMA, Achieving a 5:1, 44, 617

Sanctuary in Response to Global Escalation in Number of Displaced Persons/Refugees, Affirming the Principles of, 69, 946

Sanctuary, Reaffirming the Ministry of, by Congregations, 69, 944

San Francisco Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)

Seating of Corresponding Members at GA, 1

Sectarian Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to, 114

Seeking Support for Settlements of Disputes Regarding Church Property, 52, 379

Self-Development of People, National Committee on, GANC Nominations Approved,

Self-Study Reports

- Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, 59, 836
- Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns Self-Study, 113
- General Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, 24, 442
- Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates Self-Study, 52, 382

Seminary, Seminaries, and Presbyterian Schools (see Theological Institutions)

Session Annual Statistical Report, Resolution to Adapt, Final Response to Referral, 28, 161

Sessions' Annual Report of Church Statistics, appoint task force to revise survey instrument, 28, 161

Sexual Misconduct Policy and a Child and Youth Protection Policy, All Councils Shall Adopt and Implement a, 34, 290

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Discrimination and Violence Against Individuals Based on Their, 68, 938

Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity, On Therapies Purporting to Change, 57, 785

Sexual Violence within the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update, Resolution on, 118

Slavery, on Seeking to Eradicate from the Supply Chains of Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business, 42, 567

Smith, Johnson C., Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)

Social Justice Issues, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)

Social Witness Anniversary, Celebrating a Significant, 55, 715

Social Witness Policy, Advisory Committee on (see Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy)

Speak-Out, 7, 16

- Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions, 96, 103, 119**
- Special Committee to Conduct an Administrative Review to Assure Compliance with Donor and GA Restrictions on Administration of Jarvie Service, 26, 957**
- Special Committee to Review the Preparation for Ministry Process and Standard Ordination Exams, 97**
- Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century, Recommendation to Create, 20, 1014**
- Special Offerings Review Task Force, Report of, 44, 124, 125, 603, 604**
- Special Offerings, Summary of Receipts, 45, 626**
- Spirit of GA Video, 3, 6, 15, 36**
- Sri Lanka, Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114**
- Standard Definition of Supplier Diversity, 29, 91, 93, 175**
- Standard Ordination Exam Questions, Cross-Cultural Accessibility of, 97**
- “Standards of Ethics for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly,” 13**
- Standing for Reconciliation and Ending Affiliation with Divisive Coalition, 62, 506**
- Standing Rules of the *Manual of the General Assembly*,**
 amendments disapproved by 222nd GA (2016),
 B.2.b. (add category “Presbyter Advisory Delegates), 38, 216
 B.4. (role of ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by General Assembly), 29, 174
 Standing Rule F.5.b.(1) (to require two-thirds vote on constitutional changes), 40, 236
 F.5.c. (regarding social witness policy statements or resolutions at the General Assembly), 53, 691
 F.5.d. (role of ACC and PJC when constitutional questions are considered by General Assembly), 29, 174
 L.2. (identifying the right of presbyteries and synods to submit overtures changing the Standing Rules), 38, 221
 amendments made by the 222nd General Assembly (2016),
 B.3.a. (Presbyterian Women), 29, 167
 B.5.b., (assembly committee moderators), 29, 167
 E.2.d.(2), resources for assembly committees, 28, 159
 amendments referred,
 E.2.f.(3), oral presentation to assembly committees, 28, 159
 Suspension of Standing Rule A.2.a., 3
 text of, 1077
- State of Texas, et al v. United States of America, et al, 419**
- Stated Clerk,**
 Associate Stated Clerk, approval of, 29, 169
 backstage staff presentation to Gradye Parsons, 30
 COGA presentation to, 37
 election of, 48
 GA tracker presentation to Gradye Parsons, 30
 nominating committee report, 6, 78
 orientation, 2, 11
 special presentation to newly elected Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson II, 48
 welcoming to newly elected Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson to the Stated Clerk’s chair on the platform, 73
 YAAD presentation to, 73
- Stated Clerk Nominating Committee Report, 6, 78**
- Statement of Concerns for the U.S. Electoral Process, 722**
- Statement of Concern: The Many Faces of Human Trafficking, 742**
- Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, 951**
- Statement to the Republic of Korea with Apology and Regret for Actions of U.S. Troops at No Gun Ri, 66, 853**
- Statements of Compliance with General Assembly Judicial Commission Decisions, 392**
- Statistical Report from Congregations to Include New Category, “Multiracial” (Greater Atlanta), 29, 165**
- Statistical Report to Include New Category, “Partners in Ministry,” Annual, 29, 166**
- Stewardship of Natural Resources, Witnessing Against Environmental Degradation and Affirming Public Policy to Support Good, 65, 541**
- Studying the Effectiveness of Mid Council to Mid Council Reference Checks and Clearance Procedures, 97**
- Surveillance, Resolution on Drones, War and, 116, 117**
- Sustainable Development and the Precautionary Principle, Affirming the Importance of, 91**
- Syngman Rhee, Memorial Minute for, 31**
- Synod Boundaries, Reconfiguration of, 33, 35, 279, 300**
- Synod Boundaries, Rescind the Actions of the 221st GA (2014) That Directed the Establishment of a New Configuration of, 33, 279**
- Synod Minutes, General Assembly Approval of, 36, 306**
- Synod Report Regarding Synod Boundaries, 35, 300**

Synods of the PC(USA) Asks to Have Recommendations of 221st GA (2014) Regarding Reduction in Number of Synods Rescinded, 35, 300

Synods, Requesting Exemption on Any Action the Assembly Might Take to Reduce Number of, 36, 305

Syria and Iraq, Concern, Prayer, and Action for, 119

[Syria,] Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian Violence and Persecution in, 114

T

Task Force for Korean-Speaking Congregations, 6, 35, 294

Task Force, National Racial Ethnic Ministries, 112

Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age, 113

Terrorism, Removing Cuba from List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, 114

Theological Education Fund, Final Response to Referral, 96

Theological Education Fund Transferred from PMA to the PC(USA) Foundation, 96

Theological Institutions,

- approval of celebration of Lord's Supper at named theological institutions, 20, 1007
- approval of new trustees, 20, 1004
- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004
- awards for excellence in theological education, request for docket time, 20, 1012
- awards for excellence in theological education, recommendations for, 20, 1013
- Columbia Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004
- Columbia Theological Seminary, approve president (Leanne Van Dyk), 20, 1005
- Columbia Theological Seminary, brief meditation in memory of Steve Hayner, late president of, 20, 1012
- Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, new president, 20, 1004
- McCormick Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, approve president (David Esterline), 20, 1005
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004

Theological Institutions (continued)

Princeton Theological Seminary, 20, 1004

Revised Covenant Between General Assembly of PC(USA) and El Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, 20, 1007

San Francisco Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004

Special Committee on Funding Theological Institutions, 96, 103, 119

Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, new trustees, 20, 1004

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, new trustees, 20, 1004

Theological Issues and Institutions, Assembly Committee on (see Assembly Committees)

Theological Student Advisory Delegates, List of, 1070

Translation Office, Creation of, Final Response to Referral, 104

Trauma Crisis Counseling Consultation to Train in Best Practices in Caring for Survivors of Homicide Victims, Providing a, 111

Travel Restrictions for U.S. Citizens Traveling to Cuba, Lifting All, 114, 115

U

Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education (see Theological Institutions)

U.S. Electoral Process, Statement of Concerns for the, 722

United States, Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the, 61, 463

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (see Theological Institutions)

Upholding Peoples and Partners in the Middle East and in the United States, 61, 463

Urban Vision, Recommendations Regarding The Gospel from Detroit: Renewing the Church's, 57, 108, 738

V

Van Dyk, Leanne, Approved as President of Columbia Theological Seminary, 20, 1005

Vendors and Other Businesses That the PC(USA) and Its Various Bodies Do Business, on Seeking to Eradicate Slavery from the Supply Chains of 42, 567

Video, Spirit of GA, 3, 6, 15, 36

Violence and Discrimination, Supporting the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regarding Protecting Individuals from, 68, 938

INDEX

Violence and Persecution in Egypt and Other Parts of the World, on Turning Attention to the Plight of the Church That Is Suffering Due to Sectarian, 114

Violence Prevention, Gun, 111

Violence with the U.S. Military Services: A 2014 Human Rights Update, Resolution on Sexual, 114

Violent World: Affirmations for Presbytery Consideration, Risking Peace in a, 67, 73, 867

Violent World, Risking Peace in a, 117

Voter Suppression, Resolution to Educate Against and Help Prevent, 93, 112, 113

Votes of Presbyteries on Amendments to the Constitution (see CD version, pp. 421, 422

Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, Child/Youth, 29, 30, 181, 188

W

Walker Whaley, Clarissa, Women of Faith Award Winner, 629–30

Walton Awards, Sam and Helen, 46, 632

War and Surveillance, Resolution on Drones, 116, 117

Way Forward Commission to Study and Identify a Vision for the Structure and Function of the General Assembly Agencies, Co-Moderators to Name, 38, 224, 226

Wednesday Consent Agenda (Item 02-WCA), 11

West Bank Settlements, Calling for RE/MAX Corporation to Cease Selling Property in, 61, 465

Western Sahara: Occupied, Non-Self-Governing Territory, and Test Case for International Law, 115, 116

When We Gather at the Table (COGA Report), 41, 259

Women (See Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns)

Women of Color Consultation Report: "Empowered and Hopeful," 44, 611

Women of Faith Awards, 45, 629

World AIDS Sunday, 942

World Communion of Reformed Churches, Delegation to the General Council of, 23, 439

Worship at General Assembly, 1, 7, 30, 74

Y

YAAD presentation to Co-Moderators and Stated Clerk, 73

Young Adult Volunteer Presentation, 5

Youth Protection Policies and Resources in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Resolution to Address Child/, 34, 93, 290

Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, Child/, 29, 181

Z

Zionism Unsettled Does Not Represent Views of PC(USA), Declaring That, 103, 123